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HENRY CHADWICK

Henry Chadwick

1920–2008

I

THE ACCUMULATED DISTINCTION of the Chadwick family is something of a byword. Henry Chadwick was the son of a notably brilliant and successful barrister (a former Wrangler in the Cambridge Tripos) who wrote a landmark book on property law; the brother of one senior economist and diplomat and one prolific, universally respected and loved academic historian; and, not least, the father of a charismatic headmistress and educationalist. But this was not a typical Oxbridge academic dynasty: the family's roots lay in Lancashire, and Henry's grandfather was a mining engineer, whose untimely death in a pit accident meant that John Chadwick senior was brought up by his mother (who came from a farming family at Westleigh) and, after an education at Rossall School, proceeded to Pembroke, Cambridge, studying first Mathematics and then Law, moving to the Inner Temple. He married Edith Horrocks, from another solidly Lancashire line (her father had been Mayor of Leigh), a fine pianist and a woman of culture and education, and six children, four boys and two girls, were born to them. They made their home in Bromley, Kent, where their fourth child, Henry, was born on 23 June 1920.

John Chadwick survived service in the RNVR during the First World War only to die of meningitis at the age of 51, when Henry was ten. Henry thus came to share his father's experience of being brought up by a widowed mother, and it is not fanciful to see his extraordinary musical talent as a mark of his mother's encouragement and inspiration. When he went to

Eton on a King's Scholarship in 1933, it was music that occupied most of his energies: he studied the organ with Henry Ley and was also a regular visitor to St George's Chapel, Windsor, where he would turn the pages for William Harris. Eton made him Keeper of the College Organ, a remarkable recognition of his skills, and in 1938 he won a coveted music scholarship to Magdalene, Cambridge, where his musical gifts continued to flower richly. He was awarded the John Stuart of Rannoch Scholarship in 1939, and the Mus.B. degree in 1941. Everything pointed to a career in music; senior musicians in and beyond the University regarded him with something like awe as a performer on piano and organ; though the enthusiasm was not entirely universal, as, according to legend, his supervisions in Trinity with Edward Dent were punctuated by banging on the floor above from Ludwig Wittgenstein, who preferred to keep musical enjoyment and philosophical wrestlings apart.

But other seeds had been sown in Henry's mind years earlier. One of the teachers at his prep school, an eccentric by the name of Sladen, had a reputation for telling stories from the Old Testament with—according to Owen Chadwick—a positively 'Homeric' power and conviction; and when Henry was asked in later life what drew him to theology, he would refer back to these enthralling sessions in his boyhood. As a student, he had also been active in the Christian Union, and his unostentatious but strong religious conviction was leading him towards ordination (following his elder brother, Owen, and anticipating his younger brother, Martin). After the Mus.B., he read for the Theological Tripos; according to the regulations of the day, his performance in the Tripos could not be classed, as he was already a graduate, but he was privately informed that his work had been of First Class standard. He received his training at Ridley Hall, and was ordained in 1943 by William Temple to a curacy in Emmanuel, South Croydon, a solidly evangelical parish.

Croydon was on the corridor of German bombing routes through Kent into London, and the pastoral demands of Henry's curacy were considerable. But it was already pretty clear that his future lay in theological research. Although he had never shone as a classicist at Eton, and was never to be a systematic philological expert of the traditional kind, he had attained a very impressive level of accomplishment in Greek during his theological studies and was already showing signs of that omnivorous scholarly interest in the ancient world that was to be the wonder and envy of so many later colleagues. Wilfred Knox of Pembroke had been a major influence in his reading for the Theological Tripos, and it was Knox—a

saintly and eccentric Old Etonian celibate who managed both to help found a religious order and to shift substantially the centre of gravity in Pauline studies at Cambridge—who offered Henry his first opportunity for sustained critical work. Charles Raven was then Regius Professor of Divinity, and had expressed to Knox his eagerness to see a new translation and annotation of Origen's *Contra Celsum* for the University Press. Knox wrote to Henry saying that he wanted to recommend his name for this task. Henry's initial reaction was apprehensive: 'My capacities are so inadequate,' he wrote. 'I shall have to read the whole of Plato and most of the Stoics and all the magic of the Hellenistic underworld.' But he eventually said yes; and his exiguous spare time in Croydon was taken up by his labours on this text.

He sent his drafts to be looked after (and commented upon) by Margaret (Peggy) Brownrigg, then teaching (the only woman on a staff of 80) at Wellington College in Berkshire. They had met in 1940, when Peggy, a Londoner and at that time a student at Bedford College, had been evacuated with her fellow-students to Cambridge. She was another keen musician, a singer, who liked to say later on that she had married her accompanist. The marriage took place in 1945; Henry joined Peggy—and his elder brother Owen, who had been Chaplain of the school since 1942—on the staff at Wellington for a brief period, to return to Cambridge in 1946 as Fellow and Chaplain at Queens' College, where he was to remain for thirteen years, later becoming Dean of Chapel (in Cambridge, this latter title designates a role more academic than pastoral in its focus). He worked with extraordinary energy at all the varied tasks laid before him. Three daughters, Priscilla, Hilary and Juliet, were born during these years at Cambridge, and the family had the usual challenges of balancing domestic life with a college routine designed for resident bachelors. Henry certainly never stinted on the pastoral care he gave as Chaplain, and the work on Origen and other scholarly projects guaranteed him a twelve-hour day or more during full term. But his daughters, as musically and intellectually gifted as one might expect, remember many happy and intimate times, especially in the shared making of music. And Peggy continued—as she did throughout Henry's life—to work with him on refining and polishing the clarity of his written words and to provide generous hospitality to students, friends and colleagues. Those written words multiplied constantly, as Henry steadily established himself as the most learned and judicious patristic scholar in the English-speaking world.

