



STEVEN RUNCIMAN

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James Cochran Stevenson Runciman

1903–2000

JAMES COCHRAN STEVENSON RUNCIMAN was born on 7 July 1903 at his parents' house, then West Denton Hall, astride the Roman Wall in Northumberland, second son and third child of Hilda Stevenson, later MP, and Walter Runciman, MP, later first Viscount Runciman of Doxford. His family called him Steven from the start.

The Hon. Sir Steven Runciman, KCBE (1958), CH (1984), FBA (1957), FSA (1964), FRSL (1952), C.Lit. (1987), F.R.Hist.S., MA, hon. D.Phil., hon. D.Litt., hon. Litt.D., hon. Lit.D., hon. Ll.D., hon. DD, hon. DHL, Order of the Phoenix (Greece 1961) and of the Madara Horseman (Bulgaria 1993), Grand Orator of the Great Church of Constantinople (1969), Wolfson Literary Award (1982), Gold Medal of the City of Athens (1991), David Livingstone Medal (RSGS 1992), Onassis Prize for Culture (1997), died at his great-nephew's house in Radway, Warwickshire, on 1 November 2000. He is hereinafter called SR.

SR was elected Fellow of the British Academy in 1957, which is why a Memoir of him appears in these *Proceedings*. SR indeed contributed to and enjoyed academic fellowship, starting with that of Trinity College, Cambridge. The British Academy may have enjoyed his fellowship most when it finally moved to Carlton House Terrace, more convenient to SR's other London club, the Athenaeum. Yet it was only one of a host of institutions, his family, and friends to which SR gave mutual allegiance. This is only one of many published memoirs, some of which are listed at the end of this notice.

SR lived long. His way of putting it was that in 1931 he danced with a lady (actually Violet, Lady Greville) who had danced with Albert the Prince Consort (d. 1861). His earliest recollections, discussed later, seemed to grow more acute the older he got. Otherwise his long life may be brought to order by identifying four overlapping phases. In the first, SR, went up from Eton (where as a Colleger he transferred from Classics to History) to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1921 at the age of eighteen, graduating (double first) in 1924, where he was fellow (1927–38, honorary fellow from 1965) and University lecturer (1932–8). At his Prize Fellowship dinner in 1927, SR maintained that George Macaulay Trevelyan (1876–1962), who had just succeeded John Bagnell Bury (1861–1927) as Regius Professor of Modern History, took him aside to advise him to follow his example and eventually escape Cambridge if he wanted to write. With hindsight the move looked preordained, but in fact SR had thought of the Foreign Office, museums, and publishing. Nor did he shirk teaching at Cambridge, where he supervised twenty-four new undergraduates a term in medieval history from 1932–8. Even after 1947 there are indications that SR would have liked to return, like Trevelyan, to academe.

Nevertheless his grandfather's death in 1938 allowed SR to chose to become an 'independent scholar', a second phase which never ended. But a third phase supervened from 1940–7, SR's more fruitful equivalent of Edward Gibbon's service with the Hampshire Militia in 1759–62. It was a period of independence and maturity away from home. SR was on government service in Sofia (1940), Cairo (1941), and Jerusalem (1942). There can be no promotion beyond Jerusalem. SR was in his element with a piano in the House by Herod's Gate, arranging protocol with the heads of religious communities, and doing a little film censorship. But duty and the President of Turkey called. From 1942–5 SR held the first chair of Byzantine Art and History at the University of Istanbul, his first opportunity to teach the subject by name. SR's lectures in Istanbul (originally intended for publication in Turkish) were, to judge by their typescripts, the most rigorous introduction to Byzantine Studies that any student could then find beyond Munich. He had to quote Kekaumenos from memory and taught Armenian numismatic epigraphy on the blackboard. If he had found time to spy, SR would surely have made a better story of it, but he was indeed considered for the assistant directorship of the supposed 'spy school', the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies in the Lebanon, along with Abba Eban.

It was, however, SR's revival of the British Council in Athens in 1945–7 which may be his most significant 'secular' achievement. In the

heady days between the end of the Second World War and of the Civil War in Greece, SR and Major Leigh Fermor faced a queue of 3,500 waiting for enrolment outside the re-opened British Council office. He revived a cultural network of friends. There was Osbert Lancaster, but he found the embassy people rather gauche. SR was perhaps a little too enthusiastic about the prison camp on the island of Makronisos, where communists were reconverted into Hellenes with slideshows and song, though he would have nothing to do with the Greek military *junta* in 1967–74. On Easter Sunday 1946 SR wrote to his brother Leslie ‘England seems to me such hell now, that I can’t contemplate living in London . . . though it would be very delightful to settle at [the Runciman’s island of] Eigg for several months of the year’. But he preferred Athens: ‘what more could one want?’ It was the British Council which had lost its attractions by 1947.

