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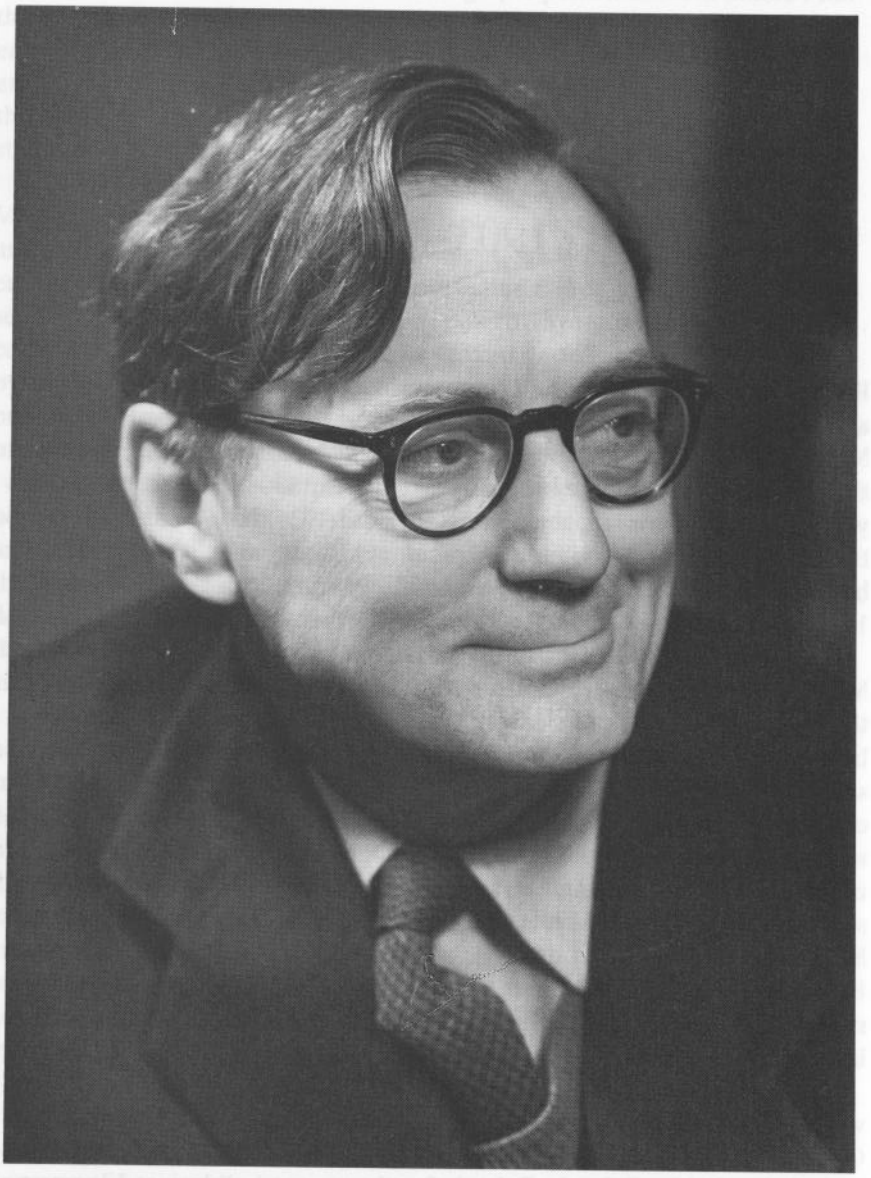
Roger Aubrey Baskerville Mynors 1903–1989

ROGER AUBREY BASKERVILLE MYNORS was born on 28 July 1903, slightly ahead of his twin brother Humphrey. Their father, Aubrey Baskerville Mynors, then rector of Langley Burrell, Wiltshire, was later secretary to the Pan-Anglican Congress held in London in 1908. The Congress was years in the preparation, and it was not until 1920 that Aubrey produced the little book that described the spending of the money it raised. But he had by then long reverted to the tranquil life of a parish priest. He died in 1937 at the age of 71.

It is conjectured that the Mynors family took its name from Les Minières not far from Breteuil-sur-Iton, south-west of Évreux. In England they can be traced back to the twelfth century, when they are associated with land at Burghill, north-west of Hereford. The connection with Treago in the same county, which Roger was to inherit, goes back at least to the fifteenth century. Humphrey's book on the family suggests no particular intellectual strain before the twentieth century, though plenty of local honour and rural sports. The more interest, therefore, attaches to Aubrey's wife, a strong personality, who came of a family of squires from Kent. She was Margery Musgrave, born in 1878 daughter to the Rev. Charles Musgrave Harvey, Prebendary of St Paul's; among her surviving brothers, all of them successful, was Sir Ernest Musgrave Harvey, Bt, who held, as Humphrey later did, the post of Deputy Governor of the Bank of England.

Roger and Humphrey had an elder sister Winifred; two further brothers were born later, and all four boys were to win open classical awards at Oxford or Cambridge. The twins were much in the country even when their father held a living in Bristol, for they spent holidays at Llanwarne in Herefordshire, where Aubrey's brother was rector, as their father had been before him, and where Aubrey and his wife are buried. Aubrey, who



R. A. B. MYNORS *J. W. Thomas*

had a remarkable collection of eggs, instilled a knowledge of birds, as well as of ecclesiastical architecture; an influential governess, Miss Jose, taught a love of wild flowers. Roger remembered watching the work in the smithy: he was always, he said, 'fascinated by men doing things'. But the major influence came from the clerical background on both sides of the family, and from the serene frugal life of a country vicarage, where politics was never mentioned and responsibility to parishioners was a matter of course.

The twins were very close, and remained so all their lives. They were famously alike, at least till middle age; Humphrey is said to have remarked: 'Yes, we are still very much alike, I suppose because we have both lived sheltered lives.' When they were separated by education, it is well attested that Humphrey once attended chapel at Eton in Roger's place, only the Head Master noticing; but quite untrue that Roger rode a bicycle round the Court at Marlborough, explaining, when challenged, that he was not a member of the school.

Roger, who had earlier been at Summerfields in Oxford, went to Eton as a scholar in 1916. In the same selection were J. C. S. (now Sir Steven) Runciman and Denis Dannreuther, who went on to Balliol with Roger and became a barrister and Fellow of All Souls. Junior to them were, amongst others, Robert Longden, the ancient historian, and Eric Blair, better known as George Orwell. The Eton of this period is veiled in myth, much of it purveyed by Cyril Connolly's *Enemies of Promise*. Connolly's contemporaries viewed his account with scepticism, but there seems no doubt that Dannreuther, as captain of the school, together with Longden and Mynors, brought a civilising influence to a world of 'bullying, beating, fagging [and] . . . militarism', and Roger was apparently very happy. He was no sportsman. But he got into the Lower Boats on the Fourth of June, and was twelfth man in the St Andrew's Day Wall Game in 1921: 'Has had bad luck in staying out during the greater part of the Half. Knows what to do and how to do it, and has a long reach.' In 1922, at the Fourth of June Speeches, he read from the second *Georgic*, 'most kindly and wisely using the old pronunciation'. The future was coming into focus.

Homer and Virgil were at this time the pillars of an Eton education. English was not formally taught, though it was unofficially encouraged, and when Mynors went up to Balliol the college commented on his 'really astounding knowledge of English poetry'. He later spoke of 'what so many of us inarticulately feel, the gratitude to those who taught us when we were young', but it is difficult to be sure where he felt his chief obligations lay. It is probable that the Head Master, C. A. Alington, who taught Latin to the upper forms, communicated his unusual enthusiasm for Latin written after 200 A.D. Even more important was M. R. James, who became Provost of Eton in 1918. 'This genial and amusing super-uncle', as John Lehmann

described him, was a lover of P. G. Wodehouse and 'laughed his teeth out' over him. He was also, Mynors felt, rather too keen on Gilbert and Sullivan. Yet he was a leading authority on Biblical studies and on medieval manuscripts, with, at his elbow, a wonderful college collection that he had himself had the run of as a boy. He became a family friend of the Mynors. Roger was to visit him at Eton for a week in 1935 to show him some of his work on the Balliol manuscripts: 'the great man was cheerful, affectionate and communicative. What a man!' (Hunt 5.4.35). It is to be presumed that Mynors, who followed so many of his paths and was to inherit some of his books, was well known to James at Eton, went to his breakfasts, and benefited from his learning and encouragement. Certainly he must have warmed to a man who could tell boys: 'But as to knowing, finding out about things, this is the time of life when you have most chance of beginning to do that . . . There are, providentially, so many things in the world to be observed and watched and noted and collected.'

Mynors won only an exhibition to Balliol. The College wrote to Eton that 'his work was full of cleverness all through . . . We did feel that there was a lot of verbiage about him and that he would want pruning in the end'. No one ever made that complaint again; and Eton wrote a surprised reply. Soon, however, he became the first holder of the closed Robin Holloway scholarship from Eton. It was Dannreuther who got the open scholarship, just as later he was preferred at All Souls. None of this soured Mynors's affection for Balliol: 'my heart,' he wrote on election to an honorary fellowship in 1963, 'has always been, and will be, in the College, to which I owe more than I can express' (Keir 4.6.63).