II

The Origen translation was eventually published in 1953 in a handsomely produced volume of over 500 pages from Cambridge University Press, and its importance was recognised at once. There are a few translations that are practically as helpful to the scholar as a critical edition, and this was undoubtedly one such. Henry's initial misgivings about taking on the task were quite intelligible. The *Contra Celsum* is a dauntingly complex work, since it contains the great Alexandrian theologian's point-by-point refutation of one of the most thoroughgoing pieces of learned pagan polemic against the Christian faith in that era. Celsus' *True Discourse* or *True Doctrine* had been written most probably at some point in the second Christian century, but the exact date and provenance and the identity of its author (who may or may not be identical with one of the otherwise attested figures of this name in the first and second centuries) are still debated. Origen himself has clearly picked up a report that Celsus was an Epicurean, but recognises that this fits rather badly with the blend of Stoicism and Platonism that characterises the text before him, and speculates that either the identification is at fault or the author is concealing his real opinions. We have no other sources for the work than the quotations in Origen's text, and so no secure means of judging how much of it these (quite copious) extracts represent. And to interpret both Celsus' arguments and Origen's replies requires, as Henry rightly foresaw, a comprehensive familiarity with Greek and Hellenistic philosophy, with classical literature, and with popular religion and magic. Fortunately the textual tradition is comparatively straightforward, with a single direct line linking the extant manuscripts to one thirteenth-century Greek prototype in the Vatican. The 'indirect' lines of attestation are mostly related to the fourth-century anthology, the *Philokalia* of Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus, with a scattering of other citations. Paul Koetschau of Jena had established a pretty reliable text, strongly privileging the direct tradition, for his 1899 edition in the *Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* (GCS) series. Other scholars, notably Paul Wendland, aggressively challenged the option for the direct tradition, and Koetschau adjusted some of his textual judgements over the years. In addition, some fresh questions had been raised by the discovery in 1941 of fragments of Origen's writings at Tura, near Cairo, including portions of the first two books of the *Contra Celsum*; these were not fully published until 1956. In the event, they did not demand any hugely significant re-evaluations of the work, tending to reinforce the direct manuscript tradition evidenced in the Vatican text.

So a translation of Origen's work necessarily involved attention to matters of the intellectual ambience of not one but two works and to a variety of textual and historical questions around both. In the years when the translation was being prepared, Henry wrote several articles on these matters, including (in 1947) his first piece for the newly revived *Journal of Theological Studies*, mapping out the way in which the shared Stoic vocabulary of Origen and Celsus when discussing ethical matters was interwoven with 'Middle Platonic' metaphysics—the kind of magisterial ground-clearing exercise at which, on the larger or the smaller scale, he would always excel. The introduction to his translation is a relatively brief and very clear outline of the nature of the book, its place in Origen's *oeuvre*, and some of the questions around the date and provenance of Celsus' work, with a short account of the textual questions. Henry declined (surely correctly) to identify Celsus with any of the known prosopographical candidates, located the composition of the *True Discourse* between 177 and 180, indicated some support for the idea of Alexandria as its place of origin, and declared for Koetschau's textual option in broad terms, while recognising that there was some unfinished business and acknowledging the suggestions of others, including in particular Albert Wifstrand of Lund, for clarifying the text. In an article in the *Journal of Theological Studies* (1953) published more or less simultaneously with the translation, he defended a number of his own proposed emendations at greater length than the book itself allowed. The famously combative Richard Hanson intimated that he had shown undue conservatism in respect of one particularly controverted passage (holding to Koetschau's earlier judgement even when the German editor had had second thoughts); but the 1953 article shows that Henry never followed the GCS text slavishly. The translation itself is a model of clarity, and, with some minor emendations for a second edition in 1963, it remains an indispensable tool for the patristologist.¹

The reputation it won for Henry was reinforced by a volume of selected passages from Clement and Origen which appeared as *Alexandrian Christianity* in the SCM's Library of Christian Classics in 1954, incorporating more translations or revisions of earlier translations; and by a series of enormously learned and original articles. There are excursions into

¹ The Greek text has been re-edited more recently for the *Sources chrétiennes* series by M. Borret (1967–76).