The British Academy’s election of SR to its fellowship in 1957 marks the beginning of a fourth phase. It came after the conclusion of SR’s greatest uncommissioned work, *A History of the Crusades*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1951–4). The publications of this final phase are largely of lecture series, beginning with *The Eastern Schism* (Oxford, 1955). SR made a somewhat reluctant excursion to Sarawak with *The White Rajahs* (Cambridge, 1960) but gave active and warm promotion and patronage of numerous scholarly institutions, dutiful and hard working to the end. As a private person he took discreet pleasure in being a public figure. Obituarists used what became a canon of anecdotes. But SR himself had the best stories, polished, yet consistent, of which he published an authorised version in *A Traveller’s Alphabet* (London, 1991), to which he added an unfinished typescript of family history and recollections up to 1939, before he died. These are quite as rewarding and tricky to use as Gibbon’s autobiographies. The engaging picture they leave of a man of charm and modesty, a detached amateur among notable people and interesting places he happened to have known, is much more authentic than contrived. What can one add for the Academy that has not been published elsewhere? I start again.

SR was elected FBA as a historian. Outside the Academy SR is one of the best known British historians of the last century. This at least may be quantified. SR himself claimed that he earned more for Cambridge University Press ‘than any author except God’. In fact CUP reveals that SR probably only beat God in the years 1950–80. But in fame and sales outside the Academy SR perhaps succeeded G. M. Trevelyan, who in the previous three decades did much the same for Longman. There are two

differences. In both library and drawing room, SR's books seem to have survived better. While Trevelyan's *English Social History* (London, 1944) sold 400,000 copies in five years, it reached its sell-by date comparatively earlier. By contrast, at his death in 2000, twenty of SR's twenty-seven books (not counting translations) remained in print, beginning with his first, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and his Reign* (Cambridge, 1929). A reason may be sought later, but more remarkable is that the topics do not look equally alluring to the general public. Yet in the category of academic best-seller Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1889–1975) may be compared, and in a previous era Edward Gibbon (1737–94), especially in the edition of J. B. Bury. The wonder is that all were historians of the Lower Empire, a medieval and Greek world then on no British academic syllabus and alien to the common reader. I never asked SR about Toynbee. He was conventionally critical of Gibbon, but regarded a walk round the Backs in Cambridge with Bury in 1924 as his confirmation to undertake research in what neither may have been aware was that year identified and announced as a coherent discipline and field at the First International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Bucharest. In Cambridge SR's progression from classicist to medieval historian and therefore to Byzantium is still not conventional, but made insular sense. This context meant the warmth of Trinity and the examples of Bury and Trevelyan, successive Regius professors. SR was in fact largely spared Bury, for him perhaps a blessing, for they would not have agreed about the nature of Clio. For Trevelyan, Clio was a Muse, a creed to which SR was increasingly faithful.

Such a context had little to do with a then largely francophone and Balkan national historiographical movement which was declared in Bucharest. As a Byzantinist, SR's closest contemporary in this movement was Dionysios Zakythinos (1905–93). It is useful to see what linked and divided them, beyond mutual respect. Zakythinos's background in Cephallonia is the nearest Greek version of SR's own origins. Writing on Mistra, SR was happy to refer readers to Zakythinos's massive work on the Morea (1932, 1953) and Zakythinos, President of the Hellenic Academy was a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy, among other honours—though in Mistra they named a street after Runciman. Both were pioneers: SR in width and Zakythinos in depth of approach. Zakythinos graduated from Athens in 1927 to research in the Paris of Charles Diehl (1851–1944) and Ferdinand Lot (1866–1952). His thesis was textual, economic, and administrative: on a Trapezuntine *chrysobull* of 1362. In contrast to SR, his interests in the Morea were demographic, social, and fiscal. I do not think that either Zakythinos or SR ever acknowledged

Fernand Braudel (1902–85), still less subscribed to *Past and Present*, but Zakythinos was an early exponent of the *Annales* ‘School’ of Paris in Greece and in Byzantine Studies.

I do not think it occurred to SR in 1924–7 that Paris, rather than Cambridge might be the place to join Zakythinos at the incipient headwaters of Byzantine Studies. In Paris a thesis was to do with texts, a different treadmill. SR rarely used more than was edited in print, often narrative chronicle, of which he was a keen critic. Palaeography and manuscripts were not among his skills. Like Gibbon he expected his sources to be made available by others. He rarely got his hands dirty, in archive or archaeology. But the real distinction between SR and later Byzantinists is that they asked different questions of new, or rather original, sources. He largely ignored the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists and I do not think that he used Paul Lemerle’s *Archives de l’Athos* (Paris, 1937–). For SR the term ‘apophatic’ was his watchword on the Holy Mountain, the key to its mystical theology. Who can blame him? A happy consequence was that SR was wonderfully immune to historiographic ideology and had the pleasure of outliving many in his time. No one could now attempt single-handed *A History of the Crusades*, with tomes shipped from the London Library to the Hebridean island of Eigg. But no one would now assign the society (by which he meant social history on Trevelyan’s terms), economy (by which he meant commerce), culture, art (mostly Queen Melisende’s Psalter), and architecture of *Outremer*, to a mere thirty-five pages at the end of the third volume of that work (1954).

