D. R. Gillie

TOWARDS A POLICY OF HUMANISM

Scholars' congresses enjoy outside the circles of those who participate in them a quite unjustified reputation for dulness. They have never attracted the attention of novelists. The printed volumes of their proceedings don't look inviting. Participation, even on the fringe as an observer, completely reverses this impression. There is a natural happiness and cordiality amongst men and women who are enjoying a rare opportunity of discussing their special subjects of study with those who are equally interested and competent. There is often more than a glint of passion in argument. There is reversal of roles when great scholars return to the students' benches to listen to one another—or instead play the truant in order to talk together in cafés. There is intellectual excitement when new views and discoveries are announced. There is the preoccupation with the common cause of enlarging and organising knowledge when pressing practical problems of the particular branch of scholarship are discussed. There is the perpetual conflict between the systematic approach devised by the organisers of the congress and the individual wishes of participants and would-be contributors of papers which fit into no general programme.

https://doi.org/10.1177/039219215300100307 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The resumption of these international meetings of scholars after the last war was marked by a much greater attempt than in the past to organise them so as to increase their usefulness. Organisation necessarily in some degree conflicts with one of the essential purposes of such congresses, for admittedly their greatest single usefulness is the personal contacts which must take place outside the lecture room. The old-fashioned congress, at which a number of unrelated papers was read did not presuppose regular attendance to the same extent as does the newer kind. But the greater purposiveness of a well-organised congress enhances informal as well as formal meetings.

The congresses held in Paris in the last few years give some idea of the varieties of methods employed. The papyrologists in 1948 remained faithful to the old style, hearing a great variety of individual communications. Since, however, they are at all events an organised body of scholars and since also the material of their study comes almost entirely from one corner of the Ancient World, so that it has a certain homogeneity, they might be expected to be amongst the last to maintain the old individualism which has natural limits in their case. They did however adopt a dominant theme for their congress in Geneva in 1952—namely, how far the Greco-Roman papyri found in Egypt provided valid evidence for the whole Roman world. The linguists' conference in the same year was almost entirely occupied with the discussion of answers to very precisely formulated questions. The historians' congress of September 1950 adopted a mixed system. The enormous scope of subject-matter and the great number of historians attending the congress at all events made it necessary to hold half a dozen different meetings simultaneously. The afternoons were given over to the hearing and discussing of individual papers—each being allotted an hour. But in the morning, discussions lasting three hours were held on the basis of reports printed and circulated in advance. All history had been divided into four periods—ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary. Each period was discussed from the angles of demography, ideas and sentiments, economic history, social history, civilisation, institutions and political events. This gave rise to a stout volume, containing about thirty reports, published with the help of UNESCO. Some of these were broadly conceived essays on the present state of historical studies, others largely bibliographical, others illustrative studies of one particular problem within the period and subject-range demanded. There was some rebelliousness against this sytem, and some confusion about what was being criticised—whether the principle of discussing reports that had already

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been circulated or that of having such a broad subject of discussion as, for instance, the social history of the Middle Ages. The discussion of reports circulated in advance has such advantages that it has almost certainly come to stay. The broad subject-matter was often in fact limited by a common desire to discuss particular problems. The medieval historians, for instance, returned again and again under different headings to the long trade recession from the end of the fourteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century with all its still mysterious aspects.

The classical congress that met in Paris at the same time as the historians' —it was the first meeting of the newly formed International Federation of Associations for Classical Studies—tried to discipline individual contributions by grouping them round general themes, but was particularly noteworthy for the number of practical problems connected with classical subjects that were discussed. This was amply explained by the crisis through which classical studies are going as a result of the general diminution of classical training in schools.

The Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphists in April 1952 was peculiarly disciplined and was generally reckoned as peculiarly successful. No communications on individually chosen themes were allowed, but only reports on the state of studies and publications on a strictly coherent plan. This corresponded to the special needs of this branch of studies. The tens of thousands of ancient inscriptions can only be studied and yield up their significance if systematically published and compared. But the whole spirit of the congress was in protest against the tendency that would isolate epigraphy from the rest of classical studies. 'We are historians who have recognised the eminent value of inscriptions for our documentation and who have equipped ourselves for their interpretation in a critical and reliable manner', said M. Louis Robert in his inaugural speech. 'The abundance of inscriptions gives us a vast domain, but though we have our domain we have no frontiers. The interpretation of inscriptions leads us into many neighbouring domains, where we have only good neighbours, with whom we are in constant co-operation, the papyrologists, the archæologists, the textual scholars, the linguists, in fact, with all the *Altertumswissenschaftler* under whatever name they go and of whom we also are a branch.' The principle that epigraphy has no frontiers meant, M. Robert went on, that there was no limit to the aspects of the ancient world in which the epigraphist must interest himself. To give their full significance to the engraved stones of the past, the epigraphists must not only be masters of the special techniques of their interpretation, but must have in