fields other than patristics—some work on New Testament issues,² a survey article for a German periodical on German influences on nineteenth-century English theology, and, most surprisingly, an anthology of *Lessing's Theological Writings* in 1956. Also in this period, Henry took on (in 1954) the joint editorship of the *Journal of Theological Studies*, with Hedley Sparks—a labour which he sustained (later in partnership with George Caird) until 1985, with immense dedication and generosity. On top of this, he undertook the selfless task of editing for publication unfinished work by some of his elders, most notably Wilfred Knox's study of synoptic sources (*The Source of the Synoptic Gospels*), published in 1957—an act of *pietas* towards one of his most revered teachers. But in spite of this variety of interest, it was plain that the focus was on the borderland between Christian theology and the philosophy and ethics of the late classical world, with a notable concern for the language and content of apologetic. A comparatively short essay of 1957 presents Origen's apologetic as distanced in a number of significant ways from the standard tropes of his day and even as foreshadowing some early modern uncertainties about simplistic appeals to miracle and prophecy. This interest in conversations at the pagan–Christian frontier bore fruit some years later in Henry's 1966 book on *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition*; and his particular interest in ethics was evidenced both in his 1959 rendering and discussion of *The Sentences of Sextus* and in a whole series of brilliant pieces throughout his career on attitudes to conscience, to asceticism and, in a particularly intriguing and subtle piece, in 1979 on 'The relativity of moral codes' in late antiquity.³ The exploration of conscience in his 1968 Robert Waley Cohen Memorial Lecture is not only a tour de force of learning, but also an eloquent lament for the disappearance of an intellectual culture able to think rationally about conscience, so that the word comes to indicate little more than strong inner conviction; and it ends with a protest against the 'trivialisation of man' which this entails. This lecture was the kernel around which his long and authoritative article 'Gewissen' in the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* in 1978 was built; and the interest in general anthropology was likewise brought to a suitable scholarly harvesting with his 1993 piece on humanity in ancient thought in the same lexicon.

²His lecture on St Paul at the meeting of the *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* at Marburg in 1954 was chaired by Rudolf Bultmann.

³This appeared in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition*, ed. L. Schoedel and R. I. Wilken (Berkeley, CA, 1953).

All this stemmed in various ways from the work on the *Contra Celsum*, and it indicates how fortunate Henry was in his choice (or the choice pushed at him by Raven and Knox) of a first major scholarly enterprise. But we have run ahead a little. The productivity of the years at Cambridge made it plain that Henry Chadwick was emerging as the foremost patrologist of his generation, and it was not surprising that there were a good many who were already considering his name for a more senior appointment in the University. The vacancy in the Regius Chair caused by Michael Ramsey's nomination as Bishop of Durham in 1952 was filled by the liturgist E. C. Ratcliffe; but many in the University were already clear that Henry could be more or less guaranteed the succession on Ratcliffe's retirement. But the timing did not work out so neatly: the vacancy in the Oxford Regius Chair in 1958 provided an obvious opening in all sorts of ways. The Oxford Chair, annexed to a canonry at Christ Church, was bound to be hard for Henry to resist, and the prospect of being in close proximity to one of the finest cathedral music establishments in the country must have enhanced the attraction. The family moved in 1959 to the splendid but rather eccentrically organised canonical residence in Tom Quad which was their home for the next decade.

III

Academic honours from a wider world had already begun to flow in Henry's direction with an honorary DD from Glasgow in 1957, the first of many; 1960 saw his election to the British Academy (he was later to be Vice-President under Ken Wheare). In 1962–3 and 1963–4 he was Gifford Lecturer at St Andrews, delivering twenty lectures in all on the theme of 'Authority in the Early Church'. He had sketched out some thoughts on this in his Oxford inaugural, noting that the first Christian centuries had never settled with a clear picture of where the 'centre' of the Church could be located—hence the title of this piece, 'The Circle and the Ellipse'; whether his analysis was correct in respect of the place of Jerusalem in the early Church is very debateable indeed, and there are some corners cut, most uncharacteristically, in the argument. But the overall thesis, in its scepticism about a monocentric community or network of communities is entirely persuasive, and he was to develop this in a number of scholarly frameworks. The Gifford lectures were never published in their entirety, but formed the foundation for a large number of studies which appeared over the next couple of decades—one of the most interesting being an

essay on the notion of a magisterium which he contributed in 1974 to a Festschrift for Yves Congar. The subject matter was to prove very pertinent in the work Henry later undertook for the Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) between 1969 and 1990. His ten years in the Regius Chair produced only a couple of books, but a formidable number of smaller pieces, including some sections in Hilary Armstrong's *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Mediaeval Philosophy* (1970) covering similar ground to the book on Christianity and classical culture, and a short but valuable commentary on Ephesians for *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (1967). In other words, much of his production in these years was that distinctive version of the *debitum naturae* so familiar to scholars, the labour of digesting broad learning into manageable form for students. The apogee of this was, of course, the superb textbook on *The Early Church* published in 1967 and constantly in print since (a revised version—which followed the German translation in incorporating the references that had been excluded from the first edition—appeared in 1985). And the habit of picking up and polishing the *relicta* of older scholars persisted: in 1968, Henry published his completion of Gregory Dix's edition of Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition*, a tribute to a savant of very different character and conviction. Dix's eloquence and imaginative sweep were not always matched by exactitude, but the combination of his sheer energy and originality with Henry's critical judgement and precision produced a very credible and durable edition of this monumentally puzzling work.

He was enormously valued as a teacher. His lectures were extremely popular—elegant, witty and beautifully tailored for the diverse capacities present in a student audience (one undergraduate auditor remarked that fifty minutes of Henry lecturing felt like twenty). The present author once compared notes ruefully with Maurice Wiles on the shared experience of having to succeed Henry as a lecturer on the early Church: it was impossible not to feel that one was picking out some distinctly clumsy exercises on the keyboard in the wake of a world-class concert pianist (a particularly apt metaphor in this instance). He was also of course acquiring graduate students. Like his successor in the Regius Chair, he never built up a school of researchers in the usual sense;⁴ but it could be said that his distinctive interest in the dialogue between theology and non-Christian thought in the early Christian centuries achieved something even more

⁴See the memoir of Maurice Wiles by Rowan Williams and Frances Young, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 153, 366.

important in establishing the study of the intellectual history of late antiquity as a fruitful and indeed exhilaratingly engaging field of work. Peter Brown, in his excellent memoir of Henry for the American Philosophical Society,⁵ underlined the importance of the invitation to Henry to address the Classical Conference in 1961, where he was welcomed by no less a personage than Arnaldo Momigliano: this ‘marked the beginning of the end of the studied estrangement of ancient from Christian history. Without the removal of that mental and emotional block, the climate which fostered the study of late Antiquity in Oxford would not have developed.’