He found himself in distinguished company when he went up to Balliol in 1922. In his year were, besides Dannreuther and Cyril Connolly from Eton, Jack Westrup, Robert Birley, Walter Oakeshott and Graham Greene. Older, but still in residence, were W. F. R. Hardie, Richard Pares and C. J. Fordyce. Balliol was a stronghold of the classics. Seven other Balliol men joined Mynors in the first class in Honour Moderations, six in the first class in Greats. He was Hertford Scholar in 1924, and in the same year Craven Scholar when T. B. L. Webster won the Ireland. At Balliol, as at Eton, it is unclear which teachers, if any, captured his imagination. Cyril Bailey, who taught him and was later his colleague for many years, hardly mentions him in his unpublished autobiography. Much later Mynors wrote to C. M. Bowra: 'It is you who have taught me all I know about the classics.' As to social life, one of his contemporaries writes: 'My general impression is of a man whom nobody did know very closely. I think he was on the fringe of a number of groups of which he never became wholly a part. . . . One of the things well-known about him was his "archaic smile".' He could row; and a contemporary said tartly: 'I cannot understand why

Roger Mynors can like getting drunk with rowing men.' It is possible that he played the Almighty in a Nativity Play. He was also briefly connected with the Balliol Players, and on their tour of 1923 played Cassandra in the *Agamemnon* and Mistress Ford in *Merry Wives* (Humphrey understudying Falstaff). 'Roger's Homeric laughter and his Homeric striding about the buck-basket' are recalled in the official account of the Players published in 1933.

Mynors's academic successes led to his election as a Junior Research Fellow of Balliol in 1926 and then Tutor in Classics and a full fellow a year later. He did not become a University Lecturer until 1935, but he was already by Hilary Term 1928 lecturing three times a week on the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*. Virgil dominated his lectures for fifty years, though he also treated Cicero, Juvenal, Lucretius (at Harvard), Propertius ('beastly difficult poet'), Plautus, Horace and Catullus. In his memory the years at Balliol came to seem a golden age. In one of his more public expressions of regret at his move to Cambridge, he said: 'I accepted a chair at one of our ancient universities and gave up teaching, a decision made with reluctance which (as far as the teaching goes) I have never for one moment ceased to regret.' In a private letter he wrote: 'I am hopelessly imbued with the Balliol principle that it's the working College tutor in the Oxford sense who matters' (Watt 17.11.46). But in the same letter he expresses horror at the 22 pupils taught by a Balliol classics don in 1946: 'here [in Cambridge] you would be restricted to 12 which is badly overdoing it.' Exactly how much Mynors taught in the thirties at Balliol is uncertain; but he remarked in 1935 that he had fifteen pupils, even though it was Trinity Term (when the Mods don's life was easiest). The pabulum at least is known; as at other colleges at that time, it was an unvaried diet of proses and verses (hence his remark, in sending Richard Hunt [18.4.29] his marks in Mods: 'your standard in both proses is a bad advertisement for your tutor'). At least for the best pupils, the meat came after the composition had been returned: 'he just talked', and often about his own research. For the rest, he was clearly liked by his pupils. One tells of 'not infrequent walks . . . when he introduced me in the lightest possible way to whole fields of knowledge which were largely new to me'. Another recalls how he arrived in Balliol in July as a late candidate and was told Mr Mynors was expecting him: 'He showed me to my room in college, saying he would come and see me in the morning . . . Come he did—and *with a cup of tea* . . . and with directions to the bath-house.'

A notable part of Mynors's life up to the war, and an important link with the young, was F. E. ('Sligger') Urquhart's Chalet des Mélèzes (dubbed des Anglais) in the French Alps. Urquhart had taken reading parties there since 1891, and Mynors, who was clearly in the 'Sligger' circle and may have owed to him his interest in pictures, went regularly from 1924 on. He did a lot

of reading there, but took much exercise also. Even to reach the chalet in those far-off days was a major effort, and once there very long walks (not to speak of extempore games) were customary; for example, an expedition with Richard Pares and C. G. Eastwood in 1924 that started at 5.15 a.m. and ended only at 9.50 p.m. Humphrey Mynors occasionally came too, and well-known names are sprinkled through the Chalet Book. On Urquhart's death in 1934, the chalet was left to Mynors. Though he did visit it once with his wife in 1950, he largely disassociated himself from it after his move from Balliol, and eventually the place was handed over to trustees, who still run it for undergraduate reading parties. As late as 1987 Mynors could write: 'How that place does get under one's skin! I think about it as little as I can, and cannot fail to think about it constantly. My so-called mind is like a house with several rooms that I cannot bear to go into. Like Queen Victoria, I make up the Prince Consort's bed every night' (Kenny 14.10.87).

Mynors lived in II.5, a room looking out, Janus-wise, on the front quadrangles of both Balliol and Trinity. Here he taught and entertained undergraduates: one of whom, Christopher Fremantle, took up a light suggestion of his to try his hand at murals there, with pre-Raphaelite results that are still to be seen. But 'Roger as a young don struck me as shy, always pleasant and polite but not obtruding himself into undergraduate society'. We glimpse him 'walking about the college with enormous enthusiasm', and, during a short period as Dean, dealing tactfully with an errant dining club. Meanwhile in the Senior Common Room he made enduring friendships, especially perhaps with Humphrey Sumner. A very junior colleague still recalls with gratitude the generosity of a timely cheque. Yet even here the note of separateness is struck. Sir Richard Southern has 'bright memories of small incidents. . . . But somehow our friendship never blossomed—it was like a string of bright beads all the same size'. Something of Mynors's ultimate inarticulacy at this period comes over in a recollection of an Australian research fellow of Balliol: 'We went up into Hall by a staircase from the Senior Common Room. At the foot of this staircase was a newel post. The top piece of this post was loose and the post itself was not as firm as it might be. Roger, before he climbed the staircase, was accustomed to give this post a good shake, producing from this action a rather loud clanking noise, which he would greet with his shy smile. It always seemed to me that this act of his was the playful gesture of a man of feeling, expressing in this small way something of his fondness for the place and all its associations.'

Mynors, however, most obviously went his own way in his research. He seems not to have known well the Oxford classicists of his day, with the exception of Bowra. It was not that men of distinction and learning

were lacking in the twenties. But several restricted themselves to the art of composition (J. G. Barrington-Ward, A. N. Bryan-Brown, T. F. Higham). Others favoured the commentary, but had little time for manuscripts (Cyril Bailey, A. S. Owen, M. Platnauer). Others, again, wrote about literature, and with wide horizons (C. M. Bowra, Gilbert Murray). Many of these were in any case primarily Hellenists, and none served as a model. Indeed 'the University provided my tottering steps with no guidance or supervision of any kind whatsoever' (Hunt 4.12.45). Mynors acted on his own principle, as he enunciated it later, that 'it is good for the young to be working at a book, and much better practice as a rule to edit a text than to enstodge a treatise' (Hunt 7.2.47). It would seem that the text chosen from the start was Cassiodorus's *Institutiones*; the edition was certainly well under way in 1931. But we hear of a 'notebook I filled in Lyons in the summer of '27 and Paris in the spring of '28'- on the ninth-century poet and theologian Florus of Lyons: 'I've always felt uneasily that I ought to go back and finish—the food in Lyons was capital, and I spent the Fête Nationale on an expedition to Paray le Moniel [*sic*] and Cluny—an appropriate day for the thoughtful inspection of monastic ruins' (Hunt 4.12.45). Such topics show Mynors from the start drawn powerfully away from the ordinary classical stamping grounds. He could easily have grafted a Jamesian enthusiasm for manuscripts on to classical studies, and in the fifties he did so. But the later period called insistently, again perhaps because of James. And, while James had concentrated on English manuscript collections, it was perhaps the travel requirements of the Derby scholarship, which Mynors won in 1926, that opened his eyes to continental manuscripts and to the ways of continental medievalists.

In the *Institutiones* 'Cassiodorus Senator, in the middle years of the VIth century, set himself to compile for the monks of his foundation at Vivarium an Introduction to their studies'. For one interested in manuscripts, a book that seemed to describe its author's own library and that certainly instructed scribes in their task of copying must have held a special fascination. The tradition was intriguing too. One notable manuscript is famously subscribed 'Codex archetypus ad cuius exemplaria sunt reliqui corrigendi'; and the several recensions, authorial and other, challenged the skills of an editor who was always interested in lay-out, typography and printing convention. Mynors's edition was the only one that had (or has) appeared since 1679. But the field was not unworked. Scholars on the continent, not least Paul Lehmann, had recently concerned themselves with the complex story, and its main outlines were already clear. Mynors's introduction, written in English though originally drafted in Latin, sheds new light mainly on the later manuscripts; it does not solve the most pressing problem, the disentangling of the exact process

of the expansion of Cassiodorus's original text. That remains unsolved, perhaps insoluble. It was the manuscripts that held Mynors's attention most closely. He travelled widely to see them ('the Laurenziana and Ambrosiana came since I last wrote—I entered them in fear and trembling': Hunt 30.7.33), though he seems oddly not to have at this stage visited such great collections as those at the Vatican, Munich and Leiden. His sole aim, he wrote, was 'to establish the relationship of the manuscripts to one another, and to provide at last the materials for a text that can be trusted'. Much remained to be done from other angles, as a tart review in *Gnomon* pointed out. Mynors's disclaimer of the requisite knowledge for a commentary was not mere modesty. But an appended translation and notes on the difficulties of interpretation would have added to the utility of the volume immeasurably.

