



Nota Bene



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In Memoriam

In the recent past, Harvard's Department of the Classics has suffered several deaths among its faculty and emeriti. To consider only the Pope Professorship of the Latin Language and Literature, we have had to cope—within less than four years (by a single day)—with the departure of no fewer than four individuals whose incumbency in the chair spanned continuously more than four decades: Mason Hammond (1950-1973, died October 13, 2002), Herbert Bloch (1973-1982, died September 6, 2006), David Roy Shackleton Bailey (1982-1988, died November 28, 2005), and Wendell Vernon Clausen (1988-1993, died October 12, 2006). In contemplating these losses, we decided for two main reasons to innovate by publishing a memorial issue of *Nota Bene*, our departmental newsletter, that would gather obituaries, remarks made at memorial services, and other related materials.

One of the two reasons is that Classics is the cornerstone of the humanities, as the *artes humaniores* have come to be known. An essential component of these "arts" is humaneness, and nothing makes a person suffer more acutely the related experience of humbling humanness than to experience the absence when a dear one dies. Our thoughts, our empathies, go out to the families and friends of those commemorated here.

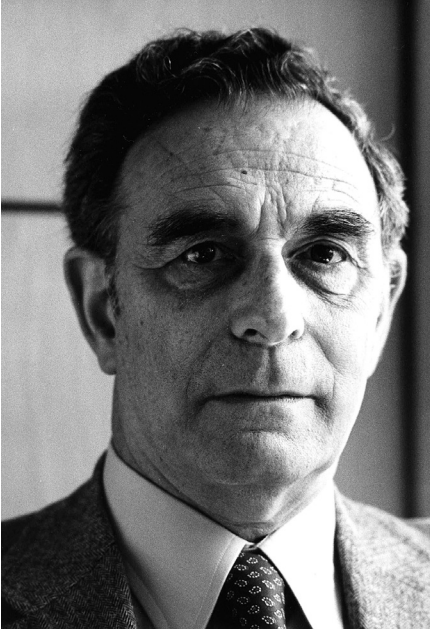
Another motivation in assembling these texts is that Classics, for all its stupendous interdisciplinarity and all the ever-changing diversity of approaches that it elicits and requires, remains (as it began) a field in which texts and traditions are foundational. So that those in the future who are interested, as well as those right now who care deeply and immediately, may remember the members of our community we have lost, we offer the following pages. The issue focuses upon those who have passed away in this fall semester of 2006, namely: Herbert Bloch; Wendell Clausen and Margaret Clausen; and Rodney Dennis, retired curator of manuscripts in Houghton Library and enthusiastic participant in our community.

Jan Ziolkowski, Chair

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HERBERT BLOCH



Herbert Bloch, Pope Professor of the Latin Language and Literature, Emeritus, died on September 6, 2006, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was ninety-five years of age. A native of Germany, he was born in Berlin on August 18, 1911. He was the eldest of two sons of Ludwig Bloch, who became a director of the Dresdner Bank in Berlin, and Alice Gutman, the bank owner's daughter. Ludwig's father was a family doctor in Pilsen (now in the Czech Republic), so beloved of his patients that once, when he lay ill, they packed the cobblestones outside his house with straw to muffle the sound of horses and carriages. Bloch studied

ancient history, classical philology, and archaeology at the University of Berlin (1930-1933), which he left for Rome. Owing to the vicissitudes of fate, his brother Egon remained in Germany and died in the Holocaust.

Bloch received his doctoral degree in Roman History in 1935 and the Diploma di perfezionamento in 1937 from the University of Rome, where he was a student of the eminent historian Arnaldo Momigliano. Though Momigliano directed Bloch's thesis on the religious policy of Commodus (161-192 CE: Roman emperor, 180-192), Momigliano professed that there was nothing he could teach his student. In 1938 Bloch remained in Italy, serving as a member of the staff of the excavations in Ostia in 1938. During these years he not only honed his skills as a scholar but also developed a facility in Italian that remained with him his entire life. Because of his fluency, he used to go and translate at sight articles in German for the great Italian historian Gaetano de Sanctis (1870-1957), after which they would discuss the contents together.

Bloch's command of ancient history, Italian, and German resulted in one particularly memorable experience in 1938. When Adolf Hitler paid a German state visit as chancellor to Rome in March of that year, Benito Mussolini made a stop at the reconstructed Ara Pacis (a monumental altar of peace that was

completed in 9 BCE) a centerpiece of a city tour. At the last moment the organizers, realizing that their attempted translation of the exhibition catalog into German was a botch, cast around for a person qualified to redo it. They were told that there was someone who could, but he was Jewish. Nonetheless, they asked Bloch, who agreed and stayed up two nights to produce a new version. Hitler so liked the exhibit that he made a second, unscheduled visit. Bloch gave as his reason for translating the catalog that he had to choose between helping the country that had taken him in or refusing out of dislike for the country that had driven him out.