It was also during these years that he was nominated by Archbishop Michael Ramsey to membership of the Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission. He was not a stranger to ecumenical encounters: he had taken part in private discussions with Orthodox and Lutheran theologians already and had been involved in unofficial conversations in Oxford between Anglican and Roman Catholic scholars. He was a very obvious person (along with his friend and neighbour at Campion Hall in Oxford, Fr Ted Yarnold, SJ) to help take these encounters to a more formal level in 1967 when this became possible in the wake of Ramsey’s 1964 visit to Pope Paul VI, and a preparatory meeting was convened in Malta. He served on both the first and second of the ARCIC dialogues (being reappointed by Robert Runcie in 1983), and played an increasingly important role. Quite apart from his sheer diplomatic skills in keeping difficult conversations moving, his scholarship helped to shape the whole idiom and method of the ARCIC process. It was he who drafted crucial parts of the text (the paragraphs relating to transubstantiation) on eucharistic doctrine for the report of 1971, managing to find words that all could assent to with good conscience; and, as the present Bishop of Guildford, sometime secretary to the Commission, has said, it was Henry’s approach to issues around authority and primacy that determined a good deal of the Commission’s later discussion of this neuralgic matter. Henry was always enough of a classical Reformed Christian to be unconvinced by claims for the papacy as a unique charism in the Church, but enough of an historian and a pragmatist to see that acceptance of some sort of primacy in the Church was not necessarily a betrayal of fundamental theological principle. Within ARCIC, he came to represent for all involved a classical Anglican identity, beyond ‘party’ allegiance, profoundly rooted in the thought of the early Church and the spirit of the seventeenth-century

⁵Peter Brown, ‘Henry Chadwick’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 154/1 (2010), 79–86.

divines of the Church of England. The warmth and trust with which he was regarded by Roman Catholic colleagues was remarkable; and in the fraught period leading up to the visit of Pope John Paul II to the United Kingdom in 1982, Henry played a significant part in quiet negotiations with the Vatican to clarify expectations and avoid embarrassments. His contribution was acknowledged in the richly symbolic gift from the Pope of a priestly stole.

IV

In 1969, the death of Cuthbert Simpson left the Deanery of Christ Church vacant. The appointment—being a Crown nomination and therefore subject only to informal consultation—was the matter of much rather wild speculation; and some singularly ill-informed and fatuous diarising in *The Times* drew attention to one famous but highly implausible name. Others in and beyond the House seem—if the entertaining account of all this in *The Letters of Mercurius* is at all to be trusted⁶—to have had anxieties about whether the liturgical life of the Cathedral was to be pushed further in the markedly Anglo-Catholic direction that Simpson had allowed if not encouraged. In the event, the Crown, predictably, heeded good local advice: the candidate who most obviously commanded the respect and trust of the House was Henry Chadwick, and he was duly nominated to the post. He received the ‘Very Private’ letter from Harold Wilson by way of a British Embassy car waiting at Nauplion for the arrival of the Swan Hellenic cruise on which he was lecturing—one of the more dramatically public deliveries (in front of some 150 people) of a highly confidential communication. The family duly moved some yards eastwards in Tom Quad. The installation took place, appropriately, on 18 October, the feast day of St Frideswide, founder of the original Priory on the site of Christ Church.

He was to serve ten years as Dean. The Deanship was not, by general consent, the happiest time in his professional life, but he promoted and oversaw significant developments in the life of the House. Alterations were made to permit more students to come into residence and the fabric was much improved. Colleagues praised the ‘wisdom, humanity and for-

⁶Anon., *The Letters of Mercurius* (London, 1970), pp. 33–7, 44–7. The writer’s tribute to Henry is worth quoting: ‘Dr Chadwick is held by all to be a man of sense and learning . . . as also an excellent preacher, able to put together an English sentence, with subject, verb and syntax, which is rare enough in these illiterate days’ (pp. 46–7).

bearance' with which he had presided, and found his sound grasp of broader University affairs 'very reassuring' in the context of collegiate business. He was indeed active in the University at large—on the Hebdomadal Council (where St Anne's College had particular cause to be grateful for his advocacy) and the Delegacy of the University Press, for example, and serving as Pro-Vice-Chancellor in 1974–5. But Christ Church was not a peaceful place. The formidable triumvirate of Robert Blake, Charles Stuart and Hugh Trevor-Roper had, in the 1950s and early 1960s, battled against the clerical establishment of the House as part of their wider campaign against what they saw as stagnant and intellectually deadening habits in Oxford. They were out to make Christ Church socially, politically and academically influential in the way its resources suggested it should be, and they associated the clerical foundation of the House with an environment of dinginess and self-important dullness.⁷ These radical Tories were spokesmen of a Conservatism newly impatient with inherited privilege and the stranglehold of corporate tradition, eager to unite wealth and meritocratic enterprise: arguably the first swallows of what was then a very distant summer (which when it came in the 1980s was to feel rather more like winter to most academics, including some of their precursors). By 1969, Blake and Trevor-Roper had moved on, but their legacy remained; it did not make for an easy atmosphere in the Christ Church Governing Body. One former colleague, reading some years later Henry's account of Boethius being tortured by having a cord twisted around his head, speculated that this was pretty much how Henry had felt during some Governing Body meetings during his tenure of the Deanery. Temperamentally averse to a domineering style in private or public, and cursed with the capacity to see all sides of a question, he could seem indecisive and lost much energy in anxiety over the continuing squabbles in the House. But the Chapter, though very diverse in interest and in churchmanship, was not given to acrimony; Henry's relations with his successor, Maurice Wiles, were cordial, although their style of patristic scholarship and their theological convictions were very different.