The book finally appeared in 1937, after characteristic delay in the final stages and proofs. It was always Mynors's custom to work with passion on what he was interested in at the moment, but then, its back broken, to turn to new projects. On this occasion the tempting Siren took the shape of English medieval library catalogues. Even before the departure of his pupil Richard Hunt to research under Lehmann at Munich he had discussed this matter with him. And on Hunt's return, first to Oxford and then to a job in Liverpool, the two became deeply involved in a scheme that ultimately arose from a study published by M. R. James in 1922 of a fifteenth-century bibliographer known to him as John Boston of Bury St Edmunds. The chequered history of this project has been authoritatively told by Sir Richard Southern in his memoir of Hunt (*P.B.A.* lxvii [1981], 378–89) and does not need to be repeated here. A vast amount of work was done, but its fruits were slow to appear. One was the first edition, in 1941, of *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*, the work of Neil Ker, another Etonian palaeographer, whom Mynors first met in 1935, and who with Hunt and Mynors became pivotal in the reshaping of British medieval studies described in Southern's memoir. The original 'Boston' project lost impetus around 1937, when Mynors began to express despair at its endless ramifications. He occasionally harked back to it after the war, and he contributed a chapter on it to the Saxl Festschrift in 1957. But he and Hunt were glad, after they had both retired, to hand over their dossiers to Richard and Mary Rouse in 1974. In 1981 the Academy adopted the Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, a series foreseen by Mynors in the early thirties, and he took a keen interest in the progress of the first volume, K. W. Humphreys's *The Friars' Libraries* (1990). The second is the Rouses' *Registrum Anglie de libris doctorum et auctorum veterum*, 'the text established by R. A. B. Mynors' (1991). Its first chapter tells the absorbing tale of the long battle with this recalcitrant material, and

records the part played not only by Roger Mynors but also by his brother Humphrey, who, as we know from a letter to Hunt (17.5.37), had 'plotted the complete order of monasteries on an outline map stolen from the Bank of England', cracking the code of the library numbers.

Mynors took his first Balliol manuscript from its shelf in 1926. He became the college's Librarian in 1929, and was soon at work on the manuscripts. The bulk of the first draft of the Catalogue was done by 1940, but the usual delays, caused partly by the desire to amass comparative material from Oxford and Cambridge college libraries, postponed publication until 1963. It is deeply indebted, as Mynors frequently acknowledged, to Hunt and Ker. One qualified to judge it says that 'it represents a high-water mark of thoroughness and detail which will, largely for economic reasons, probably never be surpassed'. It is strong where James would have been weak, in the treatment of obscure scholastic texts; but it suffers from its minimal index (something that remained on Mynors's conscience). His ideal was 'a catalogue in three dimensions, not just the bibliographer's flatland' (Thomson 16.9.83), and the most striking feature of the extended introduction is a detailed treatment of the life and books of William Gray: 'the more I think of Wm. Gray,' he wrote to Hunt in 1935, 'the more interesting his collection gets for Kulturgeschichte, as a mixture' (5.4.35). Mynors's only published article fills in a detail of Gray's story, and incidentally provides another point of contact with the work of M. R. James. The Catalogue illuminates its author's dictum that 'more and more, I attach chiefest importance to *Form* in publication of this kind' (Hunt 2.12.37). And Eduard Fraenkel used to read it aloud to his wife.

The Durham Catalogue was conceived later than the Balliol, but published much earlier (in 1939). It took its rise from a letter from the Dean in 1935 'saying they can't yet afford a regular librarian, but could I be induced to go and work a few weeks in the Library this summer and report on it anything that occurs to me' (Hunt 30.4.35). The Dean was Mynors's old Head Master, C. A. Alington, who had moved from Eton, with seventeen furniture vans, in 1933; and M. R. James no doubt also had a hand in the arrangement. We soon hear of a 'preliminary memorandum on publication of Durham MSS . . . which has gone down all right so far and is to be discussed with MRJ' (Hunt 10.8.35). The project began as a series of reproductions of early Durham manuscripts, for which Mynors was to provide brief notes, but it expanded to include descriptions of all the older manuscripts at Durham or associated with it. The collection has its grandeurs ('now for Lindisfarne Gospels!—shall I have to wear morning-dress?': Hunt 18.1.38), and no fewer than eleven books still at Durham precede the ninth century. Hence the excitement with which Mynors greeted the appearance of *Codices Latini Antiquiores* II (Great

Britain and Ireland): 'I got my copy as they came to the Press depot at 5.30 p.m. on Dec. 31st, so they only just made 1935' (Hunt 3.1.36), and his copy bears his comment 'the first copy in circulation'. He had attended some of Lowe's seminars in Oxford (one term with Fraenkel and one other), and repaid his debt by compiling two of the indexes to the whole series that appear in the Supplement of 1971. The Durham Catalogue itself is produced more lavishly even than *C.L.A.*, and paints a uniquely vivid picture of a rich twelfth-century library. Later, in 1956, Mynors wrote about the Stonyhurst Gospel for a Durham publication, *The Relics of St Cuthbert*.

Two general comments may be made on this flood of work on late and medieval topics. One is to stress the unremitting industry it entailed. An editor today is bound to spend long hours of collation, but, thanks to comparatively cheap and easily available microfilms he can often do this in convenient instalments in the comfort of his study. Sixty years ago, it was possible to obtain 'rotographs' of manuscripts, but they were almost prohibitively expensive. The alternative was prolonged work in libraries. 'Last Thursday, I left here [Ross on Wye] before breakfast and drove over to Cambridge for one night. It took just 10/11 hours steady going to check Sister J.'s transcript of Peterhouse 169 . . .' (Hunt 7.10.35; it is true that even after the war Mynors preferred to see and collate his books *in situ*). Nor should the transformation wrought by the advent of the Xerox machine be forgotten. 'Many thanks for the de Ghellinck article,' Mynors wrote to Hunt in 1936. 'It must have been a bore copying it out' (25.10.36).

Second, the concentration on post-classical matters set up a tension that continued in one form or another until Mynors's retirement. It seemed less urgent in 1933: 'Meanwhile I've read nothing—certainly no Mods work;—but am in the middle of Raby . . . and Lehmann's "Johannes Sichardus" . . . And Cyprian's letters' (Hunt 30.7.33). By 1937 he is writing: 'I don't want to go on with Boston indefinitely; my University lectureship *in Classics* weighs on my conscience . . . I *must* read the classics and get down to those Georgics' (24.3.37). From Harvard in 1938 he wrote: 'Virgil worries me deeply . . . There is such a temptation to try a big edn. of Ecl. & Georgics, and I feel (rightly or wrongly) I could do one, up to the standard, say, of Butler and Barber's Propertius: but that's not really good enough for Virgil, and it would mean dropping for good all this messing about with MSS, which I'm very loth to do' (Hunt 24.10.38). Matters were made worse by his acceptance of the Jowett Lectureship at Balliol in 1940 'on condition of working at a specified *classical* subject with a view to publication': 'I have specified the Ecl. and Georgics, and am very excited about them' (Hunt 7.2.40). We shall see the theme developing.

Despite Mynors's evident bias towards medieval studies, he was

considered for purely classical jobs in the thirties. He found it easy enough to refuse to think of the editorship of *Classical Review* in 1935 and the Latin chair at Manchester in 1936. But he was more torn in 1939 over the possibility of a Readership in Palaeography, a plan apparently originating in F. M. Powicke: 'A stormy scene with Fraenkel on Tuesday over the readership in palaeography, as I expected. I fear he is right, that it would mean giving up any hope of being good at Latin (uncle Ed. offered me the reversion of the chair at either Oxford or Cambridge, neither of which I want, needless to say), and that I must refuse; but I daren't face FMP' (Hunt 3.3.39). Such things are unsettling, and Mynors had been unsettled enough by a few months in Harvard (Sept. 1938 – Jan. 1939). He lectured there on Lucretius as well as Virgil, and seems to have done a good deal of purely classical reading. '. . . do not look forward to returning to the round of Greek and Latin proses again . . . how extraordinary it is to live in an atmosphere in which it's taken for granted that everyone is writing an article, if not a book' (Hunt 24.10.38). The stay at Harvard was a success in itself, and it was prefaced by an exciting hurricane in New England and followed by a trip across the States to California. But it eventually became clear that he had been invited as a trial run for the succession to E. K. Rand's chair: 'Roger felt embarrassed not to be able to accept; he thought that perhaps he was there under false pretenses.' On his return he found 'Oxford is awful hard to settle into after Harvard. Feeling much is expected of one makes one about twice as good at the job; return here, where you are a nobody, and you behave like a nobody. Nor can you even keep warm. . . . But I shall get into my stride again soon' (Hunt 22.2.39). So, it seems, he did, and he found his 1939 freshmen 'as intelligent and attractive a lot as I have ever had to teach, and gloriously determined to have a crack at the humanities while they can' (Hunt 22.10.39). They included A. E. Douglas, D. F. Pears and D. A. F. M. Russell. But Balliol was upside down, the Library 'piled in two sitting-rooms, to make way for the books and press-cutting files of Chatham House which has taken over most of the College' (Hunt 16.9.39). The world was upside down too. In June 1940 Mynors went to the Exchange Control Department of the Treasury as a temporary Principal.