Owing to the pressures of the anti-Semitic laws enacted in late 1938, Bloch was soon no longer able to remain in the country that had sheltered him initially. In 1939 he emigrated to the United States. George Hanfmann (1911-1986), the art historian and archaeologist at Harvard who had been a student with him in Berlin, played a role in securing him a connection with the University. Bloch was to have been in the first group of fellows at Dumbarton Oaks, one of Harvard's centers in Washington, DC. At the time John Finley (1904-1995) was acting chair of the Department of the Classics. When Carl Newell Jackson, Eliot Professor of Greek, fell ill, Finley hired Bloch to take

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over his teaching. It was arranged for Bloch to defer his junior fellowship in Washington by a year.

In retrospect the war years were the beginning of unbroken stability in Bloch's life, since from 1941 to 1982 he taught at Harvard University. At the same time it must be acknowledged that he remained stateless through the end of the war, when he had to go to Montreal to secure his citizenship papers. He was naturalized as a U.S. citizen in 1946.

His gratitude to the United States for having given him a haven was great. Equally strong was his resistance to any whiff of intolerance or persecution. In 1954, he was approached by the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton about the possibility of a permanent position there, but decided against it at least partly because he was horrified that the chairman of the board of trustees of the Institute testified in Washington against J. Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967). In contrast, Nathan Pusey (1907-2001), recently appointed president of Harvard (1953-1971), had stood up to Senator Joseph McCarthy. Fifteen years later (1969), Bloch himself took a stand by delivering a speech to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences against the students who had taken over University Hall. He regarded them as being similar to the Nazi youths he had seen early in his life.

At Harvard Bloch rose swiftly through the ranks, as an instructor for one year (1941-1942), a faculty instructor for four (1942-1946), and an assistant professor for one (1946-1947), before being tenured as an associate professor (1947-1953). He was a professor for twenty years (1953-1973), after which he held the Pope Professorship of the Latin Language and Literature.

His teaching and research interests involved Greek and Roman historiography, Latin epigraphy, Roman archaeology (especially architecture), medieval history, and medieval Latin literature. Through his courses he advanced medieval studies in particular, by inspiring a cadre of students who have now become eminent in their own right.

In all the areas already mentioned he made a major impact in his scholarship. Among his most enduring contributions to Classics are his works on Roman brick-stamps, which enable archaeologists and ancient historians to date buildings and trace economic ties related to their construction by matching the brick-stamps to their brickyards of origin. One of his earliest interests, Roman brick-stamps were an area he revisited periodically during his long and productive career: his studies of 1936-1938 were assembled as a book in 1948 (which received a second edition in 1968) and have a pendant in his contributions to the

famous corpus of Latin inscriptions. Another longstanding commitment of his was to what used to be labeled "the final pagan revival in the West" in the late fourth century.

Among medievalists he is known best for many books and articles on Monte Cassino. His crowning achievement was the three volumes of *Monte Cassino in the Middle Ages*, which appeared in 1986. This opus, which is exemplary in bringing together evidence from historical texts with insights gleaned from works of art, was awarded the Praemium Urbis in Rome in 1987 and the Haskins Medal of the Medieval Academy in 1988. Although all this work is uniquely his own, Bloch's Monte Cassino oeuvre also bears witness to the extraordinary support of his second wife, Ellen, who not only drove him to many of the out-of-the-way places in Italy he needed to visit but also took many of the photographs with which the three volumes are illustrated.

Ten years later, well into his eighties, Bloch published *The Atina Dossier of Peter the Deacon of Monte Cassino. A Hagiographical Romance of the Twelfth Century*, in the series *Studi e Testi* 346 (1998). Peter the Deacon became a central figure in Bloch's investigations into the rise of the Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino. Around 600, when there was no way of easily and quickly copying essential documents

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or backing them up on hard drives, critical manuscripts often were lost, damaged, or destroyed. Peter the Deacon (the abbey's librarian) seized the opportunity to enhance his and the abbey's reputation and power by forging replacement documents that "embellished" the abbey's holdings. Infatuated with ancient Rome, Peter the Deacon frequently interwove references to Rome in his creations but sometimes got his facts wrong. Bloch's knowledge of Latin literature enabled him to see through the ruses and set the record straight. He delighted in this detective work.

In the 1970s and 1980s Bloch was involved in a controversy about Monte Cassino that had nothing to do with the Middle Ages. After thorough research, he wrote a monograph that criticized the Allied bombing of the monastery in 1944 as unnecessary, and in fact a detriment to the Allied cause, since it created ruins that the Germans used as a fort when massacring the troops that tried to cross the Gustav Line. Although this study made him persona non grata in some quarters (perhaps especially New Zealand, since it was a commander from there who took the key decisions), it was reprinted in generous numbers at Monte Cassino. In any case, his devotion to Monte Cassino led to his being awarded an LLD by the University of Cassino in 1989 and endeared him to the monks. Born Jewish but reticent about his beliefs, Bloch developed a sense of deep community with Benedictine monasticism.