The Cathedral was a source both of consolation and of further pressure on time and energy. Its choral tradition was going from strength to strength during this period, not least under the extremely spirited baton of Simon Preston—though this could generate its own sharp tensions. The Catholic atmosphere of Cathedral liturgy was maintained through

⁷For an account of these conflicts, see particularly the memoir of Robert Blake in the *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 153, 72–5.

the efforts of Michael Watts, Precentor for a great deal of Henry's time as Dean, and found an enthusiastic supporter in John Macquarrie, Lady Margaret Professor from 1969; theological students from St Stephen's House were regular visitors and acolytes on great occasions, a tradition begun in Dean Simpson's day. Despite Henry's Evangelical roots, he was wholly committed to this liturgical round and attended Matins and Evensong daily, as well as being present at every service on Sunday—no mean achievement, as this included both the choral offices and Eucharist and the less formal services aimed primarily at undergraduates. Although he was occasionally heard half-seriously lamenting the burden, those who knew him best recognised that this was something that anchored the rest of his work at the requisite depth. And in the Cathedral, his preaching, his beautifully musical reading of prayers and lessons and his great natural dignity combined to make him in the eyes of many the perfect decanal figurehead. He was said to be the only cleric in the Church of England who could read the King James Version of Job 39.25 ('He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha!') in a manner both stirring and decorous.

Administration and liturgy did not stifle the flow of scholarly production (or of international scholarly recognition: he became a *Correspondant étranger* of the *Académie des inscriptions et Belles Lettres* in 1976 and an associate member of the *Société des Bollandistes* in 1977). The ongoing work involved in the *Journal of Theological Studies* continued to generate substantial reviews; a number of brief articles demonstrated how much could be packed into a very small space (the three and a half pages of his 1972 note on the term 'oecumenical council' are a good example); and in 1976 he published an innovative and substantial study of the fourth-century Spanish teacher and bishop, *Priscillian of Ávila*. Engagingly subtitled *The Occult and the Charismatic in the Early Church*, the book traced the career of a most unusual figure, a defender of rigorous asceticism for clergy and laity, and associated by his opponents with Manichaeism. He was eventually condemned to death for sorcery in 385 by the emperor Maximus; many of those (including Ambrose of Milan and Martin of Tours) who had strenuously opposed him during his lifetime were appalled by this punishment, but the atmosphere of hysterical denunciation that had surrounded him and the pressure on the emperor to prove his allegiance to orthodoxy made the outcome not entirely surprising. It was a chilling revelation to some bishops of the fact that the secular power was a dangerous and compromising ally. Martin of Tours subsequently refused to attend any clerical synods because of the complicity of such meetings in Priscillian's fate. The subject matter drew together several of Henry's

long-standing interests—the evolution of synodical processes, the frontiers of religion and magic, and the fuzzy boundaries between ‘mainstream’ Christian ethics and Gnostic, Manichaeic and pagan teaching. Earlier work on encratism had laid some foundations for this, and later work on the possible use of the Nag Hammadi Gnostic texts by orthodox monastics flowed from it. The book is a vivid and attractively written introduction to a neglected subject.

His involvement in ARCIC continued to generate work on ecumenically related matters, not least on the episcopate. He produced a solid essay on biblical and patristic foundations for episcopacy as part of the preparatory material for the 1978 Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops, and, with Ted Yarnold, a commentary on the ARCIC report on *Authority in the Church*; in 1979, he gave a paper on ‘The role of the Christian bishop in ancient society’ to the Center for Hermeneutical Studies at Berkeley, which is a treasury of information about both the evolution of the individual and collective (synodical) authority exercised by bishops within the Church and the social expectations loaded on to them in the decades after Constantine. The year 1979 also saw the publication of his exceptionally interesting essay on ‘The relativity of moral codes’ already mentioned above. He was in fact hardly less productive during the demanding years at the Deanery than he had been as Regius. But the strains of the post were not conducive to the kind of work he most wanted to do. When in 1979 the electors to the Regius Chair at Cambridge offered the appointment to him, he had little hesitation in accepting.

