



PETER BRUNT

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Peter Astbury Brunt 1917–2005

SOON AFTER I STARTED being taught Ancient History by Peter Brunt, our year was summoned as a group and asked what we had read of the list of sources that we had been given; my rather short list provoked the entirely justified response ‘That’s disgraceful’. This was the first time I had been taught in Oxford by anyone who set standards; the directness of the response, apart from being the origin of my career, was also the mark of the whole of Peter Brunt’s personal, professional and scholarly life.

Peter Astbury Brunt was born on 23 June 1917, at 16 Highfield Road, Coulsdon, near Croydon, the only child of the Revd Samuel Brunt, a Wesleyan Methodist minister, and his wife Gladys Eileen, née Blewett; his mother, of Cornish origin, had herself had three brothers, only one of whom survived, providing Brunt with two cousins. Brunt’s father was older than his mother, and died early in his post-war career. His secondary education took place at Ipswich School, from which he won an Open Scholarship in History to Oriel College, Oxford, in December 1934, and a State Scholarship, in Summer 1935. Although he had studied modern history intensively at school, the decision to apply in History was in large measure a pragmatic one, since it allowed him to avoid Greek prose composition. He intended to return eventually to Modern History, and wondered later in life whether he should have done so, but he read both Mods and Greats, gaining a Double First, after a formal viva in Greats, and had by then settled on a career in Ancient History. It may well be true that he did not have the kind of memory that would have allowed him to excel in Latin or Greek prose composition; but his doubts, throughout his life, about his memory in general were not justified. Brunt was moulded from the start by his formation as a historian, which led him to maintain

in 1959, after he became a teacher of Ancient History at Oxford, that detailed work on sources and evidence should be combined with learning how to analyse change over long historical periods, rather than limiting oneself, as at Oxford, to short, in most cases disconnected periods.

Already before the end of his undergraduate career, any trace of religious belief had disappeared; it was never as far as is known a subject of conversation between him and his mother, although almost everything else from his childhood onwards was: when he bought a house in Oxford in 1970, his mother was a frequent visitor, first from the south coast, then from her own sheltered flat in Oxford. Brunt's abandonment of the religion of his parents was not accompanied by any interest in any of the fashionable substitutes for religion: a piece he wrote for *The Times* of 21 February 1964 about the Oxford Humanist Group is marked mostly by amused detachment. His absence of religious belief, however, was accompanied by a very simple belief in honesty and honour; this led him in due course, while abhorring the conduct of Anthony Blunt, to describe the conduct of those Fellows who attempted to blackmail the then President of the British Academy into demanding his resignation simply as *pessimi exempli*.

Frail in health as a child, he volunteered after graduating in 1939 for military service, but was rejected as Grade 2; conscripted shortly afterwards, he was reclassified as Grade 3, and served instead in the Ministry of Shipping (later War Transport), alongside his undergraduate contemporary and friend, Basil Dickinson, rising from Temporary Assistant Principal to Temporary Principal. He believed to the end of his life that his generation had been traduced by the public misunderstanding of the 'King and Country' debate: the public never understood that the vote had been neither against country nor for tyranny, and ignored the subsequent vote to fight over the German occupation of the Sudetenland; and he recalled with emotion both the patriotism of ship-owners who insisted that their best ships should be taken, despite realising that the compensation if they were sunk would not be in full, and the moment when news arrived that one of two tankers had got through to Malta.

Much of Brunt's work at the Ministry related to attempting to get hold of as much French shipping as possible; this involved at one end of the scale the complex international law of angary, which was recognised in places under US jurisdiction as allowing the requisitioning of French ships—Brunt had perhaps not yet as an undergraduate come across the Roman institution of *angareia*—but also relations with both the Vichy Government and the Free French, and in the early stages dealing with discontented French seamen immobilised in British ports. He also played a

large part in setting up the United Maritime Authority, which by the end of the war controlled the movements of all allied shipping. Even ship-owners could be awkward, wishing in the case of their passenger ships used as troop carriers to maintain as far as possible their old runs; so Brunt's sensible suggestion that coal-burners should be used in the Atlantic and oil-burners in the east came to nothing, and much capacity continued to be used in shipping coal to the Indian Ocean and oil to the Atlantic Ocean. Without immediate effect was also a memorandum, drafted before the end of the war, arguing that the future prosperity of Europe depended on the independent recovery of Germany, an approach which fortunately did become allied policy.

His time at the Ministry of Shipping had many other facets beyond the immediate job to be done; it allowed him to listen for hours to the brilliant conversation of Lady Violet Bonham Carter, with whom he shared air-raid duties; it created a life-long friendship with the numismatist, Celticist and musician Derek Allen, who was also in the Ministry of Shipping; and it allowed him to observe the beginnings of the Cold War, revealed by the conspiratorial obstructiveness of Russian delegates to meetings both before and after the end of the war. But the period also made it clear to him that he had substantial administrative gifts, that were to be deployed later in his career; and it is interesting to observe the characteristic independence of mind and sense of style already at work. On Christmas Eve 1942, he left the office at 11.30 p.m. after signing over twenty telegrams, including a 'personal' message from the Minister to the UK representative in Washington, drafted by Brunt, but alas with all the most splendid passages excised. It was also at this time that he got into the habit, maintained till late in life, of borrowing and reading major works of medieval and modern history, in this period exclusively, but still also later in part, from the London Library.