Professor Bloch attained all the

types of recognition that one might expect. He was a Guggenheim Fellow and a Fulbright Fellow (1950-1951); member of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton (1953-1954); syndic of Harvard University Press (1961-1965); senior fellow of the Society of Fellows (1964-1979), and trustee of the Loeb Classical Library (1964-1973). He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, American Philological Society, Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia (since 1990 Hon. Mem.), German Archaeological Institute, Zentraldirektion of the Monumenta Germaniae Historica, and Finnish Academy of Science and Letters. In 1999 he was distinguished by the Premio "Cultori di Roma."

His ties with a number of these organizations went far beyond the merely honorific. To cite two examples that speak to the chronological range he demonstrated, Bloch served as president of the American Philological Association (1968-1969) and as President of Fellows of the Medieval Academy (1990-1993). Because of his earlier years in Italy, his terms as Professor-in-Charge of the School of Classical Studies (1957-1959) and as Resident in Classical Studies (1987) at the American Academy in Rome were particularly important. He was held in very high regard and affection by all at the Academy, and on one of his final visits to it was received almost as a founding father, since there happened to be three or even four generations of his students

and colleagues in residence at the time.

Although this enumeration of Bloch's career gives a glimpse of achievements and values, it fails to capture his physical presence—what death has now wrested from us. A tall and lean man, Bloch had an Old World courtliness; a captivatingly resonant, deep voice; a modesty; and a genuine interest in the activities of others that endeared him to those who knew him. During his half century or so of living in Belmont, he loved to take long walks in the conservation land adjacent to his property. In those woods he knew the precise number and location of all the lady's slippers and could compare the totals in a given year with those of earlier ones. He cared deeply about the earth, to which he has now returned.

Herbert Bloch is survived by his twins, Anne Bloch of Arlington and Mary Alice (Nini) Bloch of Bedford, Massachusetts. They were his daughters by his first wife, Clarissa (née Holland), who came from the Boston area. She died suddenly while they were traveling together in Europe in August 1958. His second wife, Ellen (née Cohen), of Memphis, Tennessee, died in May 1987.

Reprinted, with permission and revisions, from the obituary by Jan Ziolkowski which appeared on September 21, 2006, in the Harvard University Gazette.

REMEMBRANCES



For me, the most haunting picture of my father (*seen above*) shows the face of a ten-year-old boy, wrapped in a fur hat, looking straight on. It's an innocent, open face with soft, dark, expressive—and inquisitive—eyes.

That picture was taken in 1921, when my father perhaps wasn't such an innocent boy after all. He had lived through the First World War and had learned to hate cabbage and beets because they were all that his middle-class banker's family could afford. He had frozen in a sweater made only of paper, and he had lost a beloved uncle to the war. I think some of what I see in that picture is a boy wise beyond his years. My father never lost his boyish enthusiasm, but sometimes it seemed tinged with sadness.

I want to talk today about some of the forces that shaped my father and what it was like growing up in my early years with a man whose *humanitas* I see mirrored in

so many of his students and colleagues.

My father grew up in an odd household—his mother, a Jewish bank owner's daughter, came into the marriage with a companion, Anna Hoelsch. Aunt Annychen—or Tante Anny, as my father called her—was a Catholic, and a life force within the family. I always felt that it was she, more than anyone else, who encouraged his *humanitas* and spawned his lifelong interest in the Catholic Church that culminated in his studies of the Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino. Although I never met Tante Anny in person, she became a fairy godmother of sorts, sending us packages of delicious dark chocolates, games, and anything else a child would love. I don't know how in her war-torn country she managed to scrape together such magic for my sister and me. I do know that from this side of the ocean there were monthly shipments of CARE packages to her of coffee, sugar, and other essentials. My father always spoke of Tante Anny with the greatest love, and after the Second World War, I know he tried to bring her over here. It didn't happen—she died in 1955.

Despite the ravages of the First World War, my father had some happy times in his childhood. The one he told us about the most was when he was nine. For his birthday his father presented him with twenty-five minerals—the seminal pieces of a collection. My father was stunned—and ecstatic. So ecstatic over the ensuing years

that, with more additions to his collection, he nearly became a mineralogist—and then we would have had no Pope Professor of Latin.

His mineral collection survived the war, carefully guarded by Tante Anny, who stayed in the family's Berlin apartment. In the early 1950s, she packed up every last piece of it, and it arrived, complete with the two wooden cabinets that it lived in. For a while, it seemed like endless Christmas as my father unwrapped each mineral. Anne and I were dazzled—and hooked. Soon we were following our father up on slag heaps or around quarries in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, looking for heavy bits of ore or tourmaline or quartz crystals.

We also followed my father's giant strides around Belmont Hill on afternoon walks—at first it was hard to keep up on our little legs. My father was a firm believer in daily constitutionals, and he loved wildlife. He delighted in bringing stale bread to feed the painted turtles that lived in the pond at Habitat. With more focus than I thought possible, they'd silently swim through the algae to the hands waiting with bread.

My father was an odd combination of caution and abandon. He loved collecting and eating wild mushrooms, something to this day I'm not confident about doing. He had only one mishap—early on—with a puffball that gave him a bellyache. From then on, he concentrated on the Boleti and

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meadow mushrooms.