His first lodgings were in Margaretta Terrace, Chelsea; but he soon moved to Chelsea Square, to live with his old Eton fag, Balliol pupil and friend Anthony Wagner (now Sir Anthony Wagner, Clarenceux King of Arms), two maids, billeted sailors, and a barrage balloon. The Treasury demanded long hours of hard work ('9.30 to 8 in a steam-heated room': Ker 9.2.41).

Mynors is said to have been concerned variously with the coining of Maria Theresa dollars to pay Ethiopians, the financing of the Vatican, and the establishment of the Deutschmark. He for some time belonged to the Home Guard. In the evenings he fought fires, and sang with Wagner songs from the Oxford Songbook. He characteristically became interested in heraldry, and during a precious week's leave in 1943 cycled round Herefordshire churches 'for Papworth'. There was little time for scholarship of other kinds. '. . . plan notes on the Eclogues in bed at night' (Hunt 18.5.42). But by 1944, no doubt stimulated by Galbraith's plans for Nelson Medieval Classics, he is reading for the first time Bede, Jocelin of Brakelond and Walter Map ('and was ravished by them all') and 'am now wallowing in Aldhelm' (Hunt 21.3.44). The tension between classics and medieval studies was eased by an ingenious argument: 'reading the Classics is a responsible affair, not to be undertaken by one half asleep after a day in the office which seems to get longer and longer' (ibid.). And, though Oxford started to re-assert itself (Mynors seems to have become a Curator of Bodley for a short time in 1944), that only added to the temptations: 'as long as there are College MSS uncatalogued, I shall be half torn from my Classics by the lust to go a whoring after them' (ibid.).

But Oxford had to wait; for in 1944 Mynors, on the persuasion of Eduard Fraenkel, accepted the offer of the Kennedy Chair of Latin at Cambridge. He left the Treasury in January 1945, and moved 'resentfully' to Cambridge almost at once. 'My mandate is to revive Latin studies.' But Galbraith provided the other side of the equation, adding a new twist: 'You go to Cambridge to do two things, publish the Balliol catalogue, and get married' (Hunt 26.11.44).

Marriage was the speedier matter. When C. A. Alington became Head Master of Eton in 1917, his daughter Lavinia was six. Her brother Giles was to become a Fellow of University College, Oxford, and a sister, Elizabeth, later married Alec Douglas-Home. Their mother, 'a truly remarkable person' (with whom Roger Mynors was later 'besotted'), was a daughter of the fourth Lord Lyttelton. 'Her way of expressing herself was unique' (to quote Lord Home again), and not only when she was employing the private language of the Glynnes, the Lytteltons and the Gladstones, 'Glynnese'. Lavinia was, and is, no less remarkable, and no less idiosyncratic in her expression. She had taken a first in Mods in 1931, and then changed to medicine. Roger was acquainted with her over a long period. By 1940 he was appealing to his family for advice: he wanted to marry Lavinia, but did not wish to upset her career. Late in the war, two trips by Lavinia to Cambridge sealed the friendship. They were married in Durham Cathedral on 12 December 1945. No one who saw them together later in life could doubt their entire happiness in each other's high qualities.

The couple soon moved into a 'half-house' (1A Belvoir Terrace, Trumpington Road): 'staining floors and screwing up coathooks does seem to take a lot of time' (Hunt 18.5.46). But Mynors had for some time been concerned with the practicalities of a far bigger property. 'In the same week of hearing I was to become a Civil Servant, I heard I was also become a squire, with a country house and some 1250 acres of farmland and woods, best part of a small village; the house built (by my father's family) not later than s.XV and with some charm' (Hunt 18.5.42). This was Treago, near St Weonards, south of Hereford, inherited from a cousin, a high-spirited and (in her youth) adventurous lady. The house at first continued to be let; it was occupied from 1950 to 1958 by Lavinia's parents, and from 1958 until 1969 by Roger's sister. At first it was the estate that engrossed: '. . . planning farm water supply and other improvements, in which my whole heart is, could one only raise the money and the labour' (Hunt 29.9.43). 'I have developed a perfectly hopeless passion for milking sheds' (Hunt 23.10.45). 'I am turning a derelict brewhouse into a milking-shed, sign of the times?' (Hunt 28.8.48). Later, the house itself claimed attention: 'we took over possession of my Country Seat on 1st Jan., which needs Any Amount doing to it and takes a bit of time' (Hunt 18.1.51). Throughout Mynors's professorships Treago took time, and gave deepening pleasure.

Mynors never hid the sense of loss he felt in going to Cambridge. It was, it seems, the teaching he missed, and the life of a tutorial fellow. In Cambridge 'I am expected to supervise two men researching in Propertius (heaven help them) and lecture on the textual criticism of the last five satires of Juvenal and examine every year unpaid in University Scholarships . . . and never see an ordinary pupil, nor what is worse have any contact with the ordinary life in College such as alone makes it possible to play any part in the Collegiate system' (Watt 17.11.46). Phrases such as 'a bad dream', 'rent from my beloved Balliol', 'fundamental error', 'idiot mistake' recur in his letters to the end of his life; and he even toyed with re-applying for his old job at Balliol should it fall vacant. He was made a fellow of Pembroke; a colleague was Sir Ellis Minns, his twin's father-in-law, himself a distinguished palaeographer. But 'one takes a little time to get used to a small college at Cambridge full of strangers however friendly in lieu of a large College in Oxford full of friends (however strange), with the added embarrassment of being professor in a subject with which I am but imperfectly acquainted' (Hunt 19.2.45). Against such a background, his failure in 1949 to become Master of Balliol in succession to A. D. Lindsay must have been a sore blow. In the final stage, 14 voted for D. L. Keir, 13 for Mynors. He seems later to have declined a Cambridge headship.

A further objection to Cambridge was, not that it was dominated by scientists, but that the arts dons were, in Mynors's view, so spiritless a

minority. Spirit, too, he found lacking in the Library Syndicate, on which, as on the Fitzwilliam Museum Syndicate, he was active. Personally, however, Mynors found the University Library, and the college libraries that James had catalogued, a standing temptation. There was also talk of a 'composite catalogue' of manuscripts in Oxford college libraries. Pleading to himself that he was looking for comparative material for the Balliol catalogue, he was a familiar figure in Cambridge libraries ('my entertainment at the moment . . . is the MSS of Peterhouse . . . I check MRJ's descriptions with what care I can': Hunt 13.8.46). A fruit was his contribution on Peterhouse book-markers to the Powicke Festschrift. Later 'this summer I've put all I had into helping Pink with the Cat. of Add. MSS in ULC' (Hunt 8.9.48). Not surprisingly 'I am in considerable difficulty over the split between bibliography and classics; hope to keep both going by devoting the afternoons only to MSS' (Hunt 3.3.45, with an ambiguously placed 'only'). Or again: 'efforts to close down the medieval Department of RABM have recently received a series of rude knocks' (Hunt 8.10.46). Work on the Balliol catalogue, even so, remained fitful. Towards the end of his time, Mynors began to have the manuscripts removed to Cambridge in batches; but the catalogue appeared only in 1963. It seems only to have been in Oxford that Mynors seriously began to redress the balance with classics; and he produced almost nothing in either field over his own name while at Cambridge.

That does not mean that he was unproductive. A great part of his energies was devoted to Nelson's Medieval Classics (later Texts), from 1967 Oxford Medieval Texts. Though this association extended long after his return to Oxford, the story may conveniently be told as a whole here.