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mind all ancient history, religion, and literature and must never forget the background of landscape in which the inscriptions had once stood. It was this magnificent conception of the burden of the epigraphists' task that made the 'enlightened despotism' of M. Louis Robert (as an English scholar, Professor Eric Birley of Durham, described it) acceptable to the congress. Limitations had been imposed to defend a large function.

In the first number of *Diogenes* the problem of the rapid publication of newly discovered texts was raised in connexion with the Dead Sea Scrolls. M. Robert raised the same question in connexion with inscriptions. Here, however, the question is much more complicated than in the case of unusually well-preserved manuscripts. Most inscriptions are fragmentary and it is comparatively rare that the kind of light they cast on the past is obvious at first sight. They are very numerous and once buried in the thirtieth volume of some corpus may easily escape attention almost as completely as when buried in the soil. M. Robert therefore insisted not only on reasonably rapid publication but on avoiding premature publication, for it is when a new inscription is first published and commented on that it gains attention. If it first comes before the learned world with an erroneous interpretation, a subsequent correction may never catch up with it. If it is published without any interpretation, it may remain an unregarded orphan. He also protested against expensive volumes in folio format which could never find a place in a scholar's personal library.

Amongst the reports read to the Epigraphists' Congress that from Bulgaria was particularly welcome. It was the only example of co-operation maintained with scholars behind the Iron Curtain and brought very satisfactory news. The Thracian provinces that make up modern Bulgaria were from the first only just outside the Greek world and were later an important part of the Roman Empire. But publication of inscriptions found there had been chaotic—often only in local newspapers. Much has therefore been inaccessible to scholars elsewhere. The Bulgarian Academy has undertaken a general publication of all ancient inscriptions found in the country with a Latin commentary so as to ensure its international usefulness.

There are other problems of scholarly publication beside those of making available newly discovered documents. The first congress of the International Federation of Associations for Classical Studies discussed at length that of keeping available the acknowledged masterpieces, of renewing their editions in accordance with the achievements of modern knowledge,

https://doi.org/10.1177/039219215300100307 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and of providing texts of secondary works indispensable to scholars though not of direct interest outside a restricted public of specialists.

M. Alphonse Dain in his report on this subject recalled how in October, 1948, the French university authorities had chosen Thucydides as a set book for the classical *agrégation* only to discover that in the entire world the greatest of historians was out of print. Copies for some hundreds of students had to be bought second-hand, mainly in England. It was certainly not only because of the smaller part given to Greek studies in schools or wartime shortages of paper, that no publisher, probably for the first time since the Renaissance, had stocks of Thucydides for sale. Stocks there probably had been, incinerated during the bombardments of London and above all of Leipzig, mighty bonfires of which the smaller ones lighted by Hitler in 1933 had been precursors. While the stocks burned, the plates they had been printed from had in many cases melted.

While the great authors are not always easy to purchase in spite of the big editions of the past, minor ones have not yet had a chance to reach the libraries of the world. M. Dain noted the case of a Byzantine work on military science, the Strategicon attributed to the Emperor Maurice but which more probably describes the army of the Emperor Heraclius. This has only once been printed—at Upsala in 1676. The edition is poor and only five known copies survive. Fifteen manuscript copies, however, many of them magnificent, dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries, survive in European libraries. There is probably no other work that is more rare in print than in manuscript.

The lack of any edition of this author illustrates the extreme difficulty of publishing the technical works that have survived from antiquity. Once assured of a public because their contents was still of practical use, they now have the smallest market, though often essential to historians. The smaller the public the higher the price, and so an even smaller public. M. Dain notes that all attempts in the last twenty years at systematic publication of such works have been failures.