After his release from the Ministry, he took up at the beginning of 1946 a Senior Demyship at Magdalen College, to which he had been elected the previous autumn, and the Craven Fellowship that had been awarded to him in 1939, choosing as a topic for research the relations between governed and governors in the Roman Empire, and set off for the British School at Rome. His work there resulted in his first article,¹ on the pay and superannuation of the Roman army, an article that deluded Eric Birley into supposing that another devotee of Roman army studies

¹ A full bibliography is to be published in M. T. Griffin (ed.) *Studies in Stoicism* (Oxford, 2010).

had arrived on the scene. Some of Brunt's interest in Roman Stoicism also derives from that period, as he recorded in his Inaugural in 1971; it was widely held, before and after the war, that Stoicism had had a major impact on the nature of Roman rule, and the nature of his research topic could not but bring him into contact with that view, of which he was at all times highly sceptical. Brunt's period in Rome did not inspire him with a concern for the iconographic or archaeological sources for Roman history, despite his informed love of European art and architecture from the Middle Ages onwards; archaeological evidence mostly told you something you knew already: for instance, the archaeological evidence for the organisation of a Forum in such a way that the community concerned could operate the Roman practice of voting in groups, not as individuals.

As far as inscriptions were concerned, Brunt's instinct was to think of them as individual texts that happened to be written on stone. His copy of Tod's *Greek Historical Inscriptions I*, purchased when he began Greats in 1937 and interleaved with Tod's printed handouts of texts, contains essentially notes on individual problems, some in an early—and legible—version of his characteristic hand, mostly of the years after 1951. But Brunt's instinct did not prevent him years later from seeing the importance of Keith Hopkins' analysis in 1983 of Roman funerary inscriptions with ages of death, as a body of epigraphic material; and he used the demonstration that what the material revealed was patterns of commemoration, not patterns of mortality, in a devastating review in 1976 of an admittedly rather miserable book on Roman demography.

Brunt was appointed to a lectureship at St Andrews already in 1947, but returned to Oxford in 1951, to his former college, as Fellow and Tutor in Ancient History in succession to M. N. Tod. He had by that time read, in the original Greek or Latin and in chronological order, all the major literary sources for Greek and Roman history, in preparation for a career as a teacher of ancient history: he stopped with Julian, on his appointment to Oxford, on the grounds that he would never need to teach any later period. Although the St Andrews period allowed Brunt to begin to build up his formidable knowledge of the ancient evidence for the Greco-Roman world, it was not a place that he found congenial: he lived in lodgings where he could not entertain, and which he was forced to vacate for the period of the lucrative summer market.

It was while Brunt was at St Andrews that he formed a close friendship with one of his students, that did not in the end lead to their marriage; the student in due course moved to America, and did marry, but she and Brunt remained close friends, with intermittent meetings. He never

contemplated marriage thereafter, her photograph remaining on his bookcase to the end.

As we have seen, Brunt was already interested in Stoicism, and some early work on Greek ideas of democracy, although directly stimulated by an article of Gregory Vlastos of 1945, perhaps belongs with that interest. The publication of Brunt's second article was indeed on Greek history, but far removed from the history of ideas. It coincided with his return to Oxford in 1951, and had been one of the subjects of his research during the long vacations of his tenure at St Andrews; it argued that a decree of the Athenians, hostile to the Megarians, known to ancient historians as the (!) Megarian decree, had not been passed by the Athenians shortly before the war between Athens and Sparta that began in 431 BC, as the *communis opinio* held, but long before, and that the decree had become a dead letter, to be raked up as a grievance in the diplomatic skirmishing that preceded the war. The article does not, as de Ste Croix (whom Brunt greatly admired and with whom he went on regular walks) later did, analyse in detail exactly what the terms of the decree meant; but it was, and is, one of the most original things ever written about that period of Greek history. The process of writing the article reveals much of Brunt's approach in general: he made, as he told later, no attempt to discover whether anyone had *ever* held his view, but established from the major works of reference then in use that no one of substance had in recent times advanced his view. He took as his starting point the great works of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, mostly narrative history and institutional handbooks; what he aimed to add to this starting-point emerges from an unpublished paper (delivered on 1 March 1994) on Hugh Last, holder of the Camden Chair of Roman History at Oxford from 1936 to 1948: 'Last was certainly the most commanding figure in his generation among Roman historians of this country . . . the basis for his eminence was the exactitude of his scholarship in detail and still more the range of his erudition.' What in fact marked Brunt was not only these qualities but also his historical imagination and creativity, clearly stemming from his passionate care for all the people of history.

Brunt was happy to admit the influence on his thinking of Geoffrey de Ste Croix, despite the differences between the political views of the two men. The influence of Last was, however, in Brunt's eyes paramount; to me, about 1990, it seemed that there were similarities between the approach adopted in the introductory chapter to his *The Fall of the Roman Republic* (Oxford, 1988) and that of Momigliano's 1940 review of R. Syme's *The Roman Revolution*, both chapter and review having much

to say about the aspirations that the Late Republican elite failed to satisfy and that Augustus did satisfy; when I suggested a debt to the review Brunt wrote in reply, arguing that his undergraduate essays on Augustus showed his views already formed. Are the similarities to be explained by the closeness of Last to Momigliano?