The series took its rise from a meeting in an Edinburgh club. V. H. Galbraith, Professor of History in Edinburgh from 1937 to 1944, was having a drink with H. P. Morrison, once a director of United Steel in Sheffield, now Managing Director of Nelson's. Galbraith turned down the idea of a history of England under his editorship, but suggested instead a series of medieval texts with facing translations. Morrison agreed, and Galbraith became General Editor on condition that Mynors joined to provide the Latin expertise. He agreed in 1946. The partnership, distinguished as it was, did not always flow easily. Galbraith was not convinced of the need for newly edited texts ('you can toss it off in the Long Vac.'); Mynors, aware of the shortcomings of some historians in Latin and in acquaintance with manuscripts, tended, at least where a book interested him, to take over the text for himself. But there was full agreement on the scope of the series. 'Vivian's most emphatic point in the beginning (and how right he was!) was that unless people have English to face their texts, they will give up reading their texts altogether, and his second point was that the texts

must be complete. . . . At first nothing was said about *historical* texts but with Vivian's background it was inevitable that they should predominate' (Brooke 20.8.65). Mynors thought of it as 'a series of which I like my friends (some history dons and some classical schoolmasters) to ask me "What's your next one going to be?"' Standards were to be high, but 'we try never to become *inhumane*' (Brooke 31.12.65). Towards the end of the joint editorship, Mynors was complaining that he was more and more becoming the general administrator, particularly during 'that awful year when VHG went off to California leaving EIGHT volumes in various stages on my table' (Brooke 14.10.59): 'VHG, as you can imagine, doesn't give [the programming of the series] two minutes' thought' (Brooke 15.3.59). C. N. L. Brooke, joining the General Editors in 1959, did not have an easy ride. Mynors seemed happy neither to be consulted nor to be bypassed. In 1962 it was announced that Mynors would now be only an 'advisory editor'; yet four years later he was still complaining to Galbraith about the amount of work he was doing for the series: 'it's not the tedium of all this I mind, though sometimes excruciating; it's the way it interferes with the work I am really supposed, and am paid, to do, like editing Virgil. . . . I am really borne down by it all' (Galbraith 16.10.66). Previous resignations from the editorship had been smoothed over, partly because, though a new Latinist was clearly desirable, 'Galbraith won't have one'. As late as 1970, Mynors was writing: 'I propose to RESIGN AGAIN when I reach retirement age this Fall' (Brooke 2.2.70); and the replacement of both Galbraith and Mynors followed. But for all the later difficulties, which show how the balance of Mynors's interest was at last turning decisively to classics, the series was close to his heart: 'the fact that I was privileged to help [Morrison and Galbraith] on the Latin side meant a great deal to me' (Brooke 16.5.75).

Mynors's participation in the books published in the series varied greatly. His remark to the Classical Association that 'I have been privileged occasionally to help one or two medieval colleagues with the technical aspects of their texts' is a marked understatement. With some of the editions, like Charles Johnson's *Hugh the Chanter* (1961), he regrettably seems to have had nothing to do. But in several others he collated the manuscript or manuscripts involved, often establishing the text, constructing the apparatus, and writing an account of the tradition under his own name: so H. E. Butler's *Jocelin of Brakelond* (1949), F. M. Powicke's *Life of Ailred of Rievaulx* (1950), K. R. Potter's *Historia Novella* (1955), Charles Johnson's *De Moneta* (1956), and Rosalind Hill's *Gesta Francorum* (1962). Mynors played a crucial part in Potter's *Gesta Stephani* (1955). At an advanced stage of the edition, which was then based on an early printed text, Mynors found, in a Valenciennes MS he was consulting

for the continental version of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum*, a more complete text of the chronicle; this he collated, transcribing the new material. He gave 'many marvellous supervisions' to Christopher Brooke when he was at work, from 1952, on the first volume of the Letters of John of Salisbury: 'when he had worked out that the marginal numbers in Claudius B.ii related to another collection of John's letters he was so excited he had to leave the MS room and walk round the courtyard before he could resume work.' He gave important help to J. H. Harvey in his *Itineraries* of William Worcestre (1969). And he felt especially close to C. R. Dodwell's edition of Theophilus's *De Diversis Artibus* (1961): 'it is one of the few volumes that are all my own invention (including the editor)' (Brooke 28.3.60).

Two texts named Mynors on the title-page. The later, Map's *De Nugis*, had its roots far in the past. When retyping the Latin in 1965, Mynors remarked that he had been at work on it thirteen years before (Brooke 31.12.65), and long delays were still to ensue before it was finally published in 1983. The book was close to Mynors's heart, not merely because 'the patron of Map's living of Westbury-on-Severn was *Roger de Miners*—doubtless an old Herefordshire chum' (ibid.), but especially because it was a revision of M. R. James. Brooke's notes and introduction completely replaced James's. Mynors's text improves on James in exploiting the evidence of seven English manuscripts of the *Dissuasio Valerii*, which had been published separately by Map. And he contrived delicate pastiches of James's style for passages in the translation ('the best English trans. I know of any Latin text': Brooke 14.10.59) which had been left in the obscurity of the learned language.

More important was Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. 'I have also been thinking about Bede's *History* for the Medieval classics, to be edited probably by B. Colgrave (with some help from me on the collations?)' (Hunt 23.7.52). In the event Colgrave did the translation, Mynors the text. This is no place to rehearse the unhappy story of their collaboration. Colgrave died before the volume appeared in 1969, and Mynors was left feeling he had been pressed into premature publication. 'I *loathe* my introduction, and already have a lot to add to it' (Galbraith 29.9.66). The project was perhaps misconceived from the start. The text, as Mynors readily admitted, hardly differs from Plummer's, and the apparatus is starved of material (Mynors was looking forward to spreading himself further in a volume of *Corpus Christianorum* that never materialised). We are left with a masterly survey of the tradition of the book from the eighth to the fifteenth century, the fruit not only of Mynors's own expertise but of his ripened association with the great Bernhard Bischoff, whom he had known at least as early as 1937.

Mynors also contributed to the Preface of the facsimile of the Moore Bede (Copenhagen, 1959).

Even this is not the end of Mynors's medieval work. A major effort went into the long and intriguing text of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum*. Stubbs had long ago recognised the existence of three versions of this history, at least two of them authorial. Mynors found in a hitherto unexamined manuscript at Troyes what he saw to be a fourth: it is chronologically the first, and forms the basis on which the A-text was founded around 1125. The Troyes version is closely related to an abbreviated continental tradition of the *Gesta*, whose witnesses Mynors was investigating when he stumbled on the new *Gesta Stephani*. The history of the project is characteristic. 'We still hope to find someone ready to do *G.R.* for the "Medieval Classics"' (Hunt 14.9.52, written when he was just about to go to Troyes), followed by 'VHG is trying to bully me into translating the *Gesta Regum* for Nelson's, with notes by himself (!)' (Hunt 21.11.52). In the end Mynors both edited and translated the long book. The notes were to be by Sir Richard Southern; but the scheme had become becalmed as early as 1961. Mynors typed out the final pages of the translation in his last years, when he was handing over the whole to a new triumvirate. It is his first extended essay at an art that came more and more to absorb him. William he regarded very highly; and, as with Map, there was a family connection—one manuscript of the *G.R.* describes a suit in the King's court between the monks of Gloucester and Gilbert de Mineriis.

Mynors's letters occasionally refer to active if temporary interest in other medieval authors. 'Alistair Campbell tackled me the other day about Ethelwulf's poem on those Northumbrian abbots (of which I have actually made a new text myself, but have no wish to publish it)' (Brooke 5.5.64); Campbell's edition was judged unsuitable for N.M.T., and was diverted to the Oxford University Press. Or again: 'Collated half the CCCC transcript of Asser last week—we shall be able to improve Stevenson's text here and there' (Brooke 21.5.62: this refers to a proposed edition of Asser by Galbraith himself; but nothing came of the idea). Mynors also made some progress (especially in 1949) with the Latin version of the Shepherd of Hermas, and did some abortive work on the Latin Aristotle.

To complete the picture of Mynors's medieval work, something should be said about his association with the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*. The story of this project is told by H. C. Johnson in the Preface to the first fascicule (1975). Mynors had long been a member of the committee, and he was a prime mover in the adoption of the dictionary by the Academy in 1963 and in the setting up of a new committee to oversee its progress. For many years his correspondence

with the Dictionary concerned slipping he was doing for it, very far from a mere mechanical labour, considering the nature of the texts in question, the *Hisperica Famina* and the Glossaries. Finally, in 1967, 'the Academy have told me to be Chairman of the Med.Lat.Dict.Ctee, and of course I have said yes, tho' I wish they had appointed someone more useful' (Johnson 9.3.67). He was an admirable chairman, tactful but expeditious; behind the scenes he was warmly supportive of R. E. Latham and his successor as Editor, D. R. Howlett: 'I think about you a good deal and wish you well with all my heart' (Howlett 22.9.73). He resigned as chairman in 1973, and left the committee in 1977. He also frequently attended the annual meetings of the Union Académique Internationale, which amongst other things coordinates European medieval Latin dictionaries, and was its president in 1955.