Daring to do the right or the bold thing was a theme that played out as well at the larger junctures of my father's life. I have tried hard to imagine what it must have been like for him to leave Germany in 1933 as a twenty-two-year-old university student for an uncertain future in Rome. My father had read *Mein Kampf* and believed Hitler would carry out his plan. That was his gut reaction. His father wasn't convinced, and my father's decision to leave was probably the closest he ever came to disobeying his father. Beyond the emotional trauma of leaving family and *Vaterland* behind was the fact that, when my father set off for Rome, he had never before spent even *one* night away from his family. The adjustment must have been wrenching—as it must have been when he uprooted again in 1939 and came to this country. But my father always seemed to find ways to land on his feet—not gracefully, perhaps, but at least right side up. I admired his backbone in following his convictions.

By June of 1943, his entire family (except for Tante Anny) was gone. My father rarely spoke of his birth family—his grief was too deep—so they remained shadowy figures to me. I wish I knew more. But family was important to my father, and he wanted a family here. By Thanksgiving of that year he had met and married my mother—Clarissa Holland, a kind, gentle, warm, and playful soul who was every bit his intellectual equal. She was as much a partner

in his scholarly endeavors as was his second wife, Ellen Cohen (or “Eddie,” as we knew her). Besides her wit and generous spirit, Eddie brought a social energy to the family we hadn't known before. When I was growing up, there was a lot of creativity bouncing around our house—so much so that you might think these talents would have tangled. I think both marriages worked so well in part because husband and wife had their separate realms, but each also was invested in consulting the other: my father had his study; Eddie had her garden and the gourmet world she created; my mother had her sewing machine and her power tools. And those power tools were needed.

In 1947, when my father was an assistant professor on a meager salary, my parents bought a rundown Victorian on Pleasant Street in Belmont that was to be my father's home for the next half century. Initially the only source of heat for the entire house was a large coal stove in the kitchen. I still remember both my parents schlepping coal from the bin in the cellar every morning for that stove. My father was many things but *not* a handyman. My mother was, though, and she undertook such ambitious renovation projects as transforming the pantry into a bathroom. Together my parents turned that broken house into a home. They both had vision. So did Eddie.

Some of my favorite times as a child were post-dinner “family time,” when we'd sit around the

piano and listen to my mother play Beethoven sonatas—we'll hear an excerpt today—or we'd listen to my father read such predictable fare as Grimm's fairy tales, Aesop's *Fables*, and the *Iliad*. My father seemed so content and peaceful at those times, and it was only much later that I realized what a sense of stability and continuity those family gatherings must have given a man who was forced to flee both his homeland and his adoptive country.

I saw my father's scholarship through a child's eyes. I remember his drawing Roman inscriptions and being fascinated watching him fill in with dashed lines the missing parts he had reconstructed. Roman history at the time seemed to me to be a lot about missing pieces and dashed lines. And then there was Peter the Deacon, who at times seemed almost a member of the family—albeit the black sheep. Monte Cassino's librarian during its heyday in the twelfth century was a forger of documents that embellished the power of his abbey and—through his association with it—his own stature. I felt as if my father were on a personal crusade to expose the figure we knew in the family as Peter the Dickens. On finding out some new ruse that Peter had perpetrated, my father would exclaim, “That scoundrel!” I don't think anyone else in history evoked such a combination of moral outrage and intellectual delight in my father. My father, who always tried to do the right thing, earned his reputation through hard work. It galled

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him that Peter had earned his through deceit.

My father started life nurtured by a strong, compassionate Catholic woman—Tante Anny. She stood bravely beside the family even when the Nazis confiscated her life savings and tried to starve her out by reducing her rations to the lowest possible level. My father thrived in two happy marriages, each to a strong, compassionate, vibrant woman with a sense of self and a sense of humor. Both marriages tragically ended early. As my father neared the end of his life, another strong, compassionate Catholic woman entered it—Kazia Kagan—his beloved companion of the last six years. Her loving care eased his way, buoyed his spirits, and brought out his gentleness. These words would not be complete without a salute to these four women.

My father taught me well the joy of learning and the passion of investigating—virtually anything. It took me a lot longer to appreciate the boldness of his intellect, his courage in acting on his beliefs, and the effort and love he put into his relationships. For those lessons, I am eternally grateful.

Nini Bloch

It was a matter of uncertainty between Herbert and myself just when we first met, but since by his account it was in 1942, when I was a boy of twelve

and he was over thirty, I am inclined to trust his memory more than my own. A few years later, when, by the providential workings of the Harvard dean's office, I was exempted from freshman English, I enrolled in Herbert's course on medieval Latin. Since at that time I had no predilection for either the Middle Ages or for Latin, to which I remember paying a cheerful farewell at school, I can only imagine that my decision was owing to my acquaintance with the teacher. My term papers for that course were my introduction to medieval scholarship. Herbert later supervised both my senior thesis and my doctoral dissertation, so that I can describe myself as his student in the fullest sense.