Despite this well-attested closeness, the scholarly production of Last and Brunt on the one hand and Momigliano on the other are about as unlike as they can be. Brunt, however, both reflected in his autobiographical notes of 1974/5 on the theory of history and to the end of his life kept together a small file of material on what might be loosely called historiography, some of it 'straight' material on ancient writers as sources, some of it more theoretical. In particular, he used his own decisions, not in 1945 to seek a career in the Civil Service and in 1967 to move to Cambridge, as examples of the impossibility of understanding motivation. He also made separate notes on Niebuhr and early Roman history. The notes include a comment on Momigliano's article in *History and Theory* for 1972, sent to Momigliano, with his reply. Brunt had also reviewed Momigliano's *Secondo*, *Terzo* and *Quarto Contributo*, asking in the review of the first in 1961, 'What is added, essential to a decision [on the idea that ballads formed part of the tradition for early Roman history], by reviewing what Perizonius or Niebuhr wrote?' The review provoked a friendly reply; Brunt did not change his practice, but two subsequent reviews are much more sympathetic to Momigliano's enterprise, even though Brunt maintained a clear view of antiquarianism as not history (as in his 1965 memoir on J. P. V. D. Balsdon for the British Academy), rather than, like Momigliano, exploring the links between the two.

Brunt lectured in his first three years in Oxford on Thucydides, 1951–4 (though for the Greats cohorts of 1951–2, 1952–3 and 1954–5); these lectures led to an intention to write a book on Thucydides, the historian in antiquity with whom Brunt felt perhaps the closest affinity. This was of course in part the result of sheer admiration for the quality of Thucydides' mind; but Brunt's own altruism and generosity, shot through with pessimism, perhaps also created a fascination for the gloomy view held by Thucydides of human motivation, fear, greed and the desire for glory. The book never materialised, after Tony Andrewes, while admiring the draft, had drawn attention to the number of specialist articles that would have to be read. Brunt read and analysed probably more modern work than anyone else of his generation; but he also had a justified disdain for much of the specialised literature, produced by people operating over a very narrow range, ignorant of much of what he himself knew, and

in places manifestly silly. As we will see, Brunt annotated books and articles that he read, for themes that interested him or that he was working on; an envelope contains a handful of reviews of his books, presumably sent by publishers, but he made no attempt to complete the set and did not annotate those that he had. The commitment to Thucydides issued in an article in *History Today* for 1957, and in the Introduction to a revision of the Jowett translation of Thucydides, which was actually Brunt's first book, in 1963. In both, Brunt drew attention to the way in which Thucydides felt the pity of the human predicament. The Introduction was duly reprinted in the *Studies* of 1993.

There is also a unity of thought and action between Brunt's wartime career close to the centre of events, his interest in Thucydides as an Athenian general and as an historian, and his own contribution to the administration of a major university: he never doubted, through long periods of public indifference or hostility to universities, their importance to public well-being. His civil service experience also showed him the inseparability of style and persuasiveness on the one hand and evidence and logic on the other hand: his lectures were always written out beforehand; and he had no patience with the curious view that history-writing in antiquity took a core of fact and embellished it with a randomly assembled superstructure of rhetoric.

Brunt claimed later that his published work in general arose out of teaching; this would not seem true if one considered only *Italian Manpower* and the series of articles on Stoicism, though truer if one considered also the Introduction on Thucydides and the other articles, especially those collected in three books from 1988 onwards. But the published work certainly did not arise out of the ritualistic puzzle-solving that constituted much teaching of ancient history at Oxford during his period as tutor, a form of teaching to which he objected in an article for the *Oxford Magazine* already in 1959. He clearly rejected from the start, given his initial topic for research, the widely held view that the history of the ancient world is essentially the history of its governing class; and he set out to try to understand—and help his pupils to understand—history as a whole, beginning with its economic, demographic and social structure, broad historical problems, the role of ideas, to which I return below. Hence his admiration both for A. H. M. Jones, whom he got to know when Hugo Jones simply knocked on his door in Oxford one day, and Moses Finley. His style, however, was not that of either man, lacking both the effortless, often descriptive, lucidity of the former and the off-the-cuff epigrammatism of the latter. Brunt's memoir of Jones for the 1961–70

Supplement to the *Dictionary of National Biography* expressed his admiration for the way in which, when Jones put pen to paper, he never needed to revise what he had written; Brunt's own drafts, by contrast, are covered with corrections and rewritings. His posthumous edition of a collection of articles by Jones is an awkward compromise between his instinct to update them and his sense of the impossible amount that needed to be done, of a piece with his abandonment of his intention to write a book on Thucydides.

Brunt read and made notes on an astonishing range of material, both ancient and modern, from Plato, on whom he did not publish till 1993, to Hirzel, whose themes were not his; and although some of his published work consists of a snappy demonstration that current views of parts of Alexander's army or of the chronology of Cicero's letters were most unlikely to be right, his more substantial pieces are suffused with a sense of the obscurity and difficulty of his subject. Part of the reason for this is that he not only insisted on analysing every level of ancient society, but also saw the importance of all of philosophy, law, politics and rhetoric. There was, I think, a fundamental difference between his lectures as teaching and his tutorials as teaching. The handouts that accompanied his lectures, for instance on Philip and Alexander, were for all practical purposes the footnotes and appendices for a book, the text of which was delivered as the lecture; if published, the lectures would have formed one of the major scholarly contributions on the subject. But they were for the most part devoted to political, institutional, military and narrative matters, and were relatively traditional Greats material.

It was rather in tutorials, at any rate with pupils who shared his interest in social or intellectual history—few responded equally to both—and perceived the moral quality of his liberalism and understood his commitment to the history of the poor and voiceless, that he deployed the width of his interests and sympathies.