Such a balance must be placed in British historiographical context. Volume 4 of *The Cambridge Medieval History*, on *The Byzantine Empire* (ed. J. M. Hussey, Cambridge, 1966, 1967) superseded the volume edited by J. B. Bury in 1923. As the then either *enfant* or *doyen* of British Byzantine Studies, SR contributed a spirited final chapter on ‘The place of Byzantium in the Medieval World’ which walks a now lost tightrope between the Clio as Muse or Scientist, but ends up with ‘the mysteries of the Divine Liturgy’—on which there has indeed been further research. If this colossal volume in two parts represents the shape of British Byzantine Studies in the 1960s, its omissions look startling today. There are no contributions on geography, economy, or demography and just fifty pages on art and architecture which also serve for archaeology. Yet by these standards SR was already a pioneer, or at least willing to explain what his friends were doing. He knew the Crusader routes in Anatolia and Syria on the ground. Indeed in 1937 he had the indelible experience of what a Crusade *smelled* like when a detachment of the Turkish army overtook him on the Zigana

pass, above Trebizond: ‘The men in their thick uniforms had been marching for hours uphill in the summer heat. The aroma that they left behind somewhat ruined our picnic.’

For art and architecture SR was a determined traveller in the footsteps of friends such as Anthony Gervase Mathew, OP and David Talbot Rice. He climbed scaffolding to mosaics in Istanbul with Thomas Whittemore and Ernest Hawkins. The Hittite sites of Anatolia left him rather cold, but he and Michael Grant assisted others at the establishment of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara. More significant is SR’s contribution to Volume 2 of the *Cambridge Economic History of Europe* (ed. M. M. Postan and E. Miller (Cambridge), 1952, revised and reprinted 1987). On ‘Byzantine Trade and Industry’, SR brought its bibliography of 1952 up to date in 1987. When it began, the chapter was, *faute de mieux* an introduction to the Byzantine economy. By 1987 he was alert that things had moved on. Today I cannot find any reference to SR’s chapter in the three volumes of *The Economic History of Byzantium* (ed. A. E. Laiou (Washington DC), 2002)—which may be because its indexes, bibliography (and maps) are less helpful than the standard which SR and CUP set. But the truth is that SR much preferred ‘economy’ in another meaning. For him it was more specifically a technical term in Orthodox theology, embracing the accommodation of theory and practice—in effect, tolerance.

SR’s frequently quoted manifesto is in his preface to the first volume of the *Crusades* (1951):

It may seem unwise for one British pen to compete with the massed typewriters of the United States. But in fact there is no competition. A single author cannot speak with the authority of a panel of experts, but he may succeed in giving to his work an integrated and even epical quality that no composite volume can achieve. Homer, as well as Herodotus, was a Father of History, as Gibbon, the greatest of our historians, was aware . . . History-writing to-day has passed into an Alexandrian age, where criticism has overpowered creation. Faced by the mountainous heap of the minutiae of knowledge and awed by the watchful severity of his colleagues, the modern historian often takes refuge in learned articles or narrowly specialized dissertations, small fortresses that are easy to defend from attack. His work can be of the highest value, but it is not an end in itself. I believe that the supreme duty of the historian is to write history, that is to say, to attempt to record in one sweeping sequence the greater events and movements that have swayed the destinies of man.

So Clio *was* a Muse. In the *Crusades* SR gave his Muse her most eloquent voice, but was uneasily alert to the massed typewriters (European and Israeli as well as American) which were to muffle it with demographic

detail or Latin sigillography—and, especially, questions of scope and definition. SR indeed contributed a chapter on ‘The Crusader States, 1243–1291’ to a composite six-volume *A History of the Crusades* (ed. K. M. Setton and others, 2nd edn. (Madison, Wisconsin), 1969). But he stands alone and never entered public historical controversy. Crusader historiography is interesting. Nursery scenes of nineteenth-century French knights under the palm had long been supplanted by R. Grousset as an Oriental phenomenon before SR advanced the Crusades firmly into the context of Byzantium.

In 2001 a Crusader Congress meeting in tribute to SR at Zaragoza celebrated his continuing value as a narrative historian of the Crusades. At it, Bernard Hamilton argued that since SR’s work, ‘We cannot now ignore the Byzantine dimension’ and that it became natural ‘to think of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem as closely linked to the Latin Empire of Constantinople and to the other states of Frankish Greece’. I would add SR’s identification of the native Christians of Outremer as the true victims of the Crusades. In Jerusalem in 1942 he liked the underdog Armenians, Palestinians, and Syrians more than the Melkite Greeks and colonial Latins—and never subsequently set foot in Israel. SR’s conclusion that the Crusades were a Bad Thing, even ‘a long act of intolerance in the name of God, which is the Sin against the Holy Ghost’, was not new but never more eloquently expressed. He could forgive the Ottomans for taking Constantinople but ‘there never was a greater crime against humanity than the Fourth Crusade’. (Really?) He was usually careful to leave such opinions to prefaces or conclusions of books and lectures, but Greeks and Arabs have cited SR’s authority ever since. In a lecture on why Merrie England was not so merry, SR even concluded that ‘In the building up of [a] national feeling [of] guilt, which expresses itself in all the unwilling Puritanism of English life, the Crusades played their part, which is another reason why, in my opinion, the Crusades were a Bad Thing.’

