



HEDLEY SPARKS

Ramsey & Muspratt

Hedley Frederick Davis Sparks 1908–1996

HEDLEY SPARKS was born on 14 November 1908, at Stoke Newington in East London. Both his father Frederick Sparks (who had died, at the age of 61, some five weeks before Hedley's birth) and his grandfather George Davis Sparks had been ordained, and both had remarried after being widowed. Frederick Sparks's second wife, Blanche Barnes, Hedley Sparks's mother, was the eldest daughter of Major-General William Jackson, a strict disciplinarian, whose 'intense admiration for Disraeli resulted in his filling [his] house with portraits, busts and other representations of the great man'.¹ At the time of his death, Frederick Sparks had been curate of West Hackney, and his funeral was conducted by Cosmo Gordon Lang, then Bishop of Stepney. Mrs Sparks and her infant son were offered a new home by the Rector of Noke (on Otmoor, a few miles north east of Oxford), Harry Thorp who was the brother of Frederick Sparks's first wife, and who, having recently lost his own wife, was happy to have someone to run the Rectory. The arrangement worked well for a while, but eventually came to an end owing to Harry Thorp's increasing addiction to the bottle.

One of my first recorded misdemeanours was to have 'watered' the flowers in the border outside the front door at the Rectory with the contents of a half-empty whisky bottle I had found on the table in the hall.

¹ Unless otherwise attributed, passages in quotation marks and in indented quotations are taken from Sparks's *Memoirs* (cited below as 'Memoirs'), for which see the end note.

There followed several years during which his mother acted as 'mother's help' to various clerical households, but eventually they were rescued from this itinerant and impoverished existence by a kind friend, Mrs Ellen Davies, who provided the money for them to rent a modest house in Orpington, into which they moved in May 1916. From a local school in Orpington (where he already started on Ritchie's First Steps in Latin) Hedley moved on, in September 1918, to St Edmund's School, Canterbury, which had been founded by the Clergy Orphan Corporation in the 1850s. Organised games he disliked:

Not that I resented being made to take exercise; but organised games always seemed to me such an uneconomic way of making the naturally incompetent take their exercise, and consequently such a wicked waste of their time.

In the Oxford and Cambridge Joint Board's School Certificate, which he took in 1924, Hedley gained credits in seven out of the eight subjects he took. A mild attack of Encephalitis lethargica caused him to miss his first two terms in the Sixth Form where the teaching was focused on Classics 'as a matter of course'. Both Classics and Divinity were taught by the Headmaster, W. F. Burnside, 'to whom'—as Sparks was later to record in his Memoirs—'I owe a very great deal indeed'. Burnside was evidently a man who lived up to his frequent comment that 'Rest is not idleness but a change of occupation.' Another master whom he recalls as being especially helpful was W. C. Dale, who taught French, but also started Hedley on German (a subject which had been killed off in many schools after the 1914–18 war), giving him a copy of the 11th edition (1921) of the Stuttgart Greek–German New Testament.

It was in the Sixth Form that the young Hedley first became seriously interested in New Testament studies; as he records:

Very early on I read Armitage Robinson's² *The Study of the Gospels*, and I remember finding in it a reference to 'a document which has . . . completely disappeared, and can only be reconstructed by critical methods from the Gospels of St Matthew and St Luke'—what I was soon to learn to call 'Q'; and I tried my hand at 'reconstruction' along the lines that Robinson indicated. I have often wished that my tentative efforts in this direction had been preserved: it would have been interesting to look at them in the light of some of my subsequent work in the area. But perhaps better not!

² For the Memoir on J. A. Robinson, see *PBA*, 20 (1934), pp. 297–308.

In February 1927 he travelled to Oxford to sit the examination for the Colquitt Exhibition at Brasenose. Sparks was the only candidate, and as he records he

was treated with what seemed astonishing kindness and consideration. I wrote nearly all my papers in the ante-room of the Modern History tutor ([G. H.] Wakeling). On the last day an interview followed the morning paper, I was taken to lunch in the Senior Common Room (which, for a raw school-boy, was rather an awe-inspiring experience) and then the Ancient History tutor (Michael Holroyd, who was to be my 'moral' tutor when I came up) took me to his rooms, sat me at a large table, put a Latin Prose and a box of chocolates in front of me, and remarked as he left that I could go when I liked. A few days later I had a formal, but very friendly, letter from the Principal saying that they had elected me.

When Sparks went up to Oxford to read Theology in October 1927 the Principal of Brasenose was C. H. Sampson, whose knowledge of train timetables clearly endeared him to Sparks who had been a keen 'trainiac' ever since his earliest school days:

When elected Principal in 1920 he had served the college as Senior Tutor for no less than twenty-six years. To us undergraduates he appeared a benign old gentleman, almost saintly, with a shock of pure white hair, a pair of round spectacles with the thickest of lenses, spidery handwriting that was almost impossible to read (he wrote all his personal letters himself), and a habit of interspersing any conversation with a succession of 'Quite's. He was accessible at all times and patiently listened to whatever triviality it might be that we had come to talk to him about, seemed genuinely interested, and was always helpful. His memory for detail was phenomenal: never, it was said, did he get anyone's initials wrong. But his speciality was Bradshaw. He would discuss with any undergraduate who went to see him at the end of term the route by rail to his home town or village, if it seemed at all obscure, and, if there was more than one possible route, he would recommend this rather than that in the light of the respective train times, which as likely as not he would have at his finger-tips without reference to the book.

As well as reading for the Theology School, Sparks concurrently read for the B.Mus. but, although he successfully sat two parts of this, he never took the final part and so did not gain the degree. Music, however, always remained an important part of his life, and his ability to play the organ was to come in useful on a much later occasion. His tutor in Theology was F. W. Green. Although Green's own field was Doctrine, he encouraged Sparks to concentrate on the biblical side, and indeed it was he who was responsible for Sparks learning Hebrew:

He knew no Hebrew himself, so that he had no axe to grind. One day, when I had been with him a few weeks, he raised the question of what I should take

as a 'special subject'. I went back to college, studied the options in the Statutes, and came up with 'Jewish and Early Christian Apocalyptic Literature'. When I told him of this at my next tutorial, he said firmly 'No'. And then, after a pause, added something to the effect 'If you're interested in Apocalyptic Literature, what is important is that you should learn some Hebrew now as a start, so as to qualify yourself for a serious study of the literature later on'. I expostulated that I had no special facility in languages, that I had only just been delivered from bondage to the Classics, and that consequently the idea did not appeal to me. But he was adamant; and after reflection I saw the point and agreed at least to try.