A large body of notes on Bithynia, of the late 1950s or early 1960s, was clearly put together for teaching purposes, dealing as it does with the Younger Pliny and Dio of Prusa, two of the most important sources for how the Roman Empire worked on the ground; but the notes clearly also spring in part from Brunt's original research topic of 1946 and look forward in the case of Dio of Prusa to his later work on Stoicism.

There also date to a period after 1956, not to a more youthful period of doubt, a series of notes on the Gospels as sources for history and on the Christianisation of the Roman Empire; they adopt the same approach as Brunt applied to the history of Alexander of Macedon, many of the

sources for whom do not avoid miraculous elements. Brunt concluded that there was ‘no need for agnostics to dispute the historic existence of Jesus’, which did not involve ‘the necessary acceptance of dogmas intolerable to the rational mind’. Some of this material flowed into his 1964 review of A. N. Sherwin-White’s book on society and law in the New Testament, into a review of W. H. C. Frend on martyrdom and persecution, and into an article on persecutions for the *Oxford Dictionary of the Church*. Overall, however, Brunt thought Roman religion could not be studied because there were no private diaries containing men’s innermost thoughts, rather than seeing that Roman religion was simply not that kind of religion; as a result, he largely cut Roman religion out of his thinking about the Roman world, as we shall see in relation to his later book *The Fall of the Roman Republic*.

To return to Alexander, by the time Brunt lectured on him and his father Philip in 1959–60, the lectures were, as we have seen, the text of a book, the handouts a complete set of footnotes. The edition of Arrian for the Loeb Classical Library, however, did not appear until 1976 (Volume I) and 1983 (Volume II), and it is not surprising that Brunt, in the Preface to *Studies in Greek History and Thought* of 1993, should say with characteristic self-deprecation that ‘my most substantial contribution to Greek historiography, or at least that which I have most laboured on, is to be found in the introduction and appendixes, especially the last, of my Loeb edition of Arrian’s *Anabasis* and *Indica*’; the last appendix is on the date and character of Arrian’s work, of interest also for what it says about the second century AD world of Arrian. Although there is little polemic, the appendix is in part a tacit reply to the review of Volume I by P. A. Stadter, that had asked for a different—and longer—book (Stadter’s own book had in the meanwhile appeared). Brunt’s Loeb *Arrian* was one of a new generation of Loeb’s, massively richer than its predecessor—the tradition had not been one that placed scholarship above readability—and one of the finest, and it was unreasonable to want more; it is interesting that, in writing the 1987 Memoir on A. N. Sherwin-White for the British Academy, Brunt set out to defend him against the detractors of his commentary on the *Letters* of Pliny, the principal effect of whose desiderata would have been to increase its size. If, within their intended scope, the two volumes on Arrian have a fault, it is perhaps that Brunt tended to seek to emulate Alexander in cutting the Gordian knot, in places where agnosticism is the only sane choice. Two articles of his later career, on the nobility under the Roman Republic and the Equites under the Roman Empire, also presented the argument as more cut-and-dried than it really

could be. What remains unexplained is the amount of work devoted to Philip and Alexander, far beyond what lecturing in Oxford required, lecturing to which Brunt had been more or less drafted by Tony Andrewes: Brunt's sympathy for the under-classes meant that Alexander was not for him a particularly sympathetic character; and he had little admiration for Arrian as a historian, particularly in comparison with Thucydides. The answers are perhaps different for Philip and for Alexander: in the case of the first, it was perhaps Brunt's justified belief that his skills as a historian would lead to a better understanding of the horrendously difficult problems surrounding Philip's contribution to the development of Macedon and the subsequent conquest of much of the known world; in the case of Alexander, Brunt perhaps thought that he would learn more from Arrian about Stoicism under the Roman Empire than he actually did.

One of the themes that occupied Brunt during the period from 1951 to 1968 was that of ancient slavery: some of his work issued in a critical review of Westermann's *Slave Systems* in 1958; but more of it flowed into the project that increasingly occupied his time and his attention, the demography of Roman Italy and of the Roman world in general. A set of file cards on slavery, placing in a single alphabetical order Latin words, topics in English, and modern authors, reflects this wider context. This approach was rapidly replaced by the drafting of what were in effect notes for articles on a wide range of topics, from the profitability of mining slaves in Athens to the hire of slaves in Roman law, all following the same pattern, a close reading of the sources and an analysis and critique of the main modern works.

Brunt's standing by this time is marked by the fact that he had been asked to speak at the Second International Conference of Economic History at Aix-en-Provence in 1962; the ancient history theme, chosen by Moses Finley, was 'Trade and Politics in the Ancient World'. The other speakers dealt with the theme as a whole, in the Classical and Archaic Greek world; but Brunt chose to speak rather on the Equites, the second order of Roman society, who gradually in the last three centuries BC ceased to be the cavalry of the Roman Republic, and became the group to whom much of its administration was, in modern jargon, 'outsourced'. For one tiny element of the published version, Brunt read and made notes on T. P. Wiseman's then unpublished thesis; the article was both meticulously learned and, like the other piece of work of the same period, agenda-setting.

For Brunt had published already in 1962 one of the most important articles on Roman Republican history of the second half of the twentieth

century, on the army and the land in the revolution that replaced the Roman Republic with an Empire; the concern of the article with the interests of the poor and the impact of those interests on the revolution was a prominent feature also of a paper in *History Today* in 1963 on the conspiracy of Catiline. Despite this and his other important published articles, Brunt assumed that the Camden Chair of Ancient History would go to Sherwin-White, not him. Partly because of this, partly to get more time for writing, Brunt became in January 1968 Bursar of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, which promised a professorial salary and at any rate some time for research.