SR may have missed out on, say, post-structuralism. Instead, his first virtue was consistency. Like his favourite traveller-artist Edward Lear, it is impossible to date his work by style. He claimed Beatrix Potter as his model—she rivalled his sales. His style is lucid. SR’s next virtue was a skill with languages, begun early with Latin and Greek. Slavonic brought him Bury’s respect—SR’s mother had engaged the future Mrs Arthur Waley to teach him Russian as early as 1915. He taught himself Armenian for *Lecapenus*. His lectures in French were acclaimed in Belgium. He spoke basic Turkish with Rudolph Nureyev but wisely examined his students in Istanbul through an interpreter. He avoided Hungarian, but gave his last

speech, on Mount Athos, in Greek *katharevousa*. He had an early interest in necromancy, religion, and family. As early as 5 June 1924 SR concluded a lecture on papal nephews with the words: 'We are grown-up now, and don't play Happy Families any more. I think it is a pity.' Asked about his religion in 1996 SR replied: 'Neither Anglican nor Roman Catholic. I was brought up in the Church of Scotland, which is Calvinist, but my sympathies have been for many years with the Orthodox Church. I have always been greatly interested in religion, though not *pratiquant*.' I raise these points, for they feature in SR's intellectual formation before 1927, remained consistent and may be noticed in the examples which follow.

SR habitually began at the beginning. He had read the Russian classics by 1917, preferred Edith Wharton, but bought Marcel Proust early. Proust's novel begins, not with a *tisane* but with history and illusion in the nursery. On the magic lantern the Merovingian scandal of Geneviève de Brabant and the infamous Golo is to end up with the Guermantes. The Runcimans were no Guermantes, or even Trevelyans, but nineteenth-century Lowland Scottish shipping people. SR rejected such medievalism in two colours. 'My interest in Byzantium was first aroused by reading [Walter Scott's] *Count Robert of Paris*, a dreadful book which I felt by instinct to be quite wrong. I hurried off to study the Byzantines . . . I may add that Gibbon had the same effect on me a little later on . . .'

 (1962).

SR's unpublished memoir of the 1990s begins with imagined history. In about 1910 SR and his elder sister Margaret (1901–44), then at Doxford, created the world of Kokland. They had two island kingdoms. 'We planned histories for our countries, and I went so far as to make out genealogical trees for mine. I even planned a verse drama about one of my princesses, whose name was Siflikananashka. The plot was simple.' It was not. But

Soon we decided that Kokland must have its own religion. There was a brother and sister god and goddess, called Gouronos and Gurene—at the age of seven I had just begun to learn Greek, and the names sounded beautifully Greek to me. We compiled a prayer book . . . We erected a chapel in the woods . . . My parents regarded it all with tolerant amusement; and Nannie did not approve at all. But by that time we were out of her care, and our governess never protested.

Nannie Sarah Elizabeth Emily Laight was an Anglican, who SR believed had surreptitiously baptised him. The governess was Miss 'Torby' Forbes, a Gaelic-speaking episcopalian who taught him never to write 'of course' or 'recur'. As his parents were, in English terms, non-conformist, SR experienced such distinctions early. In England his mother, a Liberal MP, the first woman to obtain the equivalent of a first

class degree in history at Cambridge, went to Chapel. His Tory governess, a classicist, went to Church. SR went to both.

I was well under seven years of age when [Torby] came to us, but she started at once to teach Margie and me Latin; and the following year we began to learn Greek . . . She would talk to us about the Romans and the ancient Greeks almost as though they were people living in our own time. We would be made to act simple plays in Latin, as we also did in French. . . . I soon decided that I liked the Greeks much better than the Romans . . . a liking that later schoolmasters were unable to destroy; and I owe to her my readiness to try to read, not always successfully, any European language that came my way.

Torby gave SR his Greek Testament for his tenth birthday, but few governesses go on to proof-read their charges' first books, as she did.

Then comes SR's skill swiftly to grasp and succinctly to describe a political or genealogical situation, gossip included. It all looks so easy. Compare the two passages which follow.

1 Within days of arriving, on tour for his health, at the British Consulate General, Tientsin, SR sent a situation report to his brother Leslie on 2 December 1925:

. . . Chang Tso-lin's son, the 'young general' Chang Hsueh-liang stayed 3 nights ago at Astor House Hotel [Shanghai], disguised as an American man's servant, in an unsuccessful attempt to find and conciliate his former great friend the rebel General Kuo (pronounce more Guo). Here opinion is that Chang Tso-lin will recover his position as against Kuo, but will have to stay behind the Great Wall . . . Feng is in complete control of Chih-Li now; but no one quite knows his game. And the position of Li Ching-lin, the Tupan of Chih-Li, who resides in Tientsin, is precarious and uncertain. He was appointed by Chang, but having made \$39,000,000 out of the Tientsin merchants, now safely invested in Dairen, he is trying tactfully to join the other party. However Chang has one advantage. Li's mother and Kuo's whole family reside at Mukden and are in his power. . . . The Chinese are most fond of Wu Pei, who is waiting, very short of money, at Hankow, but the latest rumour is that he has rallied with the former traitor Feng. Chang is the most formidable figure, but lives with the most terrible fear of assassination: he is said to be in favour of restoring the Manchus.

Is that clear? For those wishing to know what happened next, Li fled and Feng Yu-hsiang, the 'Christian general', took Tientsin on Christmas Eve, when SR was out shopping. Chang Tso-lin was duly assassinated on 4 June 1928, when his train was blown up. Wu Pe'fu ran out of credit. But the 'young general' Chang outlived SR himself.