Thus Sparks commenced on Hebrew, being taught by E. R. Micklem, and in the end he even decided to take it as a special subject in Schools. Among the lectures he later recalled having attended 'both with profit and with pleasure' were those by G. R. Driver³ on 'Babylon and Israel', A. E. J. Rawlinson on 'The Book of Wisdom', K. E. Kirk on 'The Theology of St Paul' and E. W. Watson on 'The Persecutions in the Roman Empire'. But it is on D. C. Simpson's lectures that he dwells on at greatest length:

He was universally known as 'Yahweh'; and he lectured twice a week . . . in the Hall at Oriel on 'The Religion of Israel'. The whole course lasted for four terms, and, when he got to the end, he would start again at the beginning. It was, therefore, a matter of luck where, so to say, you 'came in'. But that somehow did not seem to matter, since the Hall was always full. He lectured with nothing on the reading-desk in front of him except his Bible: he would make us look up in our own Bibles (and tell us to mark) the particular passages he referred to as he went along—and woe betide anyone who hadn't brought a Bible!;—and when he was dealing with more general matters he would sit on the High Table, swinging his legs in front of him, and just talk. His lectures were very definitely 'bread and butter' lectures—hence their popularity. But I learned a lot from them myself, not merely in the way of subject-matter, but more particularly, how it is possible, if one is prepared to take the trouble, to select what is important from a mass of rather complicated and what is for most people essentially dull material, order it so that they can get hold of it without too much trouble, and then 'put it over' acceptably in public.

In the course of his second year Sparks was invited to give a paper in the following May to the Origen Society. He chose as his subject the dating of Deuteronomy (arguing for a sixth-century date, against the current view that it belonged to the seventh). The paper evidently sufficiently impressed G. A. Cooke, the Regius Professor of Hebrew,

³ Memoir in *PBA*, 63 (1977), pp. 345–62.

who was in the chair, for him to invite Sparks to lunch a few weeks later. The following year an extended essay on 'Jewish and Early Christian Eschatology' won him the Wordsworth Prize at Brasenose. In the final chapter of this, entitled 'The eschatology of Jesus and the Gospels', which was subsequently published in a shorter form in *The Modern Churchman*,⁴ Sparks proposed that 'a number of the highly-coloured eschatological passages attributed to Jesus in the Gospels' should be explained 'as possibly originally sayings of John the Baptist, which had become confused with those of Jesus in the tradition'. In the Memoirs he goes on to comment: 'Naturally, I should not now be prepared to stand by all the details in that essay; but I still think there is a great deal to be said for the basic idea.'

Schools came in June 1930, and he recalled that a violent thunderstorm appropriately accompanied his final Hebrew paper which included the passage I Samuel 7: 10 ('The Lord thundered with a mighty voice that day . . .'). One of the examiners that year happened to be G. A. Cooke, who commented to Sparks at the viva voce examination 'You've done us some very good work; and we're very pleased with you.' Another of the examiners was C. H. Dodd,⁵ and Sparks records 'I have always been gratified that I was awarded alpha plus on the Gospels in a year when Dodd was examining.'

By the end of his undergraduate course at Oxford Sparks already had the desire to become a scholar, and his First in the Theology Schools provided him with a stepping stone to a Senior Hulme Scholarship at Brasenose. This allowed for graduate study or research in any subject for a period of three years, but since he was an ordinand he also needed to find a suitable Theological College in the Oxford area, which in effect meant a choice between St Stephen's House, Wycliffe Hall, and Ripon Hall, each of which had its own ecclesiastical colour. His choice fell on 'Modernist' Ripon Hall (then situated opposite Wadham College, a site now occupied by part of the New Bodleian Library). H. D. A. Major, the Principal of Ripon Hall, suggested Sparks should take the opportunity to read for the Oriental School as a second Honour School, but G. A. Cooke disliked the idea and suggested that instead Sparks come informally to him once a week to read Hebrew and Aramaic texts, as well as attend any other lectures that seemed worthwhile. A course for beginners in Assyriology, advertised in the Lecture

⁴ 20 (1929/30), pp. 519–31, entitled 'Advent teaching in the Gospels'.

⁵ Memoir in *PBA*, 60 (1974), pp. 497–510.

List, caught Sparks's eye one term; it was to be given by Stephen Langdon,⁶ the Shillito Professor of Assyriology, at his house in Lathbury Road. Sparks duly turned up at the advertised time, and was shown by the maid to Langdon's study:

He received me in a kindly manner, but was clearly unaware that anyone might be expected at that hour—indeed he confessed as much. When I explained, among other things, that I was a Senior Hulme Scholar of Brasenose, he at once became enthusiastic. 'C. J. Gadd',⁷ he said, 'was a Senior Hulme Scholar of Brasenose; and he was the best pupil I ever had'. So he settled me down immediately with a copy of Delitzsch's *Assyrische Lesestücke* (which he lent me), explained the fundamentals, and sent me off to get up as much of them as I could for the next week, when he was to start off with the piece of Sennacherib's annals that Delitzsch had printed as his first 'text'.

Sparks remained an intermittent pupil of Langdon's for the remaining two years of his Scholarship, and he was later to reflect:

I think it is true to say that, as an individual he taught me more than anyone else in Oxford. I never intended to become an Assyriologist, and he knew that. What I learned from him ultimately was not Assyriology (though I did learn quite a bit of Assyriology at the time, most of which I have now forgotten), but the inside of what exact scholarship could mean to a devoted man.

Although the Memoirs do not mention this, Sparks must at some time have dipped sufficiently into Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar* to be able, in later life when examining Theology Schools one year, to catch out an over-clever undergraduate who produced a fake hieroglyphic inscription which allegedly mentioned the Israelites (Sparks was second reader for this paper, and the first reader had assumed the inscription was genuine).

Among the seminars which he attended was one on the Synoptic Gospels, run by B. H. Streeter:

His seminar was not a seminar in the strict sense: no set papers were read and discussed, except only occasionally when a specially knotty problem came up. The normal procedure was that, after tea, Streeter would take the chair, and we would start, in Huck's Synopsis, from where we had left off last time. Streeter would say what he thought about the passage, and then it was open to anyone to do the same.

⁶ Memoir in *PBA*, 23 (1937), pp. 565–80.

⁷ Memoir in *PBA*, 56 (1970), pp. 363–402.

Among the dozen or so participants of this seminar was T. W. Manson.⁸ Comparing Manson with Dodd, both scholars whom he greatly admired, Sparks comments in the Memoirs 'I have always felt that, great scholars as both men were, Manson ultimately had the edge over Dodd'. Another scholar whom he met during his tenure of the Senior Hulme Scholarship was R. H. Lightfoot,⁹ who was to become a good friend, and who helped Sparks in a number of different ways.