He had during his 17 years in Oxford already undertaken major administrative tasks both for his college and for the university: for the former he served as Dean from 1959–64, descending when necessary from his rooms in the third quadrangle and vigorously chasing on foot undergraduates who were amusing themselves by cycling round it; for the latter he edited in 1963–4 the *Oxford Magazine*, writing nearly all the editorials of the period, and chaired in 1967 an important committee on the future direction of the Ashmolean Museum. He had already submitted evidence to the Franks Commission's inquiry into the future of Oxford, writing in 1965 a description of the evolving activities of the Commission for *New Society*: the article is also a defence of Oxford's capacity for rapid change within its traditional structures, and a nearly contemporary article in the *Oxford Magazine* is a much more open defence of the essence of the College system. The fact that none of the problems have gone away over forty years later perhaps reflects a failure to ask how far accidents of history and accumulation of wealth and how far matters of choice contribute to the standing of Oxford.

In fact, Brunt was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1969—the citation circulated in his support was curiously generic and inaccurate. And Sheppard Frere, who was one of the electors, pressed Brunt to apply for the Camden Chair, and ask Caius College to release him from the undertaking he had given not to do so; the electors were given the page proofs of *Italian Manpower*, and the election was made in April 1969, to take effect from September 1970.

Italian Manpower appeared the year after he took up the chair, but work on it had begun in 1959, stimulated like much of the rest of his work by questions arising in the course of tutorial teaching. The range of his reading, particularly in modern history, is apparent on almost every page; it is apparent also in a dense series of notes on an article of 1964 by Joseph Needham on science and society in East and West: although the

article set out to explain the relationship between Chinese society and science, the notes deal above all with peasant-farmers, slavery and the relationship of ruler to ruled; this last theme, a continuous presence in Brunt's work from the beginning of his research in 1946, was clearly in part shaped by his experiences during the Second World War, his commitment to democracy, his experience of the ambitions of Stalinist Russia, and his conviction that general prosperity would depend on the recovery of Germany.

The book forms the most sustained attempt ever made to argue for the view, originally that of Karl Julius Beloch, that the Emperor Augustus took the extraordinary step of changing the basis of the Roman census, and that it is only up to that point that the figures represent adult males; thereafter they represent men, women, and (some) children. The essence of the argument is simple: we have a series of census figures down to 115/4 BC, some thirty years before the enfranchisement of the Latin cities and the Italian allies; we then have two figures for 86/5 and 70/69 BC, which no one has ever believed to be complete; and the first Augustan figure, for 28 BC, is then about ten times that for 115/4 BC, namely some 4,000,000.

Any attempt to relate the late second century BC figure of some 400,000 to the Augustan figure has to take into account: growth, and loss in war, between 115/4 BC and the enfranchisement of Italy; the numbers of Latins and Italians enfranchised; the numbers in Cisalpine Gaul north of the Po (and in Liguria) enfranchised in 49 BC; growth, and loss in war, between the enfranchisement of Italy and Augustus; and the numbers of slaves and provincials enfranchised in the Late Republic and the age of revolution. (It is generally believed that enfranchisement of both categories was in this period on a much larger scale than before.) No figures exist for any of these groups. It is also widely believed—though not by Brunt—that all censuses down to 115/4 BC involved substantial under-registration, and not only those of 86/5 and 70/69 BC, whereas those of Augustus were substantially complete, and in particular that Roman citizens living outside Italy were for the most part not registered before Augustus.

As a final step, a hypothetical figure for adult male Roman citizens in 28 BC must stand in a demographically plausible relationship with the figure of 4,000,000, if this indeed included women and (some) children. Since there are no reliable figures for population groups in the Roman world other than Roman citizens, any figure for the Roman Empire as a whole is thus inevitably an extrapolation from that for Roman citizens.

At the heart of Brunt's argument was the belief that the figures for Roman citizens between the third and the late second century BC were substantially accurate, and that the figures for 28 BC and subsequent censuses were no more accurate. On the basis of this view of the Roman figures, Brunt argued for figures at the bottom end of the possible range for all the groups listed above.

The book is not an easy read, with some 500 pages of text and 200 pages of appendices, much of it in effect a series of articles on an enormous range of topics, loosely connected to the central theme of Italian manpower. (It would not be altogether a parody to think of the book as rather like one of Momigliano's *Contributi*.) Such a book takes time to absorb. Initially, it commanded assent, apart from a rather perfunctory review by Horst Braunert. Work between 1971 and the re-issue of the book with a postscript in 1987 did indeed question the relationship posited by Brunt between adult males and total population excluding children under one year old; and the postscript includes a not altogether satisfactory discussion of the problem. The Preface in 1971 thanked in particular Martin Frederiksen, whose unrivalled knowledge of the archaeology of Roman Italy must have lain behind many of his comments on the typescript; the thanks, taken with the rest of the Preface, show Brunt realising that although he could not empathise with archaeological evidence, it might in the hands of others be a major source of enlightenment. But it is interesting that, although Brunt knew well *Hannibal's Legacy* of Arnold Toynbee, who made enormous efforts to incorporate archaeological evidence, the work is not cited in the Preface. Much later, Brunt did not dissent from my view that Toynbee misperceived almost everything about the Roman Republic that it was possible to misperceive. And it must be said that a great deal of current work on the archaeology of Italy displays massive ignorance of the literary texts, on which 'my work mainly rests', and of what Toynbee and Brunt actually said.