On 15 January 1926 SR wrote from Peking to his brother about more urgent matters: 'A fortune teller in Penang told me that I would have a piece of great good news about my future in February. If it means a

Lectureship is going in London, please apply for it for me.' SR did not go to London and the warlords of Manchuria lost a promising chronicler to the fellows of Cambridge. Yet the texture of his situation reports was consistent. Compare his assessment of Manchurian crisis in 1925–6, with that in the Frankish Principality of Achaia in 1313–16, which was to lead to the year of the six claimants in 1383.

2 Isabella and Florent of Hainault had had a daughter, Matilda, who was now the Dowager Duchess of Athens. In 1313 Philip of Taranto decided to marry the titular Latin Empress of Constantinople, Catherine of Valois. She was already betrothed to the Duke of Burgundy, so to console the Burgundian house for the breaking of the engagement, Philip arranged for Matilda of Hainault to marry the Duke's brother Louis; and he bestowed on them the principality. Their reign was brief and troubled, first by the claims of Matilda's aunt, Margaret of Villehardouin, and then by her widowed son-in-law, Ferdinand of Majorca, in the name of his infant son James. Margaret was imprisoned by her own barons, who disliked her marrying her daughter to a Catalan prince; but Ferdinand, who had established himself at Chlemoutsi, was more dangerous.

Ferdinand was defeated and slain in Elis in summer 1316. 'But within a month of his victory [Louis] was dead, poisoned, it was said by the Count of Cephallonia. . . . His widow Matilda was deposed for refusing to consummate a marriage ordered by the King of Naples to his brother, John, count of Grevena, as she had secretly married a Burgundian knight' (*Mistra, Byzantine capital of the Peloponnese* (London, 1980)).

So much for texture and approach. Why Byzantium? SR had an instinct for flying against convention, to explore the next field. At each stage he had the confidence, intellectual, even social, to do this because he had mastered the previous one. He later had the grace to suspect that he was a probably arrogant youth. As a classicist at Eton, he felt free to choose History—though years later was mortified to see the reports which his father never showed him—one master wrote 'I wish this boy were kinder to me'. He moved further east in Cambridge and actually east during the war. For his subsequent readers, SR's genius was to take Mediterranean and Byzantine Studies a stage further, to clarify and synthesise. In topics that interested him (even sometimes economic) he was ahead with new scholarship, with a vision to put it in context, even to identify the next hill. But unlike the mature Diehl, SR was no *haut vulgarisateur*. He wrote and read too well, and, unlike Diehl, always had the courtesy of providing his readers with references and index. There was no sleight of hand. For example, in his preface to *The Last Byzantine Renaissance*

(Cambridge, 1970) SR simply writes that ‘The nature of my subject precludes startling original research. . . . I am dependent for my knowledge on the labours of scholars who have studied [the texts]. Though I have tried at least to glance at the accessible printed works. . . .’ As a result the book is invaluable for anyone who wants a summary of the works of Hans-Georg Beck in readable English.

SR flew against convention by putting Byzantium firmly in the hands of the common reader. Schools do not teach Byzantium because it is not on the syllabus and sounds ‘difficult’; universities are wary of SR because he makes it sound ‘easy’—which is his achievement. Academic critics are silenced by his range of languages and by the examples of his early work (which, like Trevelyan’s or Diehl’s is more enduring).

SR’s first book, on *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and his Reign* (Cambridge, 1929), is based on his prize fellowship thesis of 1927 when SR was aged twenty-four. It is far more ambitious than Zakythinos’s impeccable dissertation of 1932 and may remain SR’s most lasting work. In scope it is a contextual guide to the Mediterranean, Balkan, and Caucasian world in the tenth century, more readable and realistic than Arnold Toynbee’s ponderous *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World* (Oxford, 1973). SR’s *A History of the First Bulgarian Empire* (London, 1930) is more original to readers who do not have access to the works of V. N. Zlatarsky (to which Bury introduced him), some of whose misconceptions it follows faithfully. SR’s *Byzantine Civilization* (London, 1933 and variants thereafter), wonderfully adventurous in scope and often reprinted, has showed its age earlier. His *The Medieval Manichee* (Cambridge, 1947) first reveals SR’s interest in religion and the limits of tolerance, best demonstrated in his *The Eastern Schism* (Oxford, 1955), which is a wonderfully clear account. SR was at his best in such works as *The Sicilian Vespers* (Cambridge, 1958) a study of the Mediterranean world in 1282, where he knew the sites and sources. But Ottoman Studies were at last catching up on ‘*Byzance après Byzance*’. SR could not, for example, write today *The Fall of Constantinople 1453* (Cambridge, 1965) as he did. Curiously disappointing, even perhaps at the time, is *The Great Church in Captivity. A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence* (Cambridge, 1968)—derived from his Gifford and Birkbeck lectures. The title is so adventurous and alluring. Once again SR had identified the next hill. He drew attention to the secondary sources, often western, of a great topic. But the primary sources, Ottoman and patriarchal actually exist. They are not yet fully digested. Without them the results are partial—like

a history of the Anglican Church seen through the eyes of Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem.

Like Trevelyan at his apogee, when the honours came, the gulf between SR's profession and public was already widening in the 1950s. His profession became less concerned with Clio as a Muse, more with charters rather than chronicles, but his public ensured the longevity of his work. He wrote well and simply. He was attentive to his patronage and friends. He worked very hard.