An exchange programme arranged between the Principal of Ripon Hall and the Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Marburg University gave Sparks the opportunity to spend the summer term of 1932 in Marburg, where he was able to attend the lectures of two famous biblical scholars, Rudolf Bultmann and Karl Budde. Bultmann's lectures on New Testament Introduction he describes as being 'well worth while, though not especially striking', but his seminar on Synoptic Problems 'was much more stimulating'. As a person, he found Bultmann 'both kindly and considerate, and not in the least assertive or bombastic'. This comes out nicely from Sparks's description of a particular episode:

I remember especially one of Bultmann's later lectures (on St John) when Garrard¹⁰ and I were sitting together in the front row. In the course of the lecture Bultmann referred rather cautiously to Tzay. F. Burrnee, Ze Aramaic Orrigeen of ze Fowerth Gorspel. Delighted to have an English work in which I was interested mentioned in a German lecture-room, I turned to Garrard with what I intended as an indication of my pleasure. Bultmann saw it, looked down on us both, and with the sweetest of smiles remarked (in German) 'You will see that I have learned my English with the eyes and not with the ears'.

Of Karl Budde, who was known to students as 'Nestor Budde', Sparks recalls:

He was at the time 82 years of age and was reputed to have fought as a young man in the Franco-Prussian war. He was lecturing twice a week on Job. Though he had a text in front of him, he seemed to know both it and all the emendations that had ever been suggested by heart. He moved backwards and forwards repeatedly between his reading desk and the blackboard and pointed the Hebrew words he wrote up with the vigour and zest of a twenty-year old.

1932/3 was the last year of his scholarship, and so thought had to be taken for the future. The Bishop of Oxford agreed to ordain him (this

⁸ Memoir in *PBA*, 44 (1958), pp. 325–37.

⁹ Memoir in *PBA*, 40 (1954), pp. 253–61.

¹⁰ L. A. Garrard, later Principal of Manchester College, Oxford, was on a similar exchange. He and Hedley remained life-long friends.

eventually took place on 24 September 1933, in Christ Church), and so Sparks began applying for any posts of College Chaplain that came up; in this he had no success, although he was nearly appointed by Exeter. In the meanwhile he had been approached by H. J. White,¹¹ the Dean of Christ Church, enquiring whether he would be interested in becoming White's assistant on the big Oxford critical edition of the Vulgate New Testament. Sparks (whose name had been suggested to White by B. J. Kidd and E. C. Ratcliff) provisionally agreed, and so began what was to prove to be one of his most significant academic undertakings.

The Dean's original idea was that Christ Church would elect me to a Senior scholarship. But there were those on the Governing Body, I was given to understand, who felt that Christ Church, as a foundation, was already encumbered with enough spare clerics and they were unwilling to add to their numbers gratuitously. On the other hand, they were perfectly happy to assist the Dean in what they insisted was purely his own private undertaking. The upshot was that my existence would not be formally recognized, but they would make £150 a year available to the Dean from the Lapsed Emoluments Fund, which he could pass on to me (or whoever else he might engage to assist him), and he himself would be responsible for the additional £50.

In order to make ends meet, it was arranged that Sparks should also act as curate at the City Church of All Saints, now the library of Lincoln College, and as chaplain at Ripon Hall which had just moved to Boar's Hill.

When Sparks took up his position as White's assistant in 1933 the project was already half a century old. The idea of a new critical edition of the Vulgate New Testament had originally been conceived by John Wordsworth,¹² who had put his initial proposal to Oxford University Press in 1878. According to the Memoirs, Wordsworth's 'initial interest in Jerome's Latin Biblical text seems to have been aroused by B. F. Wescott's article on "Vulgate", published in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible in 1863'. By 1882 enough preliminary work had been done to produce a pamphlet, *The Oxford Critical Edition of the Vulgate New Testament*, describing the approach and listing the textual witnesses to be used; the slightly revised form of this, reissued the following year, runs to twelve pages. At first most of the work of collating manuscripts was done by Wordsworth himself, but in due course he was assisted by younger scholars, in particular G. M. Youngman and H. J. White. After Wordsworth's appointment in 1885 as bishop of Salisbury 'White

¹¹ Memoir in *PBA*, 22 (1936), pp. 408–17.

¹² Memoir in *PBA*, 5 (1911–12), pp. 530–48.

became more and more the real editor of the Vulgate, though always under Wordsworth's supervision and control', right up to the latter's death in 1911.

The work progressed steadily, and the first four fascicles, containing each of the Gospels in turn, appeared in 1889, 1891, 1893, and 1895, subsequently to appear (in 1898) bound together with an extensive Epilogus. Acts followed in 1905, and work was commenced on Romans, though the appearance of that fascicle was delayed until 1913, since in 1907 the British and Foreign Bible Society had put forward the idea of producing a hand edition of the Latin New Testament, using Wordsworth's and White's text with a minimal textual apparatus. The idea interested both scholars, and as a result White's attention was diverted to providing a suitable text for the remaining books of the New Testament, not yet reached by the critical edition. His resulting editio minor duly came out in 1911, the year of Wordsworth's death. White was now left on his own as editor, but in 1914 (at the suggestion of Claude Jenkins, at that time one of his colleagues at King's College, London) he took on Alexander Ramsbotham as assistant, a role in which the latter continued until his death in 1932. During this time he provided White with all the material for I–II Corinthians, and put together a great deal of the evidence that would be needed for the remaining books of the Pauline corpus, along with several collations for the Catholic Epistles and the Apocalypse.

Sparks was in effect Ramsbotham's successor, and in the Long Vacation of 1933 he was set to work on the proofs of Ephesians, and early in the next year the fascicle containing Galatians and Ephesians was published. Sparks's working association with White, however, was cut short when the latter died on 16 July 1934:¹³

Although I had been familiar with the Dean at a distance since my earliest undergraduate days, having seen him about Oxford and in the Cathedral, at the time of his death I had only been personally acquainted with him for just over a year. During that period I had become increasingly devoted to him; but I would not like to say that I really 'knew' him. Throughout our brief relationship he was kindness itself and was clearly genuinely concerned about what I was doing beyond the confines of the Vulgate. Undoubtedly the Vulgate was his greatest interest in life; and I suspect that his secret hope was that gradually I might prove to be to him what he himself had been to Wordsworth. In the event, this is precisely what happened, though obviously not in the way he had intended.

¹³ Sparks was later to write the entry on H. J. White in the *Dictionary of National Biography 1931–1940* (1949), pp. 901–2.

Christ Church and Oxford University Press quickly agreed that Sparks should continue with the work (and Mrs White generously continued with the extra £50). White's literary executor was S. C. E. Legg, and it was he who arranged that F. C. Burkitt¹⁴ in Cambridge, should take on the role of senior supervisor for the project. A few months later, in a letter to the Principal of Ripon Hall dated 21 December 1934, Burkitt mentioned to Major that he had just taken on 'the responsibility of looking after your Mr Sparks, a very nice young man'.