V

Back at Cambridge, a Fellow of Magdalene and Honorary Fellow of Trinity, he settled into a busy and fruitful routine of teaching and research. He proved a notably brisk and efficient chair of the Faculty Board (many will recall his delivery on occasion—in one beautifully phrased breath—of ‘Agenda item number seven any discussion item number eight’, or some near equivalent). A good deal of the anxiety of the Christ Church Governing Body had faded away. The lectures on the early Church engaged yet another generation of students, the graduate seminar on Patristics kept up the standard of graduate discussion (with the assistance of Christopher Stead,⁸ the Ely Professor) and the articles flowed in even

⁸On whom see the memoir in this volume (pp. 301–20) by L. R. Wickham.

greater abundance. In 1981, he published what many people consider his finest monograph, *Boethius: the Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology and Philosophy*, a comprehensive intellectual biography of the author of ‘one of the dazzling masterpieces of European literature’—as Henry described *The Consolation of Philosophy* in his preface to the book: a polymathic Roman intellectual stranded at the court of the Ostrogoths and eventually falling victim to a tangled and unpleasant political intrigue. The mastery of diverse fields is here at its peak: we might expect Henry to be fluent in his readings of Boethius on music and indeed theology; what is particularly impressive is the chapter on logic, in which he gives a lucid overview of the development of logic in late antique thinking and the complex process by which Aristotle’s methods were more or less naturalised into a Platonic metaphysic (with slightly curious results for both). Boethius emerges as a skilful digester of and commentator on a formidable mass of material from both Peripatetics and Neoplatonists, someone who was able to offer to the Latin world an eminently useable configuration of Greek ideas about logic; he cannot be blamed for not resolving some of the unclarity in his Greek sources, but he does provide some major new insights on propositional logic and hypothetical syllogisms, decisive for the later history of medieval logic.

But the book also locates Boethius against the background of contemporary post-Chalcedonian controversies in Christology and Trinitarian theology. Henry responds to the doubts long expressed about the authenticity of the theological treatises ascribed to Boethius with a clear demonstration of the convergence of these theological ideas with the Platonic intellectual structures of the *Consolation*; here, and in a couple of brief papers in 1980, he notes both the hints left by the author (including possible scriptural echoes) for the Christian reader to pick up even in Boethian passages without overt theological content and the Platonic arsenal of arguments used in the theological works. One of Henry’s overall conclusions is that the *Consolation* may not be a Christian work in the strict sense, but is ‘written with the consciousness of Augustine standing behind the author’s shoulder’ (p. 249). Despite their differences, their essential orientation as Christian Platonists is much the same. The medievals were not mistaken to read them as belonging in the same intellectual and spiritual world.

The interest in Augustine evident in this book blossomed in the Cambridge years and after in a variety of ways. The discovery of twenty-seven previously unknown letters of Augustine, published by Johannes Divjak in 1981, prompted Henry to compose a comprehensive guide to

the contents of this correspondence, delivered in the Patristic Seminar at Cambridge in 1982 and published the year following in the *Journal of Theological Studies*. It is another piece of selfless labour for the sake of younger (or less energetic) scholars, a perfect summary of the content of the letters accompanied by efficient cross-referencing to the rest of the Augustinian corpus. Henry was in the habit of saying to researchers that one could either be a patrologist or an Augustinian scholar, but not both; his own work, especially in the later stages of his career, was emphatically an exception to test any such rule. In addition to this fundamental work on the Divjak letters, he wrote several substantial papers in the 1980s on Augustinian subjects, as well as a fine brief introduction to Augustine for the Oxford 'Past Masters' series, published in 1986 and reprinted more than once. A first, somewhat different, version of this was rescued from among his papers at his death and published in 2009. And in 1991 he completed a translation of the *Confessions*, a rendering as clear and elegant as his version of the *Contra Celsum* and particularly good in its cataloguing of Augustine's scriptural citations and (even more important) half-citations and allusions.

The ARCIC conversations continued to generate excursions into new territory, ranging from studies of Berengar of Tours, whose Eucharistic theology had caused such trouble in the eleventh century, and of aspects of the Reformation controversies over justification, to a piece on the Henrician Royal Supremacy for a collection of essays on John Fisher in 1988. The work on Boethius had also stimulated more research in the doctrinal controversies of the post-Chalcedonian period, evidenced in an article on the influential 'Monophysite' theologian and philosopher Philoponus. The foundations were being laid for Henry's last major work, on the inexorably developing schism between eastern and western Christendom. But before that appeared, he had at last completed a long awaited volume on the first six centuries of the Church's life, *The Church in Ancient Society: from Galilee to Gregory the Great*, published in 2001 in the Oxford History of the Christian Church, of which he and his brother Owen had for many years been joint editors. This distillation of decades of scholarly work will remain one of his chief legacies to the academic community at large. Its title shows his resolution, more and more marked as his career advanced, to resist a view of 'Church history' that turned away from locating the early Christian communities in their specific settings, social and ideological. While he never wavered from a calm and apparently untroubled orthodoxy as regards the substantive and distinctive teachings

of the Christian faith, he never made the mistake of translating this into a ghettoised understanding of doctrine or ethics in their historical evolution.