SR's final and unabated scholarly phase after the *Crusades* in 1954 was often in the form of a series of distinguished lectures. *The Eastern Schism* began as the Waynflete Lectures, Oxford, 1953–4. There were the Gifford Lectures, St Andrews (1960–1), the Birkbeck Lectures, Cambridge (1966), the Wiles Lectures, Belfast (1968), the Robb Lectures, Auckland (1971), the Regents' Lectures, Los Angeles (1971) and the Weir Lectures, Cincinnati (1973). There were lectures in Alaska and Baghdad, Toronto, Texas and Manila. SR spoke to the Lewes Literary Society. He gave the Carreras Arab Lecture. He was heard in Peshawar, in Birmingham—and most places in between. SR typed, with one finger, muttering the while, a total of 242 lectures and other papers. His missionary travels for Byzantium were prodigious. In England SR's last formal student was Donald Nicol, whom he supervised in the Athenaeum in the 1950s and who repaid him with *Byzantium and Venice* (Cambridge, 1988), the work that SR did not write. But abroad his converts were myriad. SR was a professional didact; he asked for questions out of courtesy but there was little discussion. I think that he sometimes enjoyed these long travels. On the eve of a US lecture tour on 26 October 1952 he confessed to Stewart Perowne that 'I'm alarmed about it all, and all my long forgotten shyness will re-emerge. I hope they'll be kind.' They were, and appreciative too. Quick to find his feet, SR had his own observations on his hosts by 5 January 1953: 'The more I know about the U.S.A. the more I realize that the basis of its culture is German and not English and in spite of all their talk about liberty its citizens don't really care for it, or rather they confuse it with a sort of equality of opportunity—an admirable thing but insufficient for anyone who sees beyond material things.'

SR was most at home with animated genealogy. That of his own siblings is quite as complex as of the family of Matilda, Dowager Duchess of Athens from 1313. Rosamond Lehmann was (briefly) a sister-in-law; his nephew is President of the British Academy. Sensing something interesting, a Polish Byzantinist asked who were the ladies, Ruth and Katherine, to whom SR dedicated books? The answer was simply 'My sisters'. She then

asked: 'As far as I know you have never got married. Was it a conscious choice?' SR replied 'I like to live *alone*.'

It was as simple as that. Living alone required discipline and fastidiousness—especially for SR's guests. He had a sense of public and private area and occasion. He was alarmed by a royal duchess, who, trying to help, got into his kitchen on the island of Eigg in 1955. His kitchen at Elshields, where he prepared his guests' breakfasts after 1966, was as *haram* as the domestic quarters of Topkapi—and proved as commonplace, when revealed after his death.

SR survived so long through a genius for long-nurtured friendship, public and private, and his sense of family, if not dynasty. Oldest school friends, from Summerfields in Oxford, included 'Puffin' Asquith who lived in Downing Street. Eric Blair was a fellow Colleger at Eton. He was the last living contact of the *Tilling Society* with E. F. Benson. One archbishop (he collected them) confessed that he was only half a Runciman. Very old friends—not just 'Dadie' Rylands, whom everyone knew, but a future Admiral of the Fleet—were made in Cambridge in the 1920s; but SR found Bloomsbury rather noisy in the 1930s. Nor was he a Cambridge Apostle, or even spy. Perhaps they thought that someone who kept a green parakeet called Benedict was not serious enough. SR's tolerance of friends was far from indiscriminate, and he kept them discrete. Among spies he found Guy Burgess a grubby pupil at Trinity and made him wash his hands. Nevertheless SR introduced me to an old friend decades later, for the historic experience of simultaneously holding hands with twenty-eight lords, from 11th duke to barons out of mind, all in one clasp—a sort of multiple indulgence. On 12 October 1952 SR introduced one old friend, Stewart Perowne, to another (a future Nobel prizeman): 'The nicest Greek that I know is going out shortly to be their Minister for the Arab states, with headquarters at Beirut. He is called George Seferiades and is the best living Greek poet (under the name of Seferis), a large gentle creature who combines enormous culture with a modest kindness, with a pleasant quiet but intelligent wife.'

SR and Stewart Perowne shared an interest in royalty. It was really a blameless and fond concern for displaced or misunderstood persons. SR collected Queen Alexandra's poetry and Perowne worked on the family of King Herod. In 1930 SR dedicated *A History of the First Bulgarian Empire* 'by gracious permission to Boris III, Tsar of the Bulgarians', whose race (in the final words of the book) was born of that 'wild marriage of the Scythian witches to the demons of the sands of Turkestan'. The dedication was omitted in later editions, when Tsar Boris III died

abruptly and still mysteriously after an interview with Adolf Hitler in 1943. SR would have been delighted to learn that his son is now prime minister of Bulgaria. He had demonstrated that Tsars Boris I and II were culturally disoriented in Byzantium and knew perfectly well that Boris III came instead from one of the wild marriages of the dynasty of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

If he had had time enough and chance, SR would have been a model minor royal personage as a subsidiary career. His presence was handsome and his private life modest. He preferred to be host rather than guest. His 80th and 90th birthday parties in London were almost state occasions, when SR turned round from receiving, to bidding farewell to his guests—he developed what he called a ‘liturgical stoop’. Through observation SR was critically aware of how such a person should patronise graciously, say a few well-chosen words, pretend not to hear political comment, neither fidget nor fall asleep during ceremonies and lectures, never forget a name and always write their own letters of thanks by hand.