But the real debate was started by Elio Lo Cascio, in the *Journal of Roman Studies* for 1994, who mounted a powerful argument that the figure of 4,000,000 under Augustus, like the Republican figures, represented adult males. The debate has raged ever since, and shows no signs of abating: a conference held in Leiden in 2007, and published in 2008, shows the two sides as far apart as ever. At the same time, the weakness of some contemporary scholarship emerges from the attribution to Brunt, in a review of Rosenstein, *Rome at War* (2004), of a belief in the 'decline of the Roman small-hold farmer', when *Italian Manpower* in fact argues for

the precise opposite (p. 353). Brunt's view of the relationship between the Republican and Augustan census figures required him to argue that the period from the late third to the late first century BC was not one of demographic growth, but of (perhaps some) decline; but his robust knowledge led him to assert firmly that 'it is absurd to pretend that no use, or little, was made of tenants and free labourers on the property of great landlords, or that the yeomanry of Italy had been virtually eliminated by the time of the Gracchi'. More encouraging are two recent articles by Luuk de Ligt and Elvira Migliario, taking opposite views of the structure of the population of the Po and tributary valleys, but both seeking to engage with the difficulty of the evidence.

It is astonishing that the same brain could produce in the same period not only the dense prose of *Italian Manpower* but also *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic*, written at the behest of Moses Finley and also published in 1971: it is probably still the best introductory account of the Roman Republic. It was of course based first and foremost on the sources: a great French ancient historian was most upset, when he thought he had discovered that the tribune C. Gracchus in 123 BC had introduced measures for the alleviation of debt, to be told that it was all in *Social Conflicts*. The work was published in Italian in 1974, and it was no doubt this that led to Brunt being asked to write a chapter on 'Slaves and the lower classes in the Roman Italic community', for a collective work on Italian history. Both works suffer from the disastrously mechanical approach to translation that characterises most translation of scholarly works from one modern language to another. An appendix to the chapter on slaves and the lower classes sets out to refute the widespread view, endorsed by Francesco de Martino in his *Storia economica di Roma antica* of 1979, that slavery in the Roman Empire was in a state of decay before the third century AD.

The chapter had been written in 1978, and the bibliography was revised up to 1981, allowing Brunt to comment briefly on the Istituto Gramsci volumes of that year, and—with scepticism—on the relevance of archaeology to the social and economic history of ancient Italy. He did not, however, in contrast to his thinking on inscriptions, reflect on the nature of archaeological evidence or on the methodological problems it poses: the central methodological weakness of de Martino had been his failure to realise that almost all archaeological chronologies involve arguments from silence, but this draws no comment. Brunt's comment in his memoir of Jones for the *DNB* Supplement, on his neglect of archaeological evidence, comes rather oddly from him. It does not follow, however, from his inability to empathise with archaeological evidence, recorded

also in his autobiography, that Brunt was hostile to archaeology: his admiration for Martin Frederiksen, already recorded, goes with his support for archaeology at Oxford after his return, as being crucial for the future of ancient history, and with the energy he devoted to ensuring that Martin Harrison (soon to die tragically young), was appointed to the Chair of the Archaeology of the Roman Provinces, rather than the candidate favoured by the Roman Britain establishment.

Despite his interest in the economy, Brunt in fact took little interest in the primitivist/modernist debate about the nature of the ancient economy, relaunched by Moses Finley in 1962 and much of it fuelled by arguments about the nature and meaning of the archaeological evidence, as Harry Pleket pointed out in a basically sympathetic review of *Roman Imperial Themes* of 1990. Nor, in contrast to Syme or Sherwin-White or Jones, was Brunt a traveller in pursuit of a sense of the historical geography of an area important to ancient history. When he began research, he was interviewed over an application for a travel grant by Last, who told him that he had by then been teaching Ancient History at Oxford for some thirty years, but had never been to Greece; 'No, I lie, I was once on a boat at the Piraeus, but I did not land.' There was a clear element of self-characterisation in Brunt's use of this anecdote to characterise Last.

Rather, Brunt, with his vast knowledge, ruthless clarity, and acute awareness of what is a good argument, took the analysis of the surviving written evidence from antiquity, 'meagre, conflicting or dubiously authentic', for the problems and periods in which he was interested—how far it may be trusted, what it means, how much is missing, what may be inferred from it, what may be believed on general grounds—further than anyone had taken it before, and perhaps almost as far as it is possible to take it.

It was also at the behest of Moses Finley that Brunt took over from him in 1971 as chair of the Ancient History committee of the Joint Association of Classical Teachers, which oversees JACT's A-Level in the subject. With his insistence on the study of history as a general training in the use of evidence, Brunt was peculiarly well-suited for the role, in which he served until 1978, since the JACT A-Level distinguished itself from traditional A-Level Ancient History precisely by its emphasis on learning directly from the sources. There followed a stream of 'Notes for teachers', as well as articles in the JACT journal *Didaskalos* in 1970 on the Roman Revolution, in 1976 on the nature of Ancient History. Such activity was part and parcel of his belief, expounded already in a letter to the *Oxford Magazine* in 1961, that the prime recipients of a university education in history were not those who would become professional

scholars. It was also consistent with the energy devoted to writing the general book on the Roman Republic already mentioned, and to providing translations with explanatory material of a great historian such as Thucydides, or a major historian such as Arrian.