In the letter I wrote him at the time of his retirement in 1982, I said that I remembered some of our discussions, in which he shaped not only my way of writing history but also my way of thinking about history and my approach to the subject. I defended my positions stubbornly, as young and opinionated scholars are inclined to do, and buttressed them with every conceivable argument, against which he brought the siege-weapons of experience and common sense. He taught me that a good point is often judged not by the number of supporting arguments but by the weakest, and most extreme, of them. On one occasion, when I was arguing a defense against some possible objection, he exclaimed, "Giles, you cannot convince"—he may

have said, 'argue with'—"the madmen." This is an essential, though often neglected, lesson for a young scholar to learn, and one that I have kept in mind not only in my own work (where I still have a regrettable tendency to pile Ossa on Pelion) but also in my teaching.

Meanwhile, the relationship of master and pupil matured into friendship. It was still many years, and then only at the friendly insistence of Herbert's second wife, Ellen, that "Dr. Bloch" became "Herbert," and even after that great step was taken I used to slip comfortably back into Dr. Bloch when we were together, showing that affection has nothing to do with nomenclature. He became a friend of the family, not only of my parents and brother, but also of my grandmother, whom he showed round Ostia in 1951. Later he stayed with her in London, where she all but despaired of his pronunciation of Holborn and Marylebone. Later both he and Ellen became as close to my wife, Evhy, as to me, and our children looked on them almost as members of the family. On our last visit but one to Herbert we took along Remie's two boys. His quick sympathy, wide range of interests, and ready enthusiasm thus attracted five generations of my family, as they did one then-young member of the family over sixty years ago, and as they have many other people, both inside and outside the classroom.

In preparing these remarks I looked over the letters Herbert

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sent me over almost fifty years, beginning in 1954. It is impossible here even to summarize their contents, but they include moving accounts, written in 1958, of the death of his first wife, Clarissa, the mother of Anne and Nini, and of his visit in 1982 to the birthplace of his grandfather at Ronsperg in Czechoslovakia. In 1980 he wrote about our shared love of pigs, or syphililia, as he called it. Previously he had sent me a photograph, still hanging on my office wall, of a porcine “friend,” as he put it, sleeping amid flowers and herbs in the moat of Castel Monte Sant’ Angelo. In another letter he explained his reasons for staying at Harvard rather than accepting a position at the Institute for Advanced Study, which he attributed primarily to his feeling of gratitude to Harvard. The feelings of gratitude, on the contrary, are from Harvard and not least myself and his many students. Herbert will continue to live for me as a beloved friend as well as an admired teacher.

Giles Constable, School of Historical Studies, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University

There will be other times and places to commemorate Herbert Bloch’s great achievements in scholarship, but the Herbert I want to talk of here is the friend and the teacher. It is sometimes said that teachers “form” their students, but the best

teachers do something else: they educate them in the full sense of the Latin *educare*, “to bring out, to nurture.” Herbert never imposed his views on those he taught: he did not want to make miniatures of himself, or robot soldiers to defend his views. He saw what was in each person who studied with him, and he brought it out, by advice gently given, with a slight smile rather than a frown, sometimes with a certain dismay if you said something that his courtesy forbade him to dismiss as rapidly as it deserved.

And his kindness also took a form that has now become rare: following a tradition that I suspect he had met in his own student days in Berlin, he invited not just his particular students but all of those who, for instance, had taken one of his seminars, to dinner at 524 Pleasant Street. He loved to tell us that the house was a smaller version of Memorial Hall before the tower burned down, both buildings having been built by the same architect. On those occasions, as I remember them in the 1960s, Ellen presided together with Herbert, bringing to them, I like to think, her own southern tradition of good cheer and hospitality, as Herbert had brought his traditions from his native Germany.

For that *educatio* in the fullest sense, education in how to be both gentle and generous, human and humane, I and many others owe Herbert an incalculable debt. Let us indeed honor him by recalling his virtues and, as far as we can,

by applying the lessons that he taught us.

The Tacitus text that I supplied, and which the minister read, follows:

Si quis piorum manibus locus, si, ut sapientibus placet, non cum corpore extinguuntur magnae animae, placide quiescas, nosque domum tuam ab infirmo desiderio et [muliebribus] lamentis ad contemplationem virtutum tuarum voces, quas neque lugeri neque plangi fas est. Admiratione te potius et immortalibus laudibus et, si natura suppeditet, similitudine colamus: is verus honos, ea coniunctissimi cuiusque pietas.

“If there is any place for the souls of the good, if, as philosophers think, great souls are not extinguished along with the body, may you rest quietly, and may you lead us, your relatives and friends, away from weak regret and [womanly] laments to thinking about your excellences, which it is right neither to mourn nor to bewail. Let us rather honor you with admiration and undying praise, and if nature permits us, by imitation: that is true honor, that is the loving duty of everyone closest to you.”

Christopher Jones, Harvard University

I remember my beloved mentor and friend, Herbert Bloch, most of all for his impressive erudition and his unfailing kindness and humanity.