Father Aman Dumon, O.S.B., noted the chaotic state of publication of early Christian texts. Although all the surviving works of Pelagius could be collected in a single slim volume, anyone needing to read them must assemble ten different volumes of Migne's edition of patristic literature, a number of different issues of three or four learned reviews as well as books published in Rome, Cambridge, Maredsous, Oslo, Fribourg, and Lausanne. Pelagius has perhaps suffered from being a heretic, but since he is the first man born in the British Isles to have left any literary works

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behind him it is strange that his fellow countrymen should not have provided him with a modern edition of his collected works.

M. Pierre Courcelle in a broad review of what urgently needed to be done in the sphere of patristic studies pointed out to the same congress some requirements that are truly surprising. There is not, he declared, a critical edition worthy of the name of the most famous work of the most famous of all the fathers of the Christian church—the *Confessions* of St. Augustine. In the scene of his *Confessions*, for instance, when the saint describes how he heard a voice telling him to take up the epistles of St. Paul and read—*Tolle, lege*—one group of manuscripts declares that he heard the voice *de domo vicina* 'from a neighbouring house', the other, *de domo divina*, 'from the house of God'. The one reading, as M. Courcelle points out, gives a realistic atmosphere to the incident, the other a symbolic one. Yet there has been no such systematic examination of the whole manuscript tradition as would justify a reasoned choice between the two. No doubt this is in part explained by the very large number of manuscripts of the *Confessions* that have survived—two hundred and sixty-two in all. Clearly their systematic collation would have to be the work of a well-financed team, and a team not easy to assemble with the necessary qualifications.

But it is not only a well-founded text that is needed for the study of the *Confessions*. Autobiographical passages occur throughout the vast works of St. Augustine. Although there is a scholarly index to his letters, the only one to his works as a whole is described by M. Courcelle as a 'superficial' compilation attached to Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, which is itself a century old. This can be supplemented by an old-fashioned concordance to St. Augustine's works published in 1656. Thus the student of the *Confessions* can only be sure that he is taking into account all that St. Augustine himself wrote about his life during nearly half a century of literary activity by reading through the whole corpus of his work. The lack of a good index naturally hampers the study of every other aspect of so voluminous a writer. 'How then be astonished', writes M. Courcelle, 'that though there have been hundreds of biographies of Augustine—which for the most part only summarise the *Confessions* without Augustine's literary art but, alas, often with the addition of edifying comments—we are still waiting to have in any language the truly critical and scientific life that Doerries called for back in 1929 as "one of the most important and urgent tasks for the history of the Latin church".'

It is not of course only St. Augustine who needs an index. M. Courcelle

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mentions as being either without any index or without an efficient and scientific one such important writers as Tertullian, St. Jerome for his letters, and St. Ambrose for most of his treatises. The importance of good indexing for all the Fathers of the Church is of course not limited to students of church history or of theology, for they are amongst the principal sources for all aspects of later Roman history that are not strictly political, military, or legal, notably for things they disliked and denounced such as women's fashions.

Quite a different sort of publication was urged upon the congress by Professor B. L. Ullman of the University of North Carolina—that of the vast medieval encyclopædia, the *Speculum* of Vincent of Beauvais, which he described as providing much the same mirror of the intellectual equipment of *homo mediævalis* as the Sears-Roebuck mail-order catalogue will give to future generations of American daily life. Professor Ullman argued that a new edition of this vast work—three and a quarter million words without commentary or footnotes!—'would be welcomed by a larger and more diversified group of scholars than that of any other medieval work'. The last edition, in many respects a very misleading one, dates from 1624. Was it a task for classical scholars? Yes, not only because they were best equipped to locate the classical sources from which much of Vincent's information and quotations derived, but also because with ever fewer medieval and Renaissance scholars well-grounded in Latin, the editing of Latin texts of these periods would have to be increasingly done by classical Latinists. This last is surely a very important point since it both enlarges the field of work of Latinists and indicates the great importance of maintaining a supply of them, for it is often forgotten to how late a date the main current of Western thought was still carried in this language—that in Germany, for instance, books published in German only became more numerous than those in Latin in the eighteenth century.