At the time of his death White had reached the middle of chapter 3 of Philippians. Sparks finished off the book, sent the work for Burkitt's approval in February 1935, and a month later, after Burkitt had made a number of detailed comments, it was in the hands of the Press. Burkitt, however, died on 11 May of that year, and so yet another supervisor had to be found. B. H. Streeter was chosen, and it was he who wrote the preface to the fascicle containing Philippians, Colossians, and I–II Thessalonians, published in June 1937, only a few months before Streeter was killed in an air crash in Switzerland on 10 September 1937. After Streeter's death the Press decided that a senior 'supervisor' was no longer necessary; Christ Church, however, continued to pay Sparks indirectly, this time by way of Claude Jenkins, by then the Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History. Sparks was not a little disconcerted to discover by accident that Jenkins had then described himself in Crockford's Clerical Directory as 'Editor' of 'Wordsworth and White's *Novum Testamentum* from 1939'.¹⁵ Eventually (with the help of Kenneth Sisam¹⁶ from the OUP) Jenkins was persuaded to modify the entry to 'Supervisor (for Ch.Ch.Ox.) . . .'. In the meantime, however, Sparks continued with the work single-handed for a while, but was able to enlist the help of A. W. Adams from II Timothy onwards (Sparks in due course handed over to him the full editorship of I–III John, so that he could 'be responsible for something that he could feel (and say) was definitely "his"'). The fascicle containing I–II Timothy, Titus, and Philemon was published in March 1939, while Hebrews followed in September 1941,¹⁷ the Catholic Epistles in May 1949, and

¹⁴ Memoir in *PBA*, 22 (1936), pp. 445–84.

¹⁵ Jenkins' name misleadingly appeared on the title page from fascicle 6 (1939) of volume II onwards, as well as on that of the bound volume II.

¹⁶ Memoir in *PBA*, 58 (1972), pp. 409–28.

¹⁷ M. L. W. Laistner, writing from Cornell to thank Sparks for a copy of this, described it as 'good old vintage'; he went on 'I congratulate you on a fine piece of work. When the whole is finished, it will be one of the outstanding achievements of English scholarship' (letter of 29 January 1942).

the Apocalypse in March 1954. These last two fascicles, along with Acts (published in 1905) then appeared together as volume III of the entire enterprise. In the preface to this Sparks was careful to specify who had contributed what in the work that had been undertaken since White's death. The key role played by Sparks in bringing this magnificent edition of the Vulgate New Testament to completion is justly pointed out by the late Dom Bonifatius Fischer in the course of an extended review article in the *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*.¹⁸

Sparks's achievement is all the more remarkable, in that much of the work on the Pauline Corpus was done during the adverse conditions of the war years and their immediate aftermath. July 1940, for example, was spent collating Vulgate manuscripts in Aberystwyth, whither the British Museum's collections had been removed for safety. In the autumn of that year he was corresponding with Kirsopp Lake, in Haverford, Pennsylvania, who was trying to get photographs of codex Gigas in Stockholm,¹⁹ by way of the Swedish Minister in Washington; at first Lake had sounded hopeful this might succeed, but in a brief letter of 26 February [1941] he had to write to Sparks 'have heard from Sweden, and I fear that there is no chance of any photographs until after the war. The codex is in hiding. I wish I could have done more.' In the immediate aftermath of the war he was able to use the services of Captain H. Niblock, of the British Army of the Rhine's Advanced Headquarters in Berlin, to make contact with the Librarian of the Staatliche Bibliothek in Bamberg. In a letter of 23 June 1946 Niblock reported to Sparks that 'The Librarian informs me that . . . their scripts had been evacuated to the Bavarian mountains and they were just now in the process of having them collected and returned to Bamberg. As soon as they are received at the Staatliche Bibliothek the Librarian will be able to furnish answers to your queries.' By the end of June the manuscripts were back and the Librarian, Dr Curt Hoefner, promptly provided in a letter of 29 June 1946 the answers to Sparks's queries over certain readings in the Alcuin Bible (A.1.5; he had visited Bamberg in person to work on the manuscript in October 1937). Something of what this renewed academic contact meant can be seen from Dr Hoefner's reply, dated 29 July 1946, to Sparks's letter of thanks:

¹⁸ *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 46, (1955), pp. 178–96, entitled 'Der Vulgata-Text des Neuen Testaments'; see especially p. 180. On p. 185 he justly refers to the edition as a whole as 'Wordsworth–White–Sparks', instead of the customary 'Wordsworth–White'.

¹⁹ Stockholm, A. 148 (siglum *gig* and, in the Beuron Vetus Latina edition, 51).

Das Vergnügen über die Wiederanknüpfung der kulturellen Beziehungen ist auf unserer Seite nicht geringer als bei Ihnen, zumal uns die Ereignisse der letzten 13 Jahre immer stärker von der übrigen Welt abgeschnitten hatten. Wir sitzen heute in Deutschland in einer geradezu verzweifelten Verlassenheit und Isolierung, die von den Übeln der Nachkriegszeit von unsreinem mit als das ärgste empfunden wird. Umsomehr freut es einen, wenn man gelegentlich sieht, daß es jenseits des Zauns auch noch Menschen gibt, mit denen man sich in der *république des lettres* verbunden weiß.

The year that Sparks began his work on the Vulgate he moved in, with his mother, to a rented house in Oxford (43 Broad Street),²⁰ although Sparks spent the weekdays during term time at Ripon Hall, now on Boar's Hill, where he combined his position as chaplain with tutoring anyone there who was reading Theology in the University. As the initial three-year's appointment with the Vulgate was drawing to an end he began seriously to look around for a full-time academic appointment. In 1936 a lectureship at in the Theological Faculty at Durham came up, and following the interview, Sparks was offered the post (the other two candidates were C. F. Evans and F. E. Vokes, who were both also to go on to distinguished academic careers). His initial duties at Durham were to teach early Christian Doctrine and Patristics, and this continued until the arrival early in 1940 of Michael Ramsey as Professor of Divinity in succession to O. C. Quick: Ramsey (who 'proved a delight to work with') then took over the Doctrine side while Sparks took on Hebrew, since T. W. Thacker, who had previously taught it, had been seconded for work in Intelligence soon after the outbreak of the war. The departure of the Censor of Hatfield College into the army further led to Sparks's appointment as Acting-Censor, a post he was to hold until he left Durham in 1946. Looking back on this time he wrote: 'I have often reflected that of all the things I did in Durham my job as Acting-Censor was the most personally satisfying, and at the same time probably the most generally useful.' To judge by some amusing descriptions in the Memoirs he was extremely successful and effective in dealing with difficult or awkward incidents.