He once told me that early in

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his American career he had inherited a graduate student who had been assigned an impossible thesis topic by the previous advisor. Herbert resolved never to do that and instead to take care to suit the thesis topic to the individual student's talents and personality. And so he did, as I and many others can testify. Former junior fellows in Harvard's Society of Fellows have told me gratefully over the years of how Herbert engaged them in conversation at the Society's luncheons and always made sure that they felt welcome and valued.

All his students remember with gratitude the Bloch family's hospitality at the gracious house in Belmont. We remember the delicious dinners prepared for us by Ellen Bloch, and the lively after-dinner debates that often sent her to an impressive collection of cookbooks and reference works to settle once and for all such questions as the difference between a yam and a sweet potato.

Despite his kindness, though, Herbert could be a terror at graduate oral exams, all unintentionally. Trying to help a student who was floundering, he would offer hint after hint of the correct answer, while the poor student became ever more flustered. Importantly, he perceived each of us students, we felt, to be a distinct individual complete with idiosyncrasies, some of which he gently rebuked, most of which he valued. He had in particular a noteworthy interest in peculiarities of American regional speech and in American

politics, on which he was always well informed.

My research and teaching interests, though of course they are my own, have always shown the influence of Herbert's scholarly preferences and passions. My student notebooks from his masterly surveys of medieval Latin literature show that his lectures began with early sixth-century Italy and the fascinating letters of the imperial advisor Cassiodorus, Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, and of course the *Rule* of St. Benedict, founder of Monte Cassino. The courses gave special attention to authors and works originating in German-speaking areas during the Carolingian and Ottonian periods and finally to the Renaissance of the twelfth century, which is my major interest still. My own students in turn have pursued research and teaching interests that of course are their own, but that also bear the imprint of Herbert's influence. I won't embarrass these scholars by naming them, but they know who they are.

It was from Herbert that I first learned about the writings of medieval women. From my undergraduate years at Radcliffe, I knew as an incontrovertible fact that women had written important and influential books in Latin. I knew this because I had read their works in Herbert's courses. Not only that, I had taken final examinations on medieval women writers—in academic terms, the ultimate test and proof of significance. I owe to Herbert's teaching

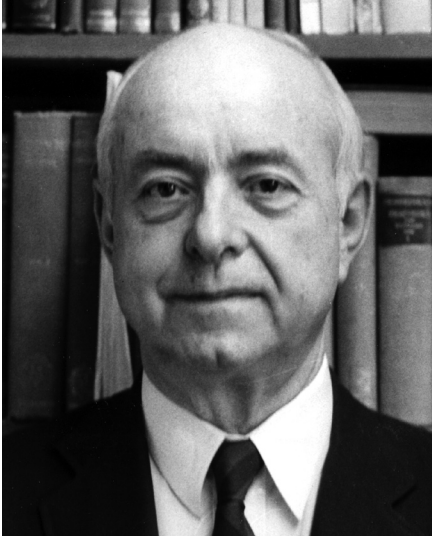
and, importantly, to the example of his support of women students and colleagues, that absolute conviction of the significance of women's contributions to the classical tradition—as authors, readers, and patrons—that has been central to my research, teaching, and feminist activism.

When I looked again at my notebooks from Herbert's courses in medieval Latin, a sheet fell out on which I had succeeded in tracing a direct and unbroken line of intellectual descent from the seventh-century English monastic historian Bede to the myriad authors belonging to the Renaissance of the twelfth century. Erasures and corrections show that it became more and more difficult to trace a simple linear tradition from teacher to student as influences became multiple, complex, and subtle. Nevertheless, the intellectual tradition was unbroken. Today in our turn we here honor the profound and abiding influence, into the future, of our beloved teacher, Herbert Bloch.

Janet Martin, Princeton University

Photo credits: pages 2, 5: courtesy of the Bloch family; pages 10, 12, 13: courtesy of the Clausen family; page 18: courtesy of the Dennis family

WENDELL VERNON CLAUSEN



Wendell Vernon Clausen, Pope Professor of the Latin Language and Literature, Emeritus, died on October 12, 2006, in Belmont, Massachusetts. He was eighty-three years of age, and had been in declining health after suffering a stroke in August 2005.

Wendell was born in Coquille, Oregon, on April 2, 1923. He received his BA from the University of Washington in 1945, majoring in both Classics and English. In his senior year he was uncertain which field to pursue, and so he sought guidance from a professor of English whom he admired, Allen Rogers Benham. Benham's advice was unambiguous: "Be a classicist! Anyone can teach English." Wendell duly enrolled for graduate study in Classics at

the University of Chicago, obtaining his PhD in just three years. His thesis was an edition of a ninth-century treatise on the grammar of Donatus that showed him already in full command of the disciplines of palaeography and textual criticism. His first appointment was at Amherst College, where he taught from 1948 to 1959. At Harvard he was Professor of Greek and Latin from 1959 to 1982, then Victor S. Thomas Professor of Greek and Latin from 1982 to 1988 and Pope Professor of the Latin Language and Literature from 1988 to 1993; he also held an appointment as Professor of Comparative Literature from 1984 to 1993. He served as chairman of the Department of the Classics from 1966 to 1971 and as editor of *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* in 1973-1974, 1982, and 1992-1993.