The needs of one public escaped the attention of this gathering of scholars, although its maintenance must in the long run be of great importance to them and it is today dwindling. From the sixteenth century down to well into the nineteenth many, perhaps most editions of Latin works were evidently intended for those who, without claim to be called scholars, read Latin and Greek for their pleasure. Without the maintenance to some degree of this public the support for classical scholarship must still further decline. The requirements of such people are generally overlooked today—unless it be assumed that all they need is a bilingual text. Yet this

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is a strange view, when for modern languages the advantage of the direct method stands unassailed. Who for instance would imagine that the best approach to the appreciation of Baudelaire was by means of a crib? The concentrated and therefore explosive character of Latin, in which the perspectives of meaning are often so startlingly out of proportion to the number of words used (most strikingly of course in Tacitus) makes a translation more nearly like beer from a long opened bottle than is the case for most languages. Only too often the translation actually becomes destructive of the literary power of the original. The reader of Latin, who is no scholar, whether he is using a text with or without translation, needs assistance that the scholar does not, not only for mythological or historical references, but also where there are linguistic difficulties. The snobism of centuries has concealed the fact that the majority of readers of Latin poetry would read it more sensitively if the long vowels were marked as they used to be in the days of Augustus (and were of course in Greek) provided that some device was used that did not make the page ugly or confuse quantity with tonic accent. For if such editions were not made an invitation to the eye they would not be worth undertaking. After all, such an ancient commentator as Servius was serving readers of this unscholarly class when he annotated Vergil. The editions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for this public include Bondius's oft reprinted annotated Horace, intended to make easy the path of the eldest son of King James I of Great Britain, as well as many of Barbou's pretty volumes. The modern equivalents of these volumes might, like them, have their notes in easy Latin, since by definition they would be intended for those who are prepared to adventure on the text by themselves. This means that such editions could be international, a consideration that would greatly reduce financial risk provided that the UNESCO agreement for the free communication of knowledge is in fact applied by the governments of the world.

International co-operation was the common hope of all the scholars who reported to the Classical Congress on such problems as those here recorded —international co-operation in financing, in preventing overlapping, in marketing of publications. These hopes were the brighter because the International Federation of the Associations for Classical Studies was itself a new departure in this direction, as, above it, was the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies. The classical scholars' congress and the historians' congress meeting in Paris at the same time were both beneficiaries of UNESCO's financial assistance for the publications of their

https://doi.org/10.1177/039219215300100307 Published online by Cambridge University Press

proceedings. Since then, however, the 1952 General Conference of UNESCO has adopted a policy of stern retrenchment which must limit the hopes of international financing for scholarship from this source.

International co-operation to avoid overlapping depends on scholars themselves. M. Dain illustrated its urgency by mentioning that three times in his career he had been engaged in editing an unpublished text, only to learn when his work was half done that the text in question was being published elsewhere in a perfectly adequate manner. The only editions of classical texts that should be of a national type, he argued, were those accompanied by translations. There might, however, be useful specialisation by nations, the scholars and publishers of a given country specialising in one type of text—a tendency that was already noticeable. The need to avoid overlapping naturally applies to any type of research. The congress passed a resolution urging that the subjects chosen for important books or for original research should as far as possible be made known to the learned world by the university authorities under whose patronage the work was being carried out. It was proposed that the German bibliographical periodical *Gnomon* which had already opened a rubric for such announcements should be used as the central clearing house of such information, so that a subject already chosen for a doctoral thesis could be made known with the least possible delay. On behalf of *Gnomon* Dr. Marg expressed this review's willingness to fulfil this function. The congress also adopted the recommendation of M. Marcel Durry that in every country one classical scholar should be chosen by his colleagues as *agent de liaison* with those of all others.

Mlle Juliette Ernst, to whose bibliographical labours in the *Année Philologique* all classical scholars are indebted, described vividly some of the present inadequacies of international co-operation in publishing and disseminating information about what is published. At present, she had to report, it was common for publishers of works of scholarship to show the greatest indifference to advertising their wares outside their own country, to announce them, if they did announce them, with quite insufficient information for the bibliographer, and to be apparently quite unaware of the valuable free advertisement of inclusion in a specialised bibliography. The lack of co-operation of so many publishers made the information contained in the learned reviews even more important, but in the sphere of classical studies alone there were 377 of these known to Mlle Ernst, apart from other learned reviews which occasionally publish articles on classical subjects. Mlle Ernst had no hesitation in saying that there were too many