For several years during his time at Durham Sparks gave a series of Sixth Form broadcasts on the Home Service, starting off with three on the New Testament, entitled *The Story of the Manuscripts of the New*

²⁰ In the Memoirs Sparks notes that a photograph of the cupboard in their kitchen in that house can be found in W. A. Pantin's 'The recently demolished houses in Broad Street, Oxford', in *Oxoniensia*, 2 (1937), pp. 171–200. This will be plate XXIID; a view of the row of houses is to be found in plates XIV–XV.

Testament, *The Originals behind the Oldest Manuscripts*, and *The Canon of the New Testament*. It was also during this period that he wrote *The Old Testament in the Christian Church*, published in 1944.

After nearly ten years in Durham Sparks was beginning to feel he should start looking for openings elsewhere. Although he was interviewed for the Samuel Davidson Chair of Old Testament Studies in the University of London, it was Alfred Guillaume who was in the end appointed. Then, in the autumn of 1945, Birmingham University advertised for a Professor of Theology. The interview was a formidable affair, since the appointment was to be made by the entire body of all the professors, and so Sparks found himself 'bombarded with questions from all sides and from every conceivable angle'. Evidently he acquitted himself well, for a few days later he received a letter announcing his appointment.

On taking up his new post in October 1946 he found that one of his first tasks was to devise a new Honours School of Theology and B.D.; and at the same time to recruit, from local theological colleges, a considerable number of 'Recognised Lecturers' to teach the new courses. Sparks had a good eye for the right person, and among those he managed to gather in for the task were G. W. Anderson, R. H. Fuller, R. P. C. Hanson,²¹ and A. S. Herbert, all of whom were fine scholars in their respective fields. Since the Department of Theology was non-denominational Sparks was determined, if possible, to include a Roman Catholic among the Recognised Lecturers. He found just the right man in Mgr H. F. Davis, Vice-Principal of Oscott,

who was a valuable standby, particularly in the Reformation period where he acted as a counterblast to [P. S.] Watson (a Luther scholar). . . . The appointment inevitably raised some eyebrows; but no valid objection could be alleged. Davis' adherence made us, I think, the first example of a genuinely 'ecumenical' Theological Department in a British University, where a Roman Catholic functioned on an equal footing with the other members of the Department.

Davis was later to give an account of this appointment from his own perspective:²²

When I began lecturing in Doctrine in 1947, the Head of the recently organised department, Professor H. F. D. Sparks, had recently come from

²¹ Memoir in *PBA*, 76 (1990), pp. 411–22.

²² In J. Coulson (ed.), *Theology and the University: an ecumenical investigation* (Downside Symposia 6; Baltimore and London, 1964), p. 175.

Durham. . . . He made it clear to me that he looked upon theology as a science of truth not of opinion. One was bound therefore to teach it as such. One could not appear to prejudge the issue by calling it Catholic, Protestant, or even neutral. One just taught the truth as far as was possible, and did not label it. . . . [I]n 1947 the situation of a Catholic lecturer in the theology department was exciting, but even at that less ecumenical time it worked perfectly.

In 1948, although not until the summer, Sparks was allowed to advertise for a full-time lecturer. The successful candidate was J. G. Davies (who was in due course (1960) to follow Sparks as Professor in Birmingham). Sparks had been warned beforehand that Davies might appear ‘a bit gruff and gauche’,

And this, sure enough, [he] did. . . . My first encounter with him was in the Common Room, which I visited just before we started [the interview] to make sure [all those called for interview] were there. Davies was sitting carelessly on one of the arms of a large settee, and as soon as he caught sight of me he asked cheerily ‘Are you on this racket as well?’ I assured him that I was; and I don’t think he was unduly put out when he met me in the chair in the next room shortly afterwards!

Once again the outcome showed that Sparks’s eye for the right man was unerring, for ‘[a]ltogether it was a most happy partnership and I had no regrets about our choice at any stage’. Gordon Davies and his wife Mary were soon to become close friends.

The following year Sparks was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Arts, an office he continued to hold the remainder of his time in Birmingham. This of course involved him in a large number of committees and other time-consuming duties, none more so, he found, than appointments of academic staff, seeing that strongly opposing opinions were often held by those on the appointments committee. The *Memoirs* further describe an incident when George Thomson, the Professor of Greek, (whom Sparks describes as someone he ‘got on very well with . . . personally; he was a man you could talk to and argue with’), tried to present the Faculty with a *fait accompli*:

He came in to see me the morning after [the] Faculty meeting, where he had been really roughly handled, and after a remarkably amicable discussion concluded with a smile, ‘I thought with you around I was unlikely to get away with it, but I still thought it was worth trying’.

As Dean of Arts, Sparks was also inevitably much involved with the University of Birmingham’s Jubilee Year, which fell in 1950. Other administrative duties, albeit less onerous, also came his way, for he

was appointed Governor both of Ripon Hall²³ and of Queen's College, Birmingham, and of Hatfield College in Durham, all of which roles involved regular, though not too frequent, meetings. Nevertheless, quite apart from continuing work on the Vulgate, Sparks managed to find time to write another book, *The Formation of the New Testament*, published in 1952. This was a short practical introduction to the New Testament literature (its approach is very different from R. M. Grant's book of the same title, published in 1965).

1951 proved a year that was to bring many changes in his life. Sparks's mother, with whom he had always lived, died on 2 June, and in September he applied to be considered for the Oriel Professorship of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford, a chair that had hitherto been combined with a canonry at Rochester, but which the University had only very recently decided to separate from this. It was only a couple of days before his birthday in November that he received news that he had duly been appointed to the chair. Amongst the ensuing letters of congratulation was one from Claude Jenkins, addressing him as 'Hieronymianissime',²⁴ at the same time asking whether the Vulgate Apocalypse was yet finished. Although from an academic point of view he was pleased that the separation of the Oriel Chair from the canonry meant that his appointment could not be seen as matter of convenience, thanks to his happening to have been ordained, on another level his lifelong devotion to cathedrals and cathedral music always made him regret that the separation had ever taken place.

Sparks had handed in his application for the Chair in September in person, since he was attending the first of the International Conferences on Patristic Studies, the brain-child of F. L. Cross,²⁵ the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity. Sparks spoke twice at the Conference, in both the Communications and at the sessions entitled *Instrumenta Studiorum* (where he spoke on the by now almost complete edition of the Vulgate New Testament); his brief but important paper, on 'A Celtic text of the Latin Apocalypse preserved in two Durham manuscripts of Bede's Apocalypse Commentary', was subsequently published in the *Journal*

²³ Later, in 1959, he became Chairman of the Governors of Ripon Hall (till 1971); he was also much involved in the discussions (1974–5) that led to the combining of Ripon Hall with Cuddesdon College to form Ripon College, Cuddesdon.