Mynors returned to Oxford as Corpus Professor of Latin in 1953. He and Lavinia lived at 14A Merton Street, where, after 8 a.m. service at the University Church, young relations (of whom he was passionately fond) would foregather for a morning's talk and Sunday lunch. Mynors rarely visited Balliol, and even during his work on the college glass for the Academy's Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi tended to slip in anonymously. At Corpus the Common Room was a markedly classical place. Mynors's predecessor, Eduard Fraenkel, of whom he always spoke with the deepest admiration, was constantly in the college till his death in 1970, and dinner was often dominated by him, the other resident classicists, the President W. F. R. Hardie, R. G. M. Nisbet and Hugh Lloyd-Jones, and their guests. Mynors did not continue the famous classes held by Fraenkel, who indeed did not stop them on his retirement. He was not an enthusiastic examiner. But he showed his customary speed and courtesy in chairing the Sub-faculty of Languages and Literature. He lectured still on the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*. It is difficult adequately to convey the fascination he commanded even for the less enthusiastic lecture-goer. He seemed to have no notes, and did not disdain a touch of the histrionic; his voice, with its attractive timbre, filled the vast School with no effort. Those who expected answers to the 'problems' that loomed so large in the then Virgil special subject were disappointed. Instead, and more importantly, they heard the mature reflections of one who loved his author and loved the countryside he described. One was advised to go to the Parks to look for specimens of a plant or tree. There were charactistic dicta, informative ('tom-cats with pink eyes are invariably deaf') or mildly polemical ('questions one is often asked by people who ought to know the answers by now'). It was all very

unfamiliar. Mynors also had research students, though not very many. He was not interested in reading drafts or even completed theses. If one asked advice one was invited to dinner at Corpus, introduced to legendary figures, and taken back to Mynors's room for disquisition on his own researches. He taught—perhaps not even with any conscious intent—by being himself, lucid, wonderfully wide in learning, unaffected, enthusiastic, drawing the uninitiated into a conspiracy of scholarship. One went away without the answer to the question, but heartened to press on.

It was from Oxford that Mynors produced the distinguished succession of Oxford texts that were during his lifetime the sole fruit of his purely classical scholarship. The Virgil naturally posed special problems. But the others are marked by a determination to be personally familiar with as many manuscripts as possible, to give their evidence in brief and elegant form, and to print a text that is, within the conditions set by the different traditions, neither over-conservative nor startlingly innovative. Himself disinclined to emend, Mynors felt strongly that the conjectures of others, especially when enshrined in manuscripts, should be properly attributed. Where other editors might shelter behind the stigma, he cited a manuscript and if possible a name. Of one admirable corrector of the *Panegyrics* he says: 'cuius nomen pudet me nescire'.

The attribution of emendations, particularly those dating from the fifteenth century, is perhaps the most valuable feature of the first text, the Catullus (1958). Eight groups of emending manuscripts, ordered by date, are distinguished by Greek letters; a reviewer calculated that of 800 emendations admitted to the text, no less than 322 are thus attributed to Renaissance manuscripts. This part of Mynors's work has not been much improved. Higher up the stemma complaint was made at the time, and a good deal of work, not all trending in the same direction, has been done since. Mynors naturally relied on three manuscripts, all known to previous editors but never so well reported, the Oxoniensis, to the facsimile of which (Leiden, 1966) Mynors contributed a Latin preface, G and R. Philip Levine's review judged that Mynors 'errs gravely' in not distinguishing in R the hands of the 'variants and other additions by one or more hands different from that of the first scribe', especially as one of the correctors seems to be Coluccio Salutati, the known owner of the book. The offence is hardly heinous in an apparatus of such conscious brevity, whatever view is taken on the still disputed matter of the corrections in R; the technical considerations involved are largely, if not entirely, irrelevant to the establishment of the text. Descending the stemma again, Mynors had said that all the other manuscripts (of which he had handled more than eighty) 'a codicibus OGR originem aut duxerunt aut, quod nobis idem ualet, duxisse possunt'. That is mere assertion, and one feels here

the need for a supporting monograph, that could also have given what Levine missed, discussion of the reasons for at least some of Mynors's textual choices.

That Mynors should depart in eight hundred places from the reading of the lost Veronensis does not, in so corrupt a tradition, make his text innovative. Even the edition later produced by G.P. Goold, though as a whole markedly unlike any text of Catullus ever published, does not print anything that had not been somewhere proposed before. It seems clear that Mynors could profitably have mentioned more rejected conjectures than he does. Several reviewers attributed the brevity of his apparatus, in this and other respects, to the strict conventions of the Oxford Classical Text series. In fact, the austerity would appear to have been self-imposed. Instructions were (and are) not issued to editors in this series, and the precedents could have led in another direction: Mynors's predecessor for Catullus, Robinson Ellis, had produced an apparatus of 'opulent confusion' (so D. F. S. Thomson; compare Mynors's own remark, in a letter to Hunt dated 3.3.45, on *Catalepton* 13.21: 'a very obscene passage, I fear, but not as revolting or as unnaturally vicious as Ellis's apparatus'). It is difficult to imagine that if Mynors had wished to provide a fuller apparatus he would have met with any obstacles from the Press.

Mynors prints no emendations of his own: 'mihi nec doctrinam neque ingenium ad [uersus deprauatos] tandem enucleandos suffecisse uix est cur moneam.' Reviewers found this excessively modest, but the words seem to conceal a life-long distaste for textual emendation. Even in the editing of medieval texts from unique manuscripts, Mynors was very slow to apply his own remedies, and the emendations printed in his *Panegyrics* come as something of a surprise (though even in 1948, re-reading his own Jocelin of Brakelond, he remarks: 'I think on looking thro' it again I was too conservative in the text' (Hunt 8.9.48). It was as though the meticulous establishment of the *lectio tradita* exhausted his curiosity as to what the author actually wrote. His judgement on the changes made by others was praised by as radical a critic as Goold, but he seems to have felt no impulse to continue along the path they had shown.

In 1963 came the Letters of the Younger Pliny. The tangled tale of how the scholars of the Renaissance built up their knowledge of this text from a nucleus of a hundred letters to a complete corpus is told in some detail in Mynors's preface. He begins and ends by acknowledging his debt to others: there was room only 'ut hic illic zizanium aliquod euellatur e segete'. That is not mere modesty. The outline of the story had been known to Keil already in 1870, and many details had been filled in by

Merrill and by Stout (Mynors's review of whose edition seems to be the only review he ever wrote). It was left to Mynors to assert firmly, but again without argument, that the old Paris manuscript lying behind the β family is partly available to us in the sixth-century fragment in the Morgan Library in New York; that this is so cannot, naturally, be seen from Mynors's apparatus, in which β is eliminated where Π is present, but comparison with Keil's makes the point clear. He was also able to find a superior witness to the elusive θ tradition, and to fit a number of subsidiary manuscripts into the general picture. Though Mynors 'shows his working' to an unusual extent in the Preface, a more extended treatment of certain aspects would still have been welcome. Reviewers commented justly on the way in which Mynors merely *tells* us what γ read (again Keil's apparatus helps to show what lies behind the scenes). As for the text, if Mynors was too mechanical in following the indications of his stemma in choosing between variants, it is only very rarely that this might seem to be leading him into serious error.

The labours involved in this edition must have been prodigious, given Mynors's determination to handle as many of the manuscripts as possible and considering the work implied by the simple word *contuli* for a text of such length. The fact that at the same time he was completing an edition of the *Panegyric* of Pliny, together with the eleven encomia associated with it in a tradition quite different from that of the letters, is little short of miraculous. This text appeared only a year after the other; Mynors had typed out every word on his ancient typewriter, as was sometimes his custom with medieval texts, to provide a clean copy for what he felt was a long-suffering Press. It is true that the tradition was a good deal less complex here, and that the main lines of it had again been laid down by predecessors, principally the Baehrens, father and son. Mynors, again concerned to inspect the books where at all possible, was able to fit further manuscripts into the picture, and he brings new order to one corner of the stemma by assuming (without any full statement of the evidence) the descent of the Cluj manuscript from Harley 2480 and of the Uppsala manuscript from the Cluj. A favourable review in *Gnomon* praised his re-collation of the sixth-century fragment in Milan, and his judgement of the worth of Cuspinianus's edition. The text, about which historians occasionally express reservations, is marked by an unusual efflorescence of the editor's own emendations, which are often, though by no means always, prompted or supported by rhythmical considerations. In all his work on Pliny, Mynors gave proper weight to clausulae, internal as well as final, and tried so far as possible to let the punctuation follow the rhythm.

The final fruit of these *anni mirabiles* was a new O.C.T. of Virgil, to

replace Hirtzel's of 1900, whose judgements, as well as whose plates, had become worn with time. 'Restat fere integer poeta: *non illum nostri possunt mutare labores*', writes the editor in one of several felicitous quotations from his author. But the apparatus, discumbered of ancient junk, gives, besides succinct citation of secondary evidence and convenient indication of the witnesses available at each point, readings from a dozen ninth-century manuscripts. That these ω-texts occasionally anticipate later conjecture or agree with the indirect tradition against the capital books does not seem to give them an independent value that could stand opposed to the old witnesses; nor does Mynors's practice suggest that even he thought they did. It would seem that his investigation of the ninth-century tradition might more elegantly have been hived off into an article or monograph, clearing the apparatus of a good deal of unnecessary material. At the same time, Mynors did not look systematically at later manuscripts, and here alone he is content with the general 'recc.'. As to the text, the occasional acceptance of a modern conjecture is a proper reminder that there is nothing sacrosanct about the text of Virgil: although the fact that the *Aeneid* was left unfinished and unrevised makes that a special case.