VI

Henry had retired formally from the Cambridge Chair in 1985, moving back to Oxford. His scholarly production continued uninterrupted, and he also became joint editor of a new monograph series, Oxford Early Christian Studies, at first with the writer of this memoir, later with Professor Andrew Louth. In 1992 he delivered a distinguished series of Schweich Lectures on ancient hermeneutics, published by the British Academy in 2009.⁹ Somewhat to the surprise of his friends, he accepted the invitation to return once more to Cambridge in 1987, as Master of Peterhouse, a post he occupied until 1993, becoming the first person for 400 years to be a Head of House in both ancient universities. Peterhouse at that time was no happier a place than Christ Church had been nearly twenty years earlier: the Mastership of Hugh Trevor-Roper (by then Lord Dacre) had been painfully divisive, and, in an ironic twist, Trevor-Roper's politics had been outflanked by the powerful ideological conservatives at Peterhouse whose oracle was Maurice Cowling, and who set out with some success to make Trevor-Roper's life as difficult as possible. It is a mark of the greater confidence that Henry had attained in the intervening years that he did not let himself be manipulated or bullied by this group. He could be severe on the incivility of some of them, especially on the rudeness towards women that was unhappily common; ordinary good manners were insisted upon at High Table, and the social atmosphere of the college softened, even though the ideological conflicts did not by any means disappear all at once. Henry was liked and admired by the undergraduate body, and, as the composition of the Fellowship changed, he had the satisfaction of feeling that he had done what he never quite managed at Christ Church—turning around the morale and ethos of an institution in a way that all could see and appreciate. National and international honours also continued to be accorded: he had been elected in 1987 to the Göttingen Academy, followed closely by election in 1990 to the Rhineland–Westphalian Academy; ahead lay the stellar distinction of the German *Ordre Pour le Mérite* in 1993. In 1997 he received an honorary doctorate

⁹They are available online at <<http://www.britac.ac.uk/pubs/cat/schweich.cfm>>.

at Harvard in the company of Madeleine Albright. Recognition in the UK was at the same high level: in 1989 he had been made a KBE.

His final years back in Oxford saw the completion of his *East and West: the Making of a Rift in the Church* (2005), written, like his earlier *magnum opus*, for the Oxford History of the Christian Church. It takes the story up to the reunion councils of the fifteenth century, and is especially good on the period between Justinian and the eleventh-century schism; it is very clear that the learned, diffident but strong-minded ninth-century Patriarch Photius is the hero of this epoch in Henry's mind, and it is none too difficult to see why. The book is written in a curiously staccato style, with very short chapters. This makes for a great clarity of presentation but also a certain uncharacteristic dryness; there is a sense of flagging energy about the book (for all its excellence as a guide to a hugely complex millennium of doctrinal and political development), something not surprising in a man in his early eighties who was by this time in consistently poor health, suffering especially from respiratory problems. He attended a couple of sessions at the Oxford Patristic Conference in 2003 and 2007, having been involved with this four-yearly event since its inception in the 1950s, but by the time his *East and West* book was published, physical infirmity had stopped him preaching and speaking in public. He died peacefully on the 17 June 2008.

VII

For most of those who encountered him, Henry Chadwick embodied the classical Anglican ideal of the ordained scholar—perhaps more than that, the ideal of a certain kind of Anglicanism itself. It was a style that seemed somewhat in retreat by the time he died; but fashions come and go, and what he unobtrusively contributed to the shaping of a theological idiom for ecumenical discussion can hardly be exaggerated. The shift in the approach of ARCIC after he left the group tells its own tale. But it is very typical that such a major legacy should be so elusive and indirect. We have already noted the way in which he put his own energies and skills at the service of others, whether by completing the unfinished work of his seniors, by his readiness to boil down his erudition into accessible form in textbooks and encyclopaedia articles, or by the patient refining of other people's work as an editor. His generosity towards younger scholars was always exemplary.

What, then, about his own direct scholarly legacy? One former Christ Church colleague now departed, noted for his acerbity, used to say that Henry had all the academic virtues except courage. This is a seriously unfair assessment; but it expresses the frustration other scholars sometimes felt, confronted by a vast learning which only seldom seemed to crystallise into an identifiable contribution to the *status quaestionis* in this or that disputed matter. Many will recall asking Henry's views on some question and receiving in reply a magisterial *tour d'horizon* which did not take the argument much further forward. After one such moment, another colleague complained in my hearing that Henry's scholarship was 'muscle-bound'. But comments like these show how easily it is possible to take for granted a kind of agonistic model of learned work in which the dramatic solution of problems is everything. Henry was perfectly capable of solving problems, deploying his skills in sorting out disputed questions with authority—from his very early article on the date of the fall of Eustathius of Antioch to his close work on Boethius' texts much later in his career. But it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that his 'default position' was the mapping exercise: sorting out misunderstandings, suggesting connections, configuring a field of study in all its complexity. The book on Boethius, to take the most obvious example, resolves a few issues, certainly, but gains its attraction and usefulness from simply establishing Boethius as an intellectual presence in a fresh way. He is now someone you have to take seriously at several levels. Similarly, in innumerable shorter studies, the conclusion you are left with is that this or that aspect of a familiar question will now have to be factored in to anything there is to be said in the future: you cannot now overlook, say, the significance of Eucharistic theology for understanding the Christological controversies, or of the shared ethical and ascetical idioms in understanding the fluid boundaries between 'Catholic' and 'Gnostic' writings and readers.

To work in this mode is not to lack courage; and the choice of figures like Priscillian and Boethius (in all his diverse intellectual richness) as subjects of research certainly indicates a willingness to go beyond the comfort zone of many if not most patrologists. We may recall Peter Brown's testimony that Henry Chadwick's achievement was, as much as anything, to clear the ground for the serious academic study of the Late Antique world as something far more than an unhappy and 'irrational' interlude on the declining road from classical antiquity towards the Dark Ages. Henry's early foregrounding of the overlap in ethical reflection between literate pagans and literate Christians did much to establish that the intellectual life of the first Christian centuries had its own surprising coherence as well

as abundant energy and urgency. It is a field of study which has now, of course, grown well beyond what Henry or others could imagine in the 1950s, and his work may seem tame alongside the vigorous and iconoclastic scholarship of a Ramsey MacMullen, a Keith Hopkins or a Virginia Burrus. But without his writings, it is hard to see that non-theologians would so readily have come to see that patristic literature was interesting in its own right as a cultural phenomenon, not just as a target for Gibbonian contempt. That patrologists might equally be persuaded to see that their field of study might be the outworking of revealed truth but was also and inseparably a matter of cultural history and linguistic miscegenation was just as much a part of the agenda that Henry—how deliberately it is not too clear—advanced with such skill and style.