²⁴ Sparks was later to contribute a chapter on 'Jerome as a biblical scholar' to the first volume (ed. P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans) of the *Cambridge History of the Bible* (1970), pp. 510–41.

²⁵ Memoir in *PBA*, 55 (1969), pp. 363–75.

of *Theological Studies*.²⁶ It was at this conference that he first met Dom Bonifatius Fischer, of the *Vetus Latina Institut* in Beuron, who was to become a close friend, and with whom Sparks was subsequently to collaborate in the invaluable two-volume hand edition of the Vulgate Bible (*Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, Stuttgart, 1969). Two other important people he first met at this conference were Elizabeth ('Betsy') Livingstone, who was shortly to become Cross's secretary and then the organiser of future Patristic Conferences, and Margaret Davy, who was to become his wife (they were married on 25 August, 1953).

Early in 1952, and before he had moved to Oxford, he bought a small cottage at Littlestone, New Romney, on the Kent coast, a vacation home that was to give the Sparks family great pleasure over many years. Every summer he would take his place amongst the local clergy conducting services in the many Romney Marsh churches. Once his new appointment at Oxford started he took up residence in a flat on the corner of Oriel Square. His lectures over the years covered a variety of subjects, including 'The Jewish and early Christian background of the Doctrine of the Trinity', 'Textual criticism of the Old Testament', 'Pre-Exilic Israel' (this was a course Sparks gave regularly throughout his long tenure of the Oriel Professorship (1952–76) since he 'regarded [this] as basic for beginners in the Theology School proper'), as well as texts in both Hebrew and Greek. He also lectured on the recent Qumran discoveries 'until there was enough popular literature available to make what I had to say unnecessary'. A seminar on 'The Strata of the Septuagint' 'proved highly successful'; this was in fact a continuation of a seminar that he had already inaugurated (along with Hanson and Fuller) while he was in Birmingham, and was concerned with a detailed examination of translation usage in the different books of the LXX, with the aim of identifying the characteristics of the various translators. Some years later Sparks gave a lecture indicating some of the seminar's findings at the winter meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study in 1957. Many of the neatly tabulated sheets in Sparks's own hand containing materials deriving from this seminar are amongst his Nachlass, and have been offered to the Septuaginta Unternehmung in Göttingen.

Oriel proved a congenial college for Sparks. Soon after his arrival he was appointed as the Governing Body's representative on the Commemoration Ball Committee. This had one good outcome for him, for it was at the first Commemoration Ball which he attended that he and

²⁶ NS 5 (1954), pp. 227–31.

Margaret Davy got engaged (he also records that the Ball made a modest profit that year). His appreciation of Oriel was clearly reciprocated, to judge by the fact that, following the resignation of G. N. Clark²⁷ as Provost, he was asked by a number of Fellows whether he would be willing to stand as a candidate. His reply was that he would be willing, but only if he was allowed to retain his Professorship (this, however, turned out not to be possible according to Oxford's rules, and so the matter went no further). Subsequently, during the last three years before his retirement he served as Vice-Provost of Oriel. Although Professors have no tutorial duties in Oxford (and indeed are not allowed to be paid for any teaching of this sort that they might undertake), this did not prevent Sparks from doing, from 1964 onwards, quite a lot of tutorial teaching of Oriel undergraduates reading Theology; as he later wrote,

I had no regrets here. I liked teaching: I much preferred teaching undergraduates to toiling with the often very mediocre 'research' students that occasionally came my way. It was something I could do for the college; and there were never more than three Oriel undergraduates reading Theology in any one year.

In fact Sparks was an excellent supervisor of graduate students, as I can testify from my own experience: he always read one's work promptly and with a sharp and critical eye, spotting any weak or woolly arguments or unsatisfactory methodology at once; although this could be a little daunting at first, one soon began to appreciate the value of his criticism (which was always constructive). Furthermore, such was his and Margaret's warm hospitality that supervisions would merge into lunch (they were by that time living in Wytham), and (in summer) an afternoon in the garden with their three children, Henry, Mary, and John, perhaps also doing a little weeding or picking of fruit.

After their marriage, Hedley and Margaret Sparks stayed on during term in their Oriel flat for some years, but after the birth of their second child in November 1956, it became imperative to find somewhere with more adequate space, and in January 1957 they moved into 3 Davenant Road—where they had a number of distinguished academic neighbours, including Eric Kemp (future bishop of Chichester), W. D. McHardy (shortly afterwards to be appointed Regius Professor of Hebrew) and Christopher Stead (future Ely Professor of Divinity in Cambridge). A few years earlier, the possibility of an incumbency of the

²⁷ Memoir in *PBA*, 66 (1980), pp. 407–25.

parish of Wytham had been raised, but this had fallen through since the aged patron had another person in mind. The incumbency became vacant again in 1961 and the old patron was by then dead. Although a move was less convenient at this stage, Sparks was pressed by Cross to accept, and he was duly instituted there on 30 June 1961. As Wytham's organist (a research student) moved away from Oxford shortly after this, Sparks had to function as organist as well for most services, and this continued until 1968 when the family bought a house in Canterbury and moved there. From that point on, until his retirement in 1976, he lived during term in rooms in Oriel. This arrangement meant that, when he finally left Oxford, he already had many friends in Canterbury.

Sparks's Oxford years were taken up with a number of different long-term undertakings (his work on the Vulgate was almost completed by the time he moved there from Birmingham). The initial request that he should produce an English Synopsis of the Gospels was put to him (by the Revd C. B. Mortlock) as early as 1944. After considering the matter, and having consulted and sought the advice of Lightfoot, Manson, and Cross, Sparks agreed to undertake the work, and started to plan on how to go about it. For obvious practical reasons the text was to be the Revised Version, with the marginal notes, and all four Gospels were to be included; furthermore, 'the texts were to be so arranged that each individual Gospel could be read straight through in its own order, the parallels in the other three being arranged alongside', even though this was going to mean a lot of duplication. His aim was 'to pack as much scholarship into it as I could without the scholarship being oppressive'. This was to be no mere English version of Huck's *Synopsis*, and the Memoirs contain a fascinating account of how he decided the text should be divided up and arranged. Among other things, Sparks was very careful 'to ensure that identical or alternative words and phrases in any two passages should be printed exactly parallel'.