SR extended his vivid sense of friendship from individuals to institutions, whole human organisms. The institutions reciprocated the attention he gave them. SR enjoyed the annual Runciman Awards of the Anglo-Hellenic League from 1990, and the Runciman Lectures at King’s College London from 1991. He was patron, president, trustee, chairman, advisor or just friend of many bodies to whom he gave support, public and private, each with a network of old and new friends. I only know some. In Scotland, where his portrait in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery by Stephen Conroy of 1990 concludes a consistent iconography of enquiring elegance started by Cecil Beaton in the 1920s, SR served the Scottish National Museum of Antiquities (trustee, 1972–7), the Scottish Ballet (chairman of Friends, 1980–4) and the National Trust for Scotland (emeritus councillor, 1985–2000). In London there was the British Museum (trustee, 1960–7), the Victoria and Albert Museum (advisory councillor, 1957–71), but he was perhaps best pleased with the inauguration of a lift in the London Library (vice-president, 1974–2000). I do not know which office he held in the Tilling Society, but in the Great Church of Constantinople he was elevated to the princely office of Grand Orator in 1969. Among other bodies, SR was a supporter of the Mediterranean Studies Association, the Royal Historical Society (vice-president, 1967–2000), the Anglo-Hellenic League (chairman, 1951–67), the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara (president, 1962–75, vice-president, 1975–2000), the Association Internationale des Etudes Byzantines (vice-president, 1966–2000), the

National Trust for Greece (chairman, 1977–84), the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies (first president, 1983–2000), the St Catherine's Foundation, Mount Sinai, and the Friends of Mount Athos (first president, 1990–2000).

It was to Mount Athos that SR made his final and most astonishing journey, in July 2000, in his 98th year. It was to inaugurate the treasury and archives of the Holy Mountain, to which he had dedicated his Onassis Prize of 1997. They are housed in a fortified library, the Protaton Tower, which is a Byzantine version of Elshieshields Tower where SR kept his own papers in Dumfriesshire. The Patriarch of Constantinople did not come, having some trouble with the monks of Athos, but SR was pleased that the monastery of Vatopaidi gave him the guest-room used by the Prince of Wales. In an interview there he spoke of his first visit to Athos in 1937, but did not mention his return then, by bus to Thessaloniki when he assisted at the childbirth of a fellow passenger, in a thunderstorm. The scene is described in *A Travellers's Alphabet* under A for *Athos*. Z for *Zion* concludes: 'I shall bravely hope that what the saints of old have told us is true and that when my travels are ended I shall reach the New Jerusalem, Zion, city of our God.' But from the Holy Mountain in 2000 he was at first diverted. Through some wonder of flight and calendar he was taken from Athos on 2 July (OS) and delivered to the Athenaeum Club on 15 July, all within one day. In secular time Steven Runciman died on 1 November 2000 and was buried at Lochmaben according to the rites of the Church of Scotland.

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Note. Most of SR's historical works, of which this cannot be a bibliography, are referred to in the text.

I am primarily grateful to the Revd Dr Ann Shukman, literary executor of SR, for allowing me to sample and quote from her uncle's papers, which are being catalogued at Elshieshields. SR left his working library to the University of St Andrews. His collection of others' offprints is now in the Institute of Byzantine Studies, Queen's University of Belfast; his collection of paintings by Edward Lear in the National Gallery of Scotland; and of coins in the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham. Apart from 242 papers in typescript, SR's main unpublished work is *Footnotes to a Long Life*, an unfinished typescript in seven chapters and prologue of autobiography to 1939. They are partial 'footnotes' to his *A Traveller's Alphabet. Partial Memoirs* (London, 1991). Notable series of letters include those from SR's mother to his father (1903–17); SR to his parents and sisters, SR to his brother Leslie (1925–46) and SR to Stewart Perowne (1952–62)—which are the most entertaining.

I am most grateful to Donald M. Nicol, FBA, for the loan of his letters from SR (1951–91). SR was a Gladstonian correspondent; his customised Christmas cards were glued together at home. Many, such as David Abulafia, have kept his letters. I first met SR in the House by Herod's Gate, Jerusalem, in 1942 and have letters since 1967.

I am also grateful to The British Council at Athens, Costa Carras, Lydia Carras, Malgorzata Dabrowska, William Davies, Nicholas Egon, Bernard Hamilton, Lord Jellicoe, Haris Kalligas, Charles King-Farlow, Peter Marshall, Faith Raven, Lord John Montagu Douglas Scott, and Henry Shukman, and many others.

SR on History include 'The Writing of History', *The Historical Association Jubilee Addresses* (London, 1956); and 'Medieval History and the Romantic Imagination', the Katja Reissner Lecture of the Royal Society of Literature, 13 December 1962. SR maintained that his most perceptive reviewer was Gore Vidal, *Reflections upon a sinking ship* (London, 1969), 154–9. It is a good review among many, but why did he choose it?