Style is a word that has to be used. He always or almost always wrote with great elegance, but never sacrificed sheer expository clarity (Peggy's critical eye and ear helped him greatly from first to last in maturing his prose). It went with a personal manner that was courtly to a degree. J. I. M. Stewart in his Proustian quintet of novels about Christ Church, *A Staircase in Surrey*, introduces us to Provost Edward Pococke, handsome and distinguished and elaborately courteous—almost but not quite to the point of self-parody—and at the same time shrewd, politically astute and humanly sympathetic. Apart from Pococke's beard and devotion to golf, the portrait is unmistakable—and unmistakably affectionate.¹⁰ Henry could be devastating in his criticism on the rare occasions when he was confronted with nonsense on stilts (reviewing the bizarre speculations of John Allegro on the Dead Sea Scrolls, for example, or commenting on wooden stylometric tests applied by computer to the texts of the New Testament), but his characteristic mode of engagement was polite and hospitable, even where he was unconvinced. His review in *Theology* (1962) of the famous Cambridge symposium *Soundings* is a good example of the mixture of sympathy and scepticism he could bring to fashionable essays in doctrinal reconstruction, and his discussion of Courcelle's argument about the fictional nature of Augustine's record of his conversion is another model of gentle but remorseless demolition.

He was never all that explicit about where he stood in relation to the controversies (increasingly sharp as the years went by) that divided his church, but it is reasonable to assume that, whatever his personal theological opinions, the degree of estrangement between the Vatican and the

¹⁰Howard Jacobson's 1983 novel, *Coming from Behind*, contains a figure who seems to be a distant (and very two-dimensional) caricature.

Church of England that followed the ordination of women caused him some disappointment; equally, he cannot have been cheered by the increased stress on the unique personal charism of the papal office under Pope John Paul II. His scholarly position on authority in the Church was nuanced, as we have seen, and for all his steadily growing sympathy with Catholic teaching and practice he was unflinchingly clear about the less edifying aspects of the evolution of the medieval papacy's claims. In 1969, he had invited Cardinal Suenens, Primate of Belgium and hero of the progressive forces in the Roman Catholic Church of that era, to speak in Oxford; the collegial vision of the Second Vatican Council as represented by figures like Suenens was always, for him, the foundation for the kind of dialogue he valued—evoking perhaps the 'Malines Conversations' of the 1920s, informal meetings between Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians hosted by Suenens' predecessor, Cardinal Mercier, and sympathetic to the same conciliar and collegial ideals. It was a vision somewhat in eclipse by the latter years of the second round of ARCIC dialogues. But he was no kind of ecclesiastical politician in the narrow sense: he served in the General Synod of the Church of England, but his role there, as he understood it, was to offer so far as possible a perspective free from party interest and informed by history. In 1988 he reminded the Synod that few personal tragedies were worse than loss of memory: it was an apt allusion to what he had always sought to offer the Church. Whether or not it is true that he declined more than one bishopric, there can be little doubt that his role as the historical conscience of the Church of England was the greatest service he could have offered it.

Henry Chadwick's achievement overall remains immense. The range of his learning in classical and post-classical literature, both Greek and Latin, and his encyclopaedic knowledge of the Fathers and, increasingly, the early medievals was rare by any standard, and his success in making it available to the non-specialist reader as well as the expert was striking. As we have seen, he played a pivotal role in redefining a whole area of scholarship. Individual works, both long and short, still occupy a significant place in the literature of their subjects—especially the work on Origen, Augustine and Boethius. The translations that frame his career—the *Contra Celsum* and the *Confessions*—illustrate his capacity to get into the skin of ancient authors. At some point, there will be work to be done to draw together more systematically his insights on the vocabulary of ethics in Christian and non-Christian Late Antiquity and its overlap with the literature of asceticism; what he wrote in this area is of special interest and has not

really had the attention it deserves. He was without doubt the foremost patristic scholar of his generation in the English-speaking world and one of the foremost in Europe. He will be remembered with enormous gratitude and affection by a large number of scholars to whom, by direct or indirect teaching and example, he taught their business. To use a metaphor that might have had resonance for him, he was able to reduce a complex score for a large orchestra to manageable dimensions for nervous keyboard players, and then to show them how to discover and identify more voices in that reduction than they could have imagined.

ROWAN WILLIAMS

Fellow of the Academy

Note. In preparing this memoir, I have had the most generous assistance from the Chadwick family, especially Peggy and Owen Chadwick, as well as from colleagues and friends too numerous to mention.

The late John O'Neill contributed a quite full bibliography—omitting reviews and ephemera—of Henry's writing until 1988 to the 1989 Cambridge University Press Festschrift for Henry: R. D. Williams (ed.), *The Making of Orthodoxy*. An equivalent task remains to be done for the last two decades of his life.