The first part, based on the Synoptic Gospels, eventually came out in 1964 (co-incidentally, the same year as K. Aland's new *Synopsis*, which also included the Johannine parallels); it was joined by the second part, based on John, in 1970). Anyone who has ever worked with it will readily appreciate the enormous labour and care that has gone into the making of this *Synopsis*, whose usefulness becomes all the greater as a good knowledge of New Testament Greek among Theology students becomes more and more rare. It is disappointing, however, that the work has never caught on in US; this is due to a dislike of the RV, and to the prior appearance there of another synopsis in English

(modelled directly on that of Huck-Lietzmann), *Gospel Parallels*, edited by B. H. Throckmorton. The complicated task of setting up the text was done by John Brown, of the Edinburgh firm of printers R. & R. Clark. In response to Sparks's letter of thanks to him after the initial volume of 1964 had appeared, Brown wrote back:²⁸

The work involved was its own reward in terminating successfully. In earlier days in our industry one had to produce satisfactory work to a greater extent than can be enforced today and in craftsmanship one learned also to do a good job for its own sake by choice, however much tedium might be involved. I am glad it is an achievement of which you may be proud.

Soon after Sparks's edition of the Vulgate Apocalypse had been published, Peter Spicer of Oxford University Press asked him whether they ought to reprint R. H. Charles's *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, stocks of which were running low. Since scholarship in this area had advanced considerably since 1913, it was clear that something new was really required, and for practical reasons it needed to be done on a less lavish scale. In the end, a single-volume counterpart to M. R. James's,²⁹ *The Apocryphal New Testament* was decided upon, and this was agreed to by the Delegates in April 1956. A great deal of thought was put into what should be included and what excluded, and Sparks set out his rationale in the Preface (dated 29 December 1981) to the volume,³⁰ where an indication is also given of some of the reasons which led to the various delays which hindered the completion of the project (the volume was finally published in January 1985). Although different scholars translated the various texts, it was Sparks himself who wrote all the introductions; these he did with admirable (and characteristic) concision, and this is a valuable feature which marks this volume out from the much more extensive collection of translations, edited in two volumes by J. H. Charlesworth (1983, 1985), where the introductions (and translations) are of very uneven quality.

Not long before he had been approached by Peter Spicer concerning Charles's *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the OT*, Sparks had received a letter from C. H. Roberts,³¹ the Secretary to the Delegates of Oxford

²⁸ Letter of 14 June 1964.

²⁹ Memoir in *PBA*, 22 (1936), pp. 418–33.

³⁰ *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford, 1984). A parergon from this was an article which is of relevance for the dating of the Testament of Jacob, '1 Kor 2 9 a quotation from the Coptic Testament of Jacob?', in *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 67 (1976), pp. 269–76.

³¹ Memoir in *PBA*, 84 (1993), pp. 479–83.

University Press, enquiring if he would take over from R. H. Lightfoot, who had died late in 1953, the editorship of the *Journal of Theological Studies*. In reply, Sparks expressed his general willingness to discuss the proposal further, but pointed out that, prior to Lightfoot's appointment, there had been two editors, one in Oxford and one in Cambridge. A reversion to this practice proved acceptable to the Press, and before long Henry Chadwick, Dean of Queens' College, Cambridge was identified as a possible editorial partner. Thus began a long and distinguished partnership which lasted until the end of 1977, when Sparks retired from the task (Chadwick continued until the end of 1985). In the course of this period the *Journal* almost doubled in size. The considerable task of organising the large number of book reviews was undertaken by Margaret Sparks, and this lasted until 1968 when they moved to Canterbury. Editorial standards were kept constantly high. Sparks took his duties seriously—and as a result many a younger scholar (and sometimes an older one too) owes to him no small debt for improving on the accuracy, and indeed on occasion, the entire presentation of what had originally been submitted. He himself only contributed an occasional article, such as that on 'The symbolic interpretation of Lebanon in the Fathers',³² prompted by G. Vermes's article in the previous number on the interpretation of Lebanon in the Targums. Reviews, however, he frequently wrote.

Two other projects in which he played no small part were the Critical Greek New Testament and the second edition of F. L. Cross's *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. The plan to produce a new edition of the Greek New Testament, with a full apparatus criticus, went back to a group of British scholars in 1926, when a committee was set up and S. C. E. Legg (its Secretary) was appointed as editor. Legg's first volume (Mark) appeared in 1935 and the second (Matthew) in 1940. Reviews of these pointed to some inaccuracies in Legg's work, and his manuscript of Luke was considered not to be sufficiently satisfactory for publication.³³ The outcome of this was the creation, in 1948, of the International Greek New Testament Project, with American and British committees, to take up the work, but on a wider basis. Sparks was a member of the British committee from its inception until the eventual publication of Luke (in two parts, published in 1984

³² *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS 10 (1959), pp. 264–79.

³³ Sparks had put his finger on one of the main weaknesses of Legg's work in his short review of the Matthew volume in *The Classical Review*, 55 (1941), p. 34.

and 1987). In these volumes Sparks was responsible for the Vulgate material throughout, and for the Old Latin for chapters 13–16 (the work for the latter was done at the Vetus Latina Institut in Beuron in the summers of 1976 and 1977). The Memoirs contain an interesting account of the frustration and difficulties he encountered as the committee's treasurer (1949–1972), above all during the first ten or so years of his time back in Oxford, prior to the appointment of G. G. Willis as executive editor (1962–9).³⁴

Sparks had already contributed a number of articles to the first edition (1957) of Cross's *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Plans for a revised second edition were already under way when Cross died at the end of December 1968. His secretary, Elizabeth Livingstone, had been appointed by Cross as his literary executor, and she engaged the help of Sparks, along with R. W. Hunt³⁵ and J. F. A. Mason, to assist her in preparing this revised edition, which appeared in 1974. For this, Sparks was responsible for the revision, or where necessary rewriting, of all entries related to the Bible.

His work on the Latin Bible had got him interested in problems of biblical translation in general. At the July meeting in 1968 of the Society for Old Testament Studies he read a paper 'On translating the Psalms', taking the view (not very popular with some of his colleagues) that modern translations might legitimately differ, depending on the use for which they were intended; in particular a translation for liturgical use should bear in mind that the earliest Christian Psalter was the Septuagint, and not the Hebrew text in its Masoretic form. Some of his reflections on biblical translation as a whole can be found in his Ethel Wood Lecture, *On Translations of the Bible*, published in 1973³⁶.

Amongst various projects of his own that Sparks started, but never completed, was a book on John the Baptist, the basic idea for which went back to his undergraduate days. What would have been a chapter of this book gained Sparks his Oxford BD in 1937, and the basis of another chapter, on John the Baptist among the Latin Fathers, was given as one of the longer papers at the 1979 Patristic Conference in

³⁴ Willis's work was continued by J. N. Birdsall (1970–8) and then by J. K. Elliott (1978–87); during this period the project was adopted by the British Academy, without whose generous financial support it would probably never have come to completion. A reconstituted committee is now preparing an edition of John.

³⁵ Memoir in *PBA*, 67 (1981), pp. 371–97.

³⁶ He is the author of the unsigned review of the New English Bible in *The Times Literary Supplement* for 19 March 1970 (pp. 293–4).