It is perhaps not unfair to say that these four texts are only in minor ways improvements on their predecessors in their treatment of the manuscript tradition, and that their apparatuses, though technically superior, are hobbled by their brevity. It should be emphasised that the prime merit of all four lies in their unfailing application of mature *iudicium*. Only close working with the texts and their apparatuses, and careful comparison with rival editions, will show the care that Mynors took over every aspect of the editor's task.

Such were the fruits of the second period at Oxford. Mynors largely forewent the delights of bibliography, at least once the Balliol Catalogue was published, and his passion for manuscripts diverted itself into the laborious investigation of the tradition of classical authors. But quite apart from this, the round of professorial duty and the constant call of Treago, Mynors lived a busy life, one that does much to explain his well-known elusiveness. He was frequently abroad on the business of the Academy. He gave the Jackson lectures at Harvard in 1966 (and failed to make a book of them). He acted as Curator of the Bodleian Library from 1953 to at least 1971, and was chairman of the Standing Committee of the Curators for many years. His retirement from his chair was marked by an exhibition 'Duke Humfrey and English Humanism in the Fifteenth Century'. In the Foreword to the Catalogue Robert Shackleton wrote: 'His energy, enthusiasm and imagination have been applied to housekeeping details not less than to the occasional purchase of a splendid manuscript. He has

placed many members of the Library staff in his debt, and none more so, or more lastingly, than the Librarian. His confidence in the future of the Library has matched his loyalty to its past.' Finally, he was on the literary panel of the New English Bible (first published as a whole in 1970). Some of the meetings were held in the Tower Room at Treago, where the translation of Job was completed. 'I had two solid days last week in the Chapter House of St Paul's, translating the Prophet Jeremiah—how's that for an alibi?' (Brooke 12.4.60).

Mynors wrote in 1963: '. . . until we retire and go and live in our country seat, as Lavinia always maintains we shall' (Brooke 24.7.63). Lavinia was right. Having for some years camped in the adjacent stables, they finally moved into the big house in 1970, together with Roger's mother, who lived on for another four years, Humphrey, and Humphrey's wife Marian. The house is big, but intimate. 'We live what they call simply. If such a thing is possible' (Winterbottom 30.4.87). Under a strict division of labour, Lavinia was cook. Roger was in his study by 7 every morning, and worked there till lunch (and often at night also). But the afternoons he always spent, whatever the weather, out of doors; often he was not home till dark, sometimes to the alarm of the others. The woods on the estate, their nurture, replacement and extension, form a constant background to his scholarship. '. . . young trees don't answer back or criticize—they just grow, and look like outliving one, and get no less beautiful with age—all the things one cannot do oneself' (Hill 25.1.76). It was hard labour: '. . . the unprecedented mildness of the winter which has made it possible, and therefore necessary, to work out of doors (23 acres of young trees to weed . . .)' (Latham 11.1.72); but that came naturally enough to someone who thought nothing of a twenty mile walk in his forties and was still striding up Garway Hill in his last decade. A special concern was the development of 'Roger's stamp-collection', a remarkable arboretum in the Wilderness, which covered old quarry workings above the house.

Apart from endlessly generous hospitality to house-guests, there was the round of local social life: 'a busy time for country-dwellers—nettle-cutting, punctuated by sherry with the high sheriff and the village fête' (Winterbottom 20.6.87), and, in particular, the church. The Mynors regularly attended St Weonards church, where Roger often read the lesson. On two Sundays a month they worshipped at Hereford Cathedral. For fifteen years from 1979, Roger was chairman of the Friends of the Cathedral. He served on the Advisory Committee for the library, and in 1988 a book fund was set up in his name, for the purpose of acquiring

valuable or rare works of permanent interest. The controversy over the proposal to sell the Mappa Mundi darkened his last years. He endeared himself equally to the under-twelves who once listened spell-bound as he talked about a manuscript on which he was working in the chained library, and to a Friend to whom he gave a book ('I think you said this was a gap—may we have the pleasure of filling it?').

The Mynors continued to the end to pay regular visits to the Homes on the Tweed, and to travel abroad, especially in Italy and Spain, living frugally and using local transport. One of the many benefits of his marriage was that Roger was forced to take holidays (Brooke 28.4.71: 'my wife carries me off this week for a fortnight's holiday in Madrid and Toledo'). Before the war, apart from physically and mentally demanding stays at the Chalet, we hear only of a day or two in Langdale ('on high hills in thick cloud mostly and quite deep snow—ice-axes, and I am a new man': Hunt 3.1.36), the result apparently of doctor's orders following 'a very mild sort of brief collapse' in late 1935. Even after the war he was subject to 'a mysterious complaint that proves life-saving every eighteen months or so when I've been slightly overdoing it, in which my temperature goes up (sometimes to 103) and the doctor asks in vain whether I haven't had malaria' (Brooke 1.3.66): nature asserting itself in a very fit man always liable to overwork. 'I don't think I could possibly work harder—it might pay in the long run to take more holidays' (Brooke 5.5.64).

There were, in first retirement, a few remnants of university cares. Mynors continued to lecture at Oxford for some years, and he was also the first Longman Visiting Fellow at the University of Leeds in 1974–5. But after 1978 private research took over completely. Far the most important preoccupation was the Erasmus project. Mynors had, as we have seen, greatly admired M. R. James's translation of Walter Map; and he shows the same rather archaic felicity in the unpublished translation of the *Gesta Regum*. But it may have been his experiences with the New English Bible that particularly turned his thoughts towards the theory of translation, of which he would often speak in his later years. 'Translation as a most perilous and most enjoyable art takes so much of my thoughts these days' (Brooke 5.12.61). He grew more and more convinced that the translator should be flexible, unliteral, bold: 'humble people don't always realise that they *must* adopt a more domineering attitude towards the style or syntax of their author, and bully him into writing English' (Brooke 12.2.60). Translation was, in any case, important for him, as a means of passing on the classical and medieval torch to ages when Latin would be little studied.

Mynors came to Erasmus by way of a short-lived association with the

Amsterdam Erasmus series, for which he edited the *In nucem Ovidii* and the *Libanii declamatiunculae* (1969). But in the same year he took a step that influenced the whole of the rest of his life, by joining a committee whose mandate was to produce a translation of the principal works of Erasmus for the University of Toronto Press. Mynors went out to Toronto annually until 1982, going on to Harvard to stay with Wendell Clausen; he 'became invisible' in Hart House, his natural elusiveness increased by his habit of working by English time, five hours ahead of the local clock. He was responsible for the translation of a very large number of the Letters (some in collaboration with D. F. S. Thomson). But it was in the *Adages* that he found the greatest fulfilment, in facing the challenge of identifying the sources and sorting out from the various editions of Erasmus's work the way in which the collection evolved. The volume of Prolegomena, which would have told the complex story, was never written, but much work was done towards it. As to the translation, two of six volumes have already appeared (one with Mynors's annotations, the other translated and annotated by him): the third was found entire after Mynors's death, and the other three in various stages of completion. His association with the project was marked by an honorary LL.D. at Toronto in 1982.

But the passion for manuscripts was never stifled. When R. M. Thomson was working on the Lincoln catalogue, Mynors wrote to him: 'O how I wish I could help!—am much tempted to slip over to Nottingham for the day, just for the pleasure of having a few nice unknown MSS in my hands and of getting some inkling of what awaits you' (16.9.83). And it was appropriate that Mynors was working on the Hereford manuscripts on the last day of his life (17 October 1989). He had fitfully concerned himself with this local collection, again in the footsteps of M. R. James, who had written the introduction to Bannister's catalogue; and it was a solace in the sad last year. A successful cataract operation had relieved worries about his sight, but others supervened. His brother Humphrey died in the summer of 1989, a grievous blow. The Treago ménage was broken up, and Roger and Lavinia moved back to the newly converted stables. The remains of his last work at Hereford show a failing of powers, and he was distressed at the deterioration of his clear and characterful handwriting; but his joy in life and scholarship remained. Meryl Jancey, the Cathedral's Honorary Archivist, tells how 'on the last day of his life, he left the Library full of pleasure at the thought of the good day he had had, and with plans for what he would turn to next. . . . As he left, we spoke of Bede. He told me he was glad that he had translated for the Oxford Medieval Texts the account of Bede's death, and that Bede had not ceased in what he saw as his work for God until the very end.' Driving

home the few miles to Treago that evening, he was killed instantaneously in a road accident.