Brunt's service to the national Classics community also included a period as President of the Roman Society from 1980 to 1983 and as a member of the council of the British School at Rome from 1972 to 1987. The latter position in effect followed from his appointment to the Camden Chair. But despite holding the Chair, Brunt had never been invited to form part of the narrow, largely Oxford, oligarchy that then ran the *Journal of Roman Studies*; he insisted as President on belonging to the editorial committee, not always seeing eye-to-eye with the then editor.

In the end, Brunt was not at ease as Camden Professor, disliking particularly the expectation that he should be able to think of topics for research students to work on and not finding the atmosphere of the graduate seminar congenial; he regarded his successor as a model in such matters. And although he had over the years a number of distinguished research pupils, he came increasingly to doubt the value of a doctorate as a preparation for an academic career. He enjoyed perhaps more the undergraduate teaching he undertook as Professor, asking that the fees should be paid to the Roman Society. And he enjoyed serving as Delegate of Oxford University Press from 1971 to 1979; the enormous attention he devoted to commenting on prospective books is typical of a lifetime devoted to in fact immeasurably helping graduate students, whether his own or not, by his comments on their work. But he was not sorry when the Thatcher butchery of universities in 1982 created an opportunity for him to retire, two years early.

Scattered notes show that in the late 1970s or early 1980s, Brunt had been thinking of writing a book on Augustus; these include an isolated lecture out of a two-term course, notes on Horace, and on Cicero and Augustus, and two odd pages re-used for notes on Aelius Aristides. But the bulk of the massive notes of this period on Cicero and his ideas mostly reflect the growing interest in Stoicism, programmatically announced in his Inaugural of 1971.

The years that followed Brunt's retirement, during which his self-deprecation led him largely to withdraw from any public academic role, were occupied by collecting for publication, with revisions and some additional pieces, his articles on the Roman Republic (1988), a book of extraordinary coherence despite the length of the period over which the various chapters had been written, the Roman Empire (1990) and Greece

(1993), and by increasingly intensive work on Roman Stoicism. The second volume of the Loeb edition of Arrian on Alexander had appeared in 1983. The volume of articles on the Roman Republic, in particular, contains new material that shows undiminished power, notably a long essay on the fall of the Roman Republic, that provided the title for the whole volume, and a piece setting out to demolish the importance of client relations for an understanding of Roman Republican politics. The central argument was in place already in 1966, in an article for the Cambridge Classics undergraduate journal *Farrago*. It is a curious irony, and perhaps a measure of the extent to which the two men had lost contact, that at about the same time Moses Finley was busy arguing that client relations provide the key to understanding Athenian politics.

The explanation offered of the fall of the Roman Republic in the introductory essay is, however, rather an analysis of the success of Augustus in putting an end to the ‘Roman revolution’, the theme to which—with particular reference to Italy—Momigliano had addressed himself in 1940. This is not quite the same thing as the fall of the Roman Republic; the essay, however, picks up on themes that had interested Brunt since the beginning of his career, and his research on governors and governed, and in part makes up for the unfulfilled intention to write a book on Augustus. The essay is more an attempt to explain what changed between Republic and Empire than to explain the end of the Roman Republic. The Senate failed ‘to solve the problems that arose from Rome’s expansion’; but the essay says little about the period between 70 BC and 50 BC, a period of expansion on an unprecedented scale, except in very general terms.

Of the three criticisms levelled against Syme by Momigliano, the ignoring of the attitudes and aspirations of the population as a whole was fully taken on board by Brunt. The points that there were things that an autocrat could do that an open society could not (and vice versa), and that an essential part of the story was a religious one, remained to be re-iterated by John North in his review of *The Fall of the Roman Republic*.

Roman Imperial Themes is concerned with four large topics, the fiscality of the Roman Empire, its administration, the attitudes of its subjects, and perhaps above all with the imperial ambitions and illusions of its governing class. On the first theme, the new chapter on *publicani* under the Empire far surpasses all other expositions; and Brunt’s learning and acuity contributed in his last years to the preparation of a full edition of the recently discovered Customs Law of Asia. Brunt brought in particular to his analysis of Roman administration a knowledge of the legal

sources that few other Roman historians have had, a knowledge that had earlier been used with typical generosity to create a selection from the Digest of Justinian for the use of Oxford students. He also brought from his wartime experience a knowledge of the relationship between civil servants and Ministers that led him to be deeply sceptical of modern attempts to present the Emperor Claudius as other than venal and capricious.

But Brunt had never been a natural participant in the oral culture of seminars and colloquia, and tended to treat as the dominant view, to be refuted if necessary, the view of the great handbooks, even if it had long been tacitly abandoned; although angry when the editorial committee of the *Journal of Roman Studies* questioned its presuppositions, he did not choose to reprint in *Roman Imperial Themes* his second article of 1983 on the Equites under the Roman Empire. Similarly, an article on the definition of 'nobility' under the Roman Republic in 1982 hardly addressed itself to the burning questions; it was also immediately after publication refuted in its main contention by Shackleton Bailey, and not reprinted.

Roman Imperial Themes is of particular interest for its re-assertion, against Martin Goodman, that the social cleavage in Judea was a major cause of the First Jewish Revolt. The same Appendix also emphasises the role of the Jewish religion: because Judaism was 'different' from pagan religions, it could function as an historical explanation, whereas the latter could not.