SR in Contexts of Place and on Friends include: Noel Annan, *The Dons: Mentors, Eccentrics and Geniuses* (London, 1999) on Cambridge and 'Dadie' Rylands, to whom SR later dedicated a moral fable, *Paradise Regained*, written in 1935 (privately printed, 1992) and a note in *Dadie Rylands* (privately printed, King's College, Cambridge, 2000); SR on Sir Charles Lambe in Oliver Warner, *Admiral of the Fleet* (London, 1969); SR on Edith Wharton, 'Mrs Wharton', *The Yale Review*, 77 (1988), 560–2; on SR in Jerusalem, J. Connell, *The House by Herod's Gate* (London, 1944); and on the Runcimans on Eigg (1922–66), Camille Dressler, *Eigg. The Story of an Island* (Edinburgh, 1998). A film, *Bridge to the East*, directed by Lydia Carras (Amaranthos, 1991), places SR in Elshieshields, Istanbul and Mistra.

Memoirs and Interviews with SR 1983–2000 include: Rachel Cullen, *The Times*, 7 July 1983; on Guy Burgess in Brian Penrose and Simon Freeman, *Conspiracy of Silence. The Secret Life of Anthony Blunt* (London, 1986) and Miranda Carter, *Anthony Blunt. His Lives* (London, 2001); David Plante, *The New Yorker*, Nov. 1986; Anastasios Sagos, *A Chronicle of The British Council Office in Athens*, typescript file, 1987; anonymous, *The Observer*, 3 May 1987; John Shirley, *The Observer*, 10 Feb. 1991; Malgorzata Dabrowska, unpublished interview, Nov. 1996; Sabbas Spentzas, *Kathimerini*, 14 Sept. 1997; James Owen, *The Spectator*, 15 Aug. 1998; Naim Attallah, *The Oldie*, Nov. 1998. Letter from SR, *The Daily Telegraph*, 25 Sept. 1999 on a passion for ducks, which SR shared with Lord Grey of Falloden from 1908–33, which may also be found a bibliographical home with G. M. Trevelyan.

Obituaries and subsequent Memoirs include: Philip Mansell and Tam Dalyell in *The Independent* and anonymous notices in *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*, 2 Nov. 2000; Patrick Bahners, in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and Nigel Clive in *The Guardian*, 3 Nov. 2000; anonymous, *Annandale Herald*, 16 Nov. 2000; Desmond Seward, *The Art Newspaper*, 109, Dec. 2000; David Abulafia, *Mediterranean Studies*, 9 (2000), 1–16; Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia, Costa Carras, and Graham Speake, *Friends of Mount Athos Annual Report* (2000), 26–35; Konstantinos Angelides, *Pemptousia*, 4 (2000), 34–40; Anthony Bryer, *Anatolian Studies*, 50 (2000), v–vi, *Bulletin of British Byzantine Studies*, 27 (2001), 82–4, *Cornucopia*, 22 (2001), 37–8 and *History Today*, 51 (May 2001) 4–5; anonymous, *The Tilling Society Newsletter*, 36 (2001); anonymous, *National Art Collections Fund Quarterly*, Spring 2001; Lord

Jellicoe, *The Anglo-Hellenic Review*, 23 (2001); Giles Constable, *Times Literary Supplement*, 2 Feb. 2001; George Kalophonos, *AO*, Alexander Onassis Foundation, *Deltio*, 15 (2001); Charlotte Roueché, King's College London, Centre for Hellenic Studies, *Newsletter*, 12 (2001).

Commemorative Meetings. For a Memorial service, held in St Columba's Church of Scotland, Pont Street, London, on 25 Jan. 2001, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies composed '*Dove, Star-folded*', a string trio, noting that SR 'owned the small automatic organ which had belonged to King George III, with which the King, in his madness, had tried to teach caged finches to sing . . .' It is 'based on a Byzantine hymn . . . with a tangential flow of thought which I would like to think catches the essence of Steven's luminous thought processes and conversation. The end is calm and wrapt . . .' Subsequent services were held in King's College London on 1 Feb. 2001, in St Sophia, Moscow Road, London, on 28 May 2001, in Oxford on 1 Nov. 2001 and on Mount Athos in perpetuity. Commemorative meetings, to be published, were held at the Gennadius Library, Athens, on 12 Dec. 2000 (including Anthony Bryer, Costa Carras, Haris Kalligas, Katerina Krikos-Davis, and Angeliki Laiou); at the P. and A. Spentzas Foundation for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies' Runciman Conference at Mistra, on 27–8 May 2001 (including Anthony Bryer, Costa Carras, Ann Shukman, and Speros Vryonis Jr.); *A Tribute to Sir Steven Runciman*, 3rd International Conference on *Crusades and Military Orders*, University of Zaragoza, on 19–25 July 2001 (including Bernard Hamilton and Luis Garcia-Guijarro Ramos).

Commemorative Publications: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 4 (1978), ed. D. M. Nicol, was a *Festschrift* for SR. On 21–3 May 1993 Michael Angold assembled twenty-four Byzantinists at Glenesk to read papers on *Byzantine Cities* to SR for his 90th birthday (he was very patient). These have somehow developed into *Byzantine Style, Religion and Civilization*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys, essays in honour of SR, which will be published in 2004. The work of SR will be discussed and exhibited at the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies, London, in 2006.