The commentary on the *Georgics* was what the classical world had been waiting for from Mynors: and the wait had been a long one. We have already found him talking of the need to 'get down to those Georgics' in 1937, and in 1938 thinking at Harvard of a commentary that would cover the *Eclogues* also. Later, Wendell Clausen took over the *Eclogues*. It is not clear when the bulk of the work on the *Georgics* commentary was done. But it was sent to press in the early eighties, and set up in proof. The delay of several years was caused, it seems, by Mynors's inability to write an introduction; on his death only a few scraps remained. He apparently knew no way in which to express what he felt with an instinctive and deep emotion, the greatness of Virgil's poetry; he was not accustomed to making judgements of that kind, either verbally or on paper. But there was also a characteristic lack of faith in his own work. He repeatedly spoke of the commentary as beta plus, and once, even more dismissively, as 'my famous commentary on the *Georgics*, which was to have been a masterpiece and now looks like an extinct volcano in use as the town tip' (Howlett 9.1.87). There was perhaps also the thought, as the years passed and *Année Philologique* grew thicker with each volume, that his approach was becoming outmoded. When the book was published in 1990 with a brief introduction by his successor at Oxford, R. G. M. Nisbet, it was opened with intense curiosity.

In the event the commentary seems timeless. It eschews any parade of secondary literature (Mynors once wrote to Clausen that his ideal commentary 'would . . . never mention a modern author (other than Pauly Wissowa and *Thes.*) except where one has an obligation to acknowledge—grossly unprofessional conduct'). And it sidesteps the antithesis of pessimism and optimism that has dominated recent work on the poem by stressing the practical and technical side of the *Georgics* (he once told Nicolas Barker that 'he was the latest person to read Virgil for practical advice'): though, beyond that, he regarded 'the subject as Man and his place in Nature etc., with a less attractive (to me) foreground of ethics and politics, for all of which agriculture, weather etc. is the chosen vehicle' (quoted by Clausen). On every page there are signs of Mynors's knowledge of a peopled and cultivated countryside: 'you can still tell a good farmer by the shine on his tools' (on 1.45–6); 'had V. seen the wild-oat standing head-and-shoulders above the crop, as it still does?' (1.154); 'the farmer who sees animals in his grain "damage-feasant", as our lawyers used to say, will mend his fence

in the face of the whole college of pontiffs' (1.270). Mynors might have added to his note on 2.189 the advice he once gave to the writer's wife, with supporting detail: 'Cull bracken on 3 June.' But it is more than the writer's knowledge that comes through. He shares Virgil's *energy*, or imparts his own: 'The effect is almost that of a visit to the fold-yard with our instructor: "You must learn to fumigate all this. Those mangers ought to be moved, or you'll get snakes in here—look, there's a *coluber*, what did I tell you? Down with it! There it goes!"' (3.414). The range of reading is everywhere apparent; and the man 'who could spend all day in front of a picture' brings Delacroix and Claude Lorraine to a discussion of 3.271–9. There is even a reminiscence of the youthful athlete (or oarsman?): 3.105–6 '*haurit*: of that familiar empty feeling before a race'—combined characteristically with a quotation from Tennyson.

The literary criticism is unstated and implicit, in Mynors's habitual manner. He adopts the persona of the moderate and not too adventurous critic: irony glances at the extravagances of 'some sensitive modern ears' (1.491, cf. 328–9). He remains, so far as he can, in the realms of what is there and can be shown; but the commentary places the poem unobtrusively within the cultural heritage of Western Europe. In his lectures, as a perceptive reviewer observed, Mynors 'flattered his hearers by speaking as an educated and passionate lover of poetry to an audience which must surely (he implied) be the same'. This flattery is at work in the commentary also, as it often was in Mynors's conversation. Indeed the book, more than most, talks to us.

Charm was Mynors's most obvious characteristic, and few who met him were untouched by it. His normal manner was mild, even bland. If one said something silly or trivial, he would often not reply, smiling, his head slightly on one side, masking his thoughts. At least till his last years, he was unwilling to speak of the bad or the sad, just as he avoided talk of religion or of the beauties of Virgil. He switched off in the face of stupidity, or from time to time lapsed into memorable anger. Some were frightened of him, some offended by his fitfulness as a correspondent (another Jamesian trait) or by what they saw as his remoteness and occasional insensitivity to their feelings. He had, a colleague wrote, a 'disconcerting way of letting you know that he knew more about you than you had supposed and than you might care to think'. But for many he had a 'gift for creating comfort' and 'extended an unswerving bond of trust'. To those of whom he approved, and especially to the young, often from overseas, with their way to make, he was unendingly encouraging: 'one was made to feel that

one was significant, and that one had a great deal to do and should get on with it'. Criticism and compliment was, like so much else, implied rather than directly stated. But one always felt one was learning from him, not only on scholarly matters: 'he was constantly teaching ethics.' There were a few gods in his universe, people 'sent to us from another planet', Neil Ker, for instance. There were demons too, the ignorant and pretentious and those who would not take the trouble to get things right. For though he was oddly unsure of himself, and often spoke of his inadequacies as a scholar, he knew very well that usually he could do a thing better than another would.

Mynors once wrote to Ker: 'I fear I am *dotty* about pictures. Perhaps I should have been an art critic—certainly not a professor' (17.9.47). D. J. Allan, on the other hand, thought he should have been a scientist: certainly he had the instinct to collect and organise data. But, as has been seen, the division felt by Mynors within himself was between medieval and classical studies. The medieval side was complex. He was clear what he was not: 'God forbid I should try to become a palaeographer' (Hunt 24.10.35, when he was setting out on his Durham catalogue). He thought of himself rather as a bibliographer ('this hobby of medieval bibliography': Hunt 26.11.44). But though he could contrast bibliography and classics (Hunt 3.3.45), he also once significantly writes: 'no one in his senses would profess Latin . . . who can plant trees or try to learn some history from the original sources' (Ker 21.9.46). His interests went well beyond the page of the manuscript, to embrace the story it told, the people whose lives it illuminated. In a tribute to the codicologist Bob Delaissé he said: '. . . if it [scholarship] is . . . to throw light on the world we all of us have to live in, as it *can* and *ought to*, it does this by never forgetting that it is dealing in the last resort with men like ourselves.' That, of course, is a principle applicable, and by Mynors applied, to work on Virgil also. His division of interests was only harmful if, as he sometimes feared, it led to a failure to do justice to either side of his work. It would be foolish to attempt a judgement on a matter over which Mynors himself agonised throughout his life. But it is worth remarking that it was in medieval studies that he made his closest friends, and had his most important influence on the course of scholarship. And it was on a medieval topic that he wrote words that best exemplify his vigour of expression, his concrete imagination, his encouragement and his implied criticism, his good humour and his lack of affectation, his depth of knowledge and his wide horizons. He is sketching the sort of preface that Ker might have written, but did not write, for *Medieval Libraries of*

Great Britain (3.3.41, written with the correction of a single letter 'hard on midnight, and I didn't get to sleep till half past three this morning'):

> It would be nice to start with a purple patch; to sketch the history of the British medieval library from Benedict Biscop returning laden from Rome with stained-glass windows and stately tomes in uncial, or Bede on his deathbed enriching Jarrow with St Mark in the vernacular, down to Leland (was it?) watching the loose leaves of the books of Malmesbury blowing across the churchyard, and being picked up by the fellow-citizens of William Stumpe—unworthy townsmen of Aldhelm—to patch their draughty windows and fire their bakers' ovens. To explain that this is not a Book but contains material for many books—a raw coral atoll fresh from the insect, on which others must make the palm-trees grow; give us our schools of writing and illumination; trace the waning of an interest in Old English, the arrival of texts from the new Universities of the Continent—ousting the Fathers who will have their turn again in the XIVth century,—the amount of attention given in monastic houses or by Tudor collectors to history or law or works of piety and romance in French and English; tell us why it is that monastic books are collected in the XVIIth century by the bourgeoisie, in the XVIIIth by peers, and in the XIXth by bankers. I should like to see you put on your dressing-gown and fill your pipe with shag, and tell us (I your Doctor Watson) how it is you perform these incredible feats of detection—for in your second article (for which I shall long remain in your debt) you have really surpassed yourself—and Dr Lowe. For that is the real justification for putting this highly specialist and unreadable book into the unwilling—let us hope acquiescent—hands of every pie-faced Fellow of the R.Hist.S.: that there are all these stories waiting to be told of the literature and art and economies of our forefathers . . . —and the spadework of this list is the essential preliminary to their telling. And published in the middle of a fearful war? Yes, because these survivor books are the best evidence we have of what happens in the change from one epoch to another, such as we live in today, and rightly interpreted can show us how men like ourselves in past time have built a new world many times over out of the ruins of the old.
>
> As this letter is getting every moment more like the inaugural lecture of the Seeley W. Mudd Professor of Bibliography, and my Pegasus is in need of a second wind, I will dismount.

MICHAEL WINTERBOTTOM
Fellow of the British Academy.

Roger Mynors was knighted in 1963. He was elected to the British Academy in 1944; he was its Vice-President in 1955–6 and its Foreign Secretary from 1958 to 1961. He was an Honorary Fellow of the Warburg Institute, of Balliol and Corpus Christi Colleges, Oxford, and of Pembroke College,

Cambridge. He was an Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society and the Istituto di Studi Romani. He was an Hon.D.Litt. of the Universities of Edinburgh and Durham, an Hon.Litt.D. of the Universities of Cambridge and Sheffield, and an Hon.LL.D. of the University of Toronto. He was President of the Classical Association in 1966.

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