As an old-fashioned liberal, while perfectly aware of the scale of injustice and exploitation under the Roman Republic, Brunt held that even if it were the case that the Roman Empire was a more just society—and his article of 1961 on provincial government under the Empire cast doubt on whether this was the case—the Republic was nonetheless to be preferred, since it was better for a few people to be free, than for no one to be free. The old-fashioned liberal comes out in such phrases as 'Given the prevalence of corruption at all times, can it ever have been of benefit to the subjects that the central government extended its own responsibilities?' (p. 89). It is worth recalling the remarks of a perceptive reviewer of *Roman Imperial Themes*, Francesco de Martino, whose (gently Marxising) attempt to write a history of the Roman constitution, as opposed to the systematic account of Mommsen, Brunt admired. De Martino admitted the incompleteness of his own, economically deterministic, view of the causes of the decline of the Roman Empire, and saw the importance of the complacency induced in the governing classes by the illusion of the eternity of Rome, with the extinction of participation and liberty contributing to the decline.

De Martino also paid tribute to the sense of ‘history as a whole’ that emerged from reading the work, to the sense of the importance of ideas; Brunt was in fact speaking for himself in his memoir on Sherwin-White, when—with obvious Thucydidean echoes—he praised Sherwin-White’s 1982 article on C. Gracchus, which attempted ‘to reconstruct the political ideas of “that intelligent and liberal statesman”’. This article illustrated his conviction that ideas mattered in Roman Republican politics, and that the actions of Roman statesmen are not to be explained invariably by greed or ambition: they might be seeking to find solutions in the public interest, as they saw it, for problems of law and administration’ (p. 465, cf. pp. 463–4).

Just as Brunt showed little interest in contemporary primitivist/modernist debates over the ancient economy, so, despite his interest in and knowledge of modern history, he showed little interest in the debate about the causal relationships of political ideas to political action associated with the name of Quentin Skinner. But his interest in the role of ideas in the Roman world, embracing the intelligent solution of administrative problems, had an altogether wider focus than the narrow question that has obsessed ancient historians recently, of whether the Roman Republic was a democracy. The influence of Last is apparent, despite the differences in politics and outlook between the two men (I hope to publish in the near future the paper given by Brunt about Last), but also the impact of having helped to organise a war transport system that helped to win a war that had to be won. The interplay between experience and scholarship was indeed as much part of his make-up as ever: the writing of one of the finest of his later articles, on the impossibility of knowing why Cicero joined Pompey in the Civil War that began in 49 BC, led him to reflect in conversation on the imponderability of his own motives in moving to Cambridge in 1968. Was it simply that he despaired of the Oxford chair? Was it also that he hoped instead for the Cambridge chair? Was it that he was bored with teaching, but not with administration? Was it that Caius College offered more money? Was it a desire for a change? Was it . . . ?

It is not surprising that it was Roman Stoicism that claimed more and more of Brunt’s attention; this took him into detailed analysis of the fragmentary and difficult evidence for the views of the founders of the school and of Panaetius, perhaps the single most important intermediary between Greek and Roman Stoicism. The question that principally exercised him, from his days as a research student to the end of his life, was that of the ‘practical influence of Stoicism. If it had much influence, that

must entail that Stoic views powerfully affected either a large number of men or at least one (Marcus) who could give effect to its precepts.' Over the fifty or so years of his involvement with Stoicism, Brunt became more and more convinced of the continuing interest of later Stoics in all three branches of the Stoic system, ethics, physics and epistemology, and also of the importance of practical everyday morality to the early Stoics. His collected papers on Stoicism will, when published, show that all too many current reconstructions of early Stoic thought are hopelessly precarious; they will also show as without foundation the widely held view that the Roman examples in Cicero's *De officiis* cannot derive from Panaetius.

A splendid party in 1997, to celebrate his eightieth birthday, brought together many of his pupils and friends; but from 1999 onwards, progressively failing physical powers led him to change the plan to write a book about Roman Stoicism into a plan to collect his earlier articles on the subject with a number of new studies. Even this project was in the end defeated, despite endless rewritings of successive drafts, at the end as at the beginning of his career; but the undiminished intellectual ambition to try and get something difficult right led him to form plans with his executors for posthumous publication.

Complaints of physical weakness were all too evidently justified, complaints of loss of memory much less so: to the end, Brunt combined an astonishing knowledge of English literature and British history with a sharply critical view of the politics and the follies of the world around him. Then, as on many occasions previously and in his autobiographical notes, he reflected both on what he recognised as his inclination to pugnacity, at least from his Civil Service period onwards, and on his loneliness. He did in fact understand well, at least intellectually, the affection inspired by his generosity and uprightness; but his life was his own, not to be lived for the benefit of those who valued him and would miss him. In the autumn of 2005, he refused treatment for a growth in the oesophagus, and died in Sobell House, Oxford Radcliffe Hospital, on 5 November 2005.

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Note. In writing this memoir, I have drawn on personal knowledge going back to 1956, as well as on Peter Brunt's autobiographical notes; these form six separate essays, I, Family, childhood, school (written between 1969 and 1974); II, End of

school to 1975 (written between 1974 and 1975); III, Reflections on teaching and research (written in 1992); IV, Reflections on career (written in 1999); V, Reflections on teaching (written in 1982); VI, Reflections on research (written in 1980s); I have also read the obituaries in *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian* (Oswyn Murray), and *The Independent* (Miriam Griffin), tacitly correcting some mistakes; I should like to thank Clive Cheesman for information on Basil Dickinson, and Miriam Griffin, Simon Hornblower and John North, both for reading the memoir in successive drafts and for help with those aspects of Peter Brunt's scholarly work with which I am less familiar. A full bibliography will appear in the posthumous volume of essays on Stoicism.