Wendell initially made his name as an expert editor of classical Latin poetry. His first major publication, in 1956, was an edition of the satirist Persius, a notoriously difficult writer. Wendell's was the first satisfactory critical edition, and its combination of deep erudition and refined taste—traits that would mark all his scholarship—brought him to international attention. It was quickly followed in 1959 by an edition of Persius and his fellow-satirist Juvenal for the Oxford Classical Texts series, in which Wendell was the first American scholar to publish

a volume. In another OCT volume, he joined with three eminent British Latinists to edit a group of poems attributed to Virgil and known collectively as the *Appendix Vergiliana* (1966).

Alongside this editorial work, Wendell also produced a series of articles that demonstrated his interest in the poetry of the late Republic and the Augustan period—the poetry of Catullus and Horace, of Propertius and Ovid, and, above all, of Virgil. In later years literary-critical work came to occupy the center of his scholarly efforts, and it is arguably as an interpreter of Latin poetry that he made his most distinctive contribution to classical studies. He was one of the first English-speaking classicists to explore the relationship between Latin poets and Hellenistic Greek poetry, with which he had a rare familiarity, and his subtle analyses revealed a new dimension of artistry in poems that had been studied for centuries. Wendell disclaimed theoretical labels, but he can be counted as a pioneer in what is now known as the intertextual reading of classical texts. Among the products of his research in this area are his contributions to the *Cambridge History of Latin Literature* (1982), which he co-edited with E. J. Kenney; his Sather Lectures at the University of California at Berkeley, published in 1987 under the title *Virgil's Aeneid*

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and the Tradition of Hellenistic Poetry and reissued in a revised and expanded form in 2002 under the title *Virgil's Aeneid: Decorum, Allusion, and Ideology*; and his magisterial commentary on Virgil's *Eclogues*, the distillation of decades of thought, published in 1994, the year following his retirement. His last published work, completed in collaboration with a former student, James E. G. Zetzel of Columbia University, was an edition of a ninth-century commentary on Persius, the so-called *Commentum Cornuti*; it appeared in 2004, bringing to fruition a project announced almost fifty years previously.

One of Wendell's great strengths as an interpreter was his ability to integrate the most exacting philological scholarship with a finely tuned literary sensibility. The two skills did not merely coexist, but were mutually reinforcing, the *lungo studio* informing and illuminating the *grande amore*. To speak of love in this context is no exaggeration, since for Wendell poetry was far more than the object of his professional study; it was a lifelong passion and a source of delight and sustenance. To hear him recite from one of his favorite Latin or English poets, with great feeling and often from memory, was a deeply moving experience. The qualities he admired in the poets he interpreted—learning, concision, exquisite

craft—were also to be found in his own writing. He took to heart Callimachus' dictum "a big book is a big nuisance," and strove to convey much in a small compass. Two of his most influential articles run to only ten pages each.

As a teacher, Wendell had a profound impact on two generations of Harvard Classics students, both undergraduate and graduate. Many of the graduate students he trained have gone on to distinguished careers as classicists. But his relationship with his students went beyond that of a typical teacher and mentor. He nurtured them with care and supported them staunchly, and they reciprocated with a deep and steadfast devotion. In the words of one of those students, David Kubiak, "Wendell was to me everything I ever admired or ever hoped to be in my life as a classicist."

Only a few of the many awards and honors he received can be mentioned here. In 1952-1953 he was a fellow of the American Academy in Rome, and in 1963 he was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (in a cohort that also included James Ackerman, Morton Bloomfield, and Noam Chomsky). In 1982 he held the Sather Lectureship at Berkeley, and in 1994 his contribution to Virgilian studies was recognized with the award of the Premio Internazionale Virgilio by the Accademia Nazio-

nale Virgiliana di Mantova and the Provincia di Mantova. This last distinction gave him particular pleasure, since his affection for Italy was almost as great as his love of Virgil. In 1998, to commemorate his seventy-fifth birthday, he was presented with a volume of essays by friends and former students. Appropriately, this Festschrift is, by the gargantuan standards too often typical of the genre, a conspicuously lean volume, twenty papers making up a mere three hundred pages.

He is survived by his sister Ilene Hull; by three sons from his first marriage, John, Raymond, and Thomas; by a stepson, Edward Woodman; a stepdaughter, Jane Woodman; and by five grandchildren.

In his first year at Harvard, Wendell and Steele Commager taught a course in Catullus and Horace. A student taking the course was asked by a friend what Professor Clausen was teaching, and he replied: "Elegance." Elegance was indeed at the heart of everything Wendell taught, and it is a lesson that his work continues to teach, to all those who care about the poetry of Rome.

Reprinted, with permission and minor revisions, from the obituary by Richard Tarrant which appeared on November 2, 2006, in the Harvard University Gazette.

OCTOBER 12, 2006

MARGARET WILLIAMS CLAUSEN



I'm Margaret's sister, and I want to tell you a little bit about Margaret before she met Wendell.