Oxford (unfortunately, since Sparks still hoped to complete the book, he did not submit it for publication in the Proceedings of that Conference). Another 'relic' (as the Memoirs describes it) was the plan to edit Bede's Commentary on the Apocalypse. This was an offshoot of his work on the Vulgate, and the collation of manuscripts accessible in Britain was done during the war (he had been greatly assisted by M. L. W. Laistner, who had provided him with a copy of the oldest manuscript of the Commentary, St Gall 259); one fruit of this was his article on the biblical text in the Durham manuscript of the Commentary (A. IV. 28), which appeared in the *Journal of Theological Studies*.³⁷ Once the war was over, he began assembling microfilms and photographs of other manuscripts in continental libraries, and some further collations were made, but then other activities and commitments took over. Eventually in 1983, when he had just about finished with *The Apocryphal Old Testament*, his intention was to turn next to completing the edition, but it turned out that, by that time, another scholar had been engaged by the *Corpus Christianorum* to undertake the work³⁸ (the general editor—and founder—of the series, Eligius Dekkers OSB, had assumed Sparks was dead, not having heard from him since 1968!).

It is interesting to note that, whereas the various undertakings that Sparks brought to a successful completion were almost all projects undertaken in response to someone else's request or prompting, most of the incompleting ones were initiatives of his own choosing which in the event got pushed aside by the others. That this should have been so is simply an indication of his generosity to others in giving of both his time and knowledge, a facet also reflected in his long service on numerous committees; on these he was especially appreciated for his good sense and his ability to pin-point what was practicable in a given situation, as opposed to what might have theoretically been more desirable in an ideal world. It is characteristic of the man that he never kept up a complete list of his publications. In many ways the words quoted above of John Brown, the compositor for his *Synopsis*, might equally well have been his own.

Undoubtedly Sparks's most important contribution to scholarship was his completion of the critical edition of the Vulgate New Testament.

³⁷ See note 26.

³⁸ This too evidently fell through, and the edition is currently being undertaken by R. Gryson, who now has the various materials collected by Sparks shortly after the war.

In this connection Professor W. Thiele, of the *Vetus Latina* Institut in Beuron, has kindly provided the following evaluation:

Auf dem Gebiet der lateinischen Bibel zählt H. F. D. Sparks zu den herausragenden Forschern. An erster Stelle stehen hier seine Verdienste um die *Oxford*er Kritische Vulgataausgabe des Neuen Testaments: Als junger Gelehrter ist er 1932 in die Arbeit an dieser großen Edition eingetreten und had sie bereits seit 1934 als verantwortlicher Herausgeber bis zu ihrem Abschluß (1954) geführt.

Begonnen von J. Wordsworth und mit ihrem ersten Teil noch in das vergangene Jahrhundert herabreichend (*Quattuor Evangelia*: 1889–1898), hat sie ihre eigentliche Prägung durch H. J. White († 1934) erhalten. Daß sie in der Wissenschaft zu den klassischen Ausgaben gehört, deren Wert und Bedeutung durch die weiterführende Forschung nicht geschmälert werden, darf Sparks auch für sich in Anspruch nehmen, der freilich viel zu bescheiden war, diesen Anspruch selbst hervorzuheben. Seine knappe, den letzten Faszikel begleitende Praefatio (1953) ist dafür ein bewegendes Zeugnis.

Nicht die eigentliche Rezension des Textes, die aus Whites *Editio Minor* (1911) zu übernehmen war, sondern die reichhaltige und genaue Dokumentation einerseits der Vulgatatradition, andererseits vor allem der altlateinischen Überlieferung in handschriftlichen und patristischen Zeugnissen kennzeichnen die Zielsetzung und den Charakter von Sparks herausgegebenen Schlußbande: *propositum est ut editio non minus utilis sit veteris versionis lectoribus quam Uulgatae* (Sparks III, 1954, p. V).

In der denkbar knappsten Form eines Apparates wird hier von Sparks nachdrücklich zum Ausdruck gebracht, daß gerade im Neuen Testament die eigene Form des Vulgatatextes nicht nur auf dem Hintergrund der vorangehenden und teilweise gleichzeitigen Altlateiner gesehen und beurteilt werden muß, sondern darüber hinaus auch die Vulgata selbst ein Glied in einer langen Reihe von Bemühungen ist, die Botschaft des griechischen Urtextes dem lateinischen Westen zu vermitteln.

Mit seinen Arbeiten zur *Vetus Latina* hat Sparks die große englische Tradition fortgeführt, die sich mit den Namen von W. Sanday, F. C. Burkitt und natürlich auch von H. J. White verbindet, und er ist dadurch ebenso verbunden gewesen mit den Forschungen und maßgeblichen Texteditionen zur lateinischen Bibel von B. Fischer, H. J. Frede, W. Thiele im *Vetus Latina* Institut Beuron. Für die *Stuttgarter Kritische Handausgabe* der Vulgata zeichnete Sparks von ihrer 1. Auflage (1969; R. Weber) an bis hin zu ihrer 4. verbesserten Auflage (1994; R. Gryson) als Mitherausgeber: in ihrem neutestamentlichen Teil hat 'seine' große *Oxford*er Edition ihren deutlich gekennzeichneten Platz.

He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1959, and received honorary Doctorates of Divinity at both St Andrews (1963) and Birmingham (1983) universities. He was made an Honorary Fellow of Oriel College in 1980. In 1976, the year of his retirement, he was

elected to a Leverhulme Senior Fellowship, which enabled him to go to work at the Vetus Latina Institut in Beuron, in connection with his work on the apparatus to the Greek text of Luke. The appreciation in which he was held at the different institutions he served can be judged from the various presentations made to him when he left them to move on elsewhere; here it is interesting to note that, along with a new copy of Lewis and Short's Latin Dictionary, and Mrs Margoliouth's Syriac Dictionary, he was presented with a set of the British Academy's Schweich Lectures when he left Ripon Hall. A source of particular pleasure to him on his retirement were farewell dinners in the summer of 1976 with the Oxford University Railway Society and with the Oriel College Choir. Hedley Sparks died on 22 November 1996 and the funeral took place in Canterbury Cathedral (28 November). The theological books from his library will form the core collection for a theological library that the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral are founding as part of the Cathedral's Education Centre.

SEBASTIAN P. BROCK

Fellow of the Academy

Note. I am extremely grateful to Margaret Sparks for lending me the manuscript of Hedley Sparks's Memoirs, written at her prompting in his retirement; this autobiographical account covers the whole of his family life up to c.1986, and I have taken the opportunity to quote quite extensively from it at times. I have also been able to draw upon some correspondence in connection with some of his undertakings, left among his papers. I am furthermore most grateful to Professor Dr W. Thiele, of the Vetus Latina Institut, Beuron, for his evaluation of Sparks's work on the Vulgate New Testament.