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reviews often founded with no real prospect of survival or of a supply of good material. She also found great difficulty in obtaining some of them, even in obtaining accurate information about them. None, however, could be ignored, for nearly all had occasional good articles from distinguished scholars, who should, Mlle Ernst clearly thought, have hesitated before placing them where they were so inaccessible. A new type of review incidentally was growing up which further complicated the picture, namely those intended to keep classical schoolmasters and readers on the edge of the world of classical studies informed about the progress of research. Articles contributed to such reviews by distinguished scholars might well do much more than summarise what had already been published in a more austere form. Mlle Ernst had also a great deal to say that was not flattering about the standards of book reviews in learned periodicals. There were too many of them, in particular too many that were much too long about mediocre books. Important books often received fewer reviews and less space and were reviewed late. When they were expensive, few were sent out to review. The lateness was explicable, when the reviewer had to consider new views and new matter—but sometimes, also, when a book advances a new and rather bold theory, one has the impression rightly or wrongly, that some reviewers, before committing themselves to a favourable or unfavourable view, prefer to wait till their colleagues have expressed theirs. Then there were the reviewers who limited themselves to a polemic on details and gave no idea of the general purport of the book—and there were others who accepted to review a book in several different journals, smothering it sometimes under the opinion of one man. Mlle Ernst was clearly not merely describing the unnecessary labours imposed on her by inaccessible, mediocre, or repetitious periodicals, but was speaking with feeling for the unfortunate scholar who wasted valuable time and limited means in hunting for other men's contributions to his speciality, often with no result at all.

As a solution of the problem of making the contents of reviews accessible Mlle Ernst proposed, and the Congress recommended, the foundation of at least one world centre which would receive, and give information about, all learned periodicals dealing with classical subjects. Ultimately by the use of microfilms it might be able to communicate the contents of the reviews to places where any given review was in practice unobtainable. To promote the international co-ordination of the publication of classical texts with commentaries a committee was established and the hope was expressed that a similar committee of specialised publishers

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would be established. But in this domain still more perhaps depends on governments who were besought not to obstruct the international trade in scientific books, especially those that are bound and voluminous—precisely the kind with which customs officials delight to interfere. The utmost liberalism of customs officials, however, cannot reduce the difficulty of paying for books so long as there is control of foreign exchange. For this problem UNESCO's system of international book coupons has been so far a partial remedy.

It is significant of the gravity of the problems that the classical scholars were discussing, that none of them seems to have mentioned the possible drawbacks of the international collaboration in which they were placing their hopes. May there not be some dangers as well as great advantages in the national specialisation of publishing under the proposed schemes of collaboration? And in the uniformisation of types of editions that is proposed? Might not important subjects for theses be reserved by registration without any guaranty of execution? Do not the learned reviews of marginal utility at least provide a guaranty against the domination of orthodoxy? But beggars cannot be choosers.

Hopes that the fourth of the Dead Sea Scrolls in American hands, that which was believed to contain the Revelation of Lamech, would shortly be published, have been dashed by an announcement made by Professor Carl H. Kraeling to the Annual Assembly of the American Schools of Oriental Research at the end of 1951 and which had escaped general attention.

His Grace the Archbishop Athanasius of Jerusalem and Jordan, who had agreed to entrust the American Schools of Oriental Research with the publication of the four scrolls for a period of three years, has declined to prolong that period. Preparations had been made to unroll the Lamech scroll after careful examination. Unlike the others its physical condition was such that special treatment of it was necessary. The best available museum specialists in the United States and Great Britain had agreed upon the method. But without the renewed authorisation of the Archbishop nothing can be done.

The Archbishop has not indicated what other method of publication he proposes to adopt. None could give greater guaranties of care and skill in unrolling the manuscript, nor could any form of publication be less open to the charge that personal aggrandisement was being sought by the editors than that used for the first three scrolls.

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The Archbishop will certainly be anxious to prove groundless any suspicion that might arise of his being actuated by the same motives as Lord Ashburnham who a hundred years ago refused to allow scholars access to a collection of ancient Irish manuscripts that he had acquired. Matthew Arnold quotes him in *On the Study of Celtic Literature* as having explained his conduct with the following words: 'For fear an actual acquaintance with their contents should decrease their value as matter of curiosity at some future transfer or sale'. After his liberal behaviour with regard to the first three scrolls the Archbishop owes it to himself as well as to the world to say what he proposes to do next.

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