Margaret and I have been part of the Harvard community since birth. Our father was a professor of Economics and the first dean of the Littauer School, now the Kennedy School. Our mother was involved in the faculty wives association for most of her adult life. We grew up on Coolidge Hill, less than half a mile from 8 Kenway Street, where Margaret lived for forty-four years, thirty-six of them with Wendell. She went to Shady Hill School, where she made fast friendships, three or four of which still flourished at the time of her death. She was always a good student and a good girl, but she had her secret side, and her anecdotes of childhood are full of forbidden journeys with a chum or two across Mt. Auburn Street to some haven on Huron Avenue for a smoke, or sneaking down to Har-

vard Square to hang out in the 5 and 10. Two of them played hooky from school one day and were caught. The principal was so charmed that such a perfectly behaved girl was so bold that she intervened with our irate mother and Margaret got off relatively easily.

Margaret graduated from Concord Academy and went on to Radcliffe College at a time when the emergencies of wartime brought about the first small fissures in Harvard sovereignty, allowing Radcliffe women to join Harvard men in some of the classrooms. Margaret was one of a handful of women who first sang in the choir of Memorial Church. She was the president of the Radcliffe Choral Society in her senior year, and graduated in an accelerated program in 1946 with a *magna* in Economics. She considered those Radcliffe years among the best of her life. She felt the excitement of powerful intellectual potential.

In the first years of her marriage to Charlie Woodman she got a master's degree at Cornell University. When that marriage ended she came back from Virginia to Cambridge with her children, Ned and Jane, six and four years old. For fourteen years she was a single working mother at a time when such realities were hardly acknowledged, much less accepted. This was the period when she developed a passion for fly-fishing, black fishnet stockings, detective stories, and local politics, serving as a

member of the Ward 8 Democratic Committee.

Word went around in the late 1960s that the chairman of the Classics Department was looking for an administrative assistant. Margaret had been introduced to Wendell only once, I think, but with a little prodding she was persuaded to at least go down and talk with him about the opening. You know most of the rest. In the last year of their lives she went every day to the nursing home to sit with Wendell while she watched him slip away from her. She was at his right side stroking his arm as he died. Jane and Ned sat on either side of her, each holding a hand as she died. These have been hard months for all the Clausens and Woodmans, and I feel as if half of me is missing.

Margaret was from the beginning smart, witty, stubborn, loyal, and profoundly solitary. With time she only grew more so. As a couple Wendell and Margaret spent much of their time alone together reading, he in a low, narrow, comfortably worn lounge chair, she swamped in a large club chair next to him. Occasionally one would interrupt the other to read a passage or make a comment. You could see the backs of their heads through the window as you came up the walkway. When Margaret died, there was a ragged copy of Frank O'Connor stories

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MARGARET AND WENDELL

on the passenger seat of the car, a Trollope tucked in the seat cushion of her chair. On the table beside her was a volume of First World War poetry. Upstairs on the table at Wendell's side of the bed, Jane and I found a photograph of Margaret at the back of a stack of Henry James paperbacks. It was taken in 1970. She's sideways to the camera, her blonde hair straight and long and pulled back behind her ears, so that her patrician profile is fully exposed. She's looking out over a field and I assume it was taken at their summer place in Vermont. On the back Wendell has written in his spidery hand: "My Beloved wife not long after our Marriage. Passionate and Generous, Elegant in Body and Mind."

Jane Williams

When I think of Margaret and Wendell, it is hard to accept that they are gone and that all of us have only a profusion of rich memories to assuage our grief at their absence.

On a bitter, icy day in January 1969, Wendell, then chairman of Classics, and I made our way gingerly over the ice to a Department lunch at the Signet Society, carrying a precious burden: a large, elaborate, and perfectly preserved terra-cotta lamp decorated with gladiatorial equipment that we had just purchased for the McDaniel Collection.

Wendell suddenly asked, "It isn't stolen, is it, David?" I assured him that it wasn't. The lamp delighted all. It now graces an exhibition case in the Roman gallery of the Sackler Museum.

I remember vividly Margaret and Wendell's daily presence for lunch at the Harvard Faculty Club. Rain or shine, no matter what the season (except for summers, when they were at their home in Vermont), they were there, radiating a kind of serene warmth in each other's company and sharing warm greetings with many friends. In particular, I remember one day when Wendell asked John Finley what he was doing. John replied, "I'm being irresponsible; I'm reading Polybius!" There is an emptiness in the main dining room, now that they are no longer there. But I still expect to see them coming through the door.

Then, I think of Wendell and Margaret seated in the comfortable chairs of the living room at their Cambridge home on Kenway Street. Margaret fixing the drinks, then warm, relaxing conversations with them, ranging from "shop talk" to reminiscences about colleagues and former students to matters of literature and human values. The Clausens so often invited graduate and undergraduate students to their home for introductions to visiting classicists, such as Otto Skutsch. The intimate setting they provided seemed like an oasis on many a

gloomy and chilly Cambridge evening, a place where one felt always warmly welcome and secure.

Finally, in my mind's eye, Wendell and Margaret appear walking in lively step around the streets of Rome and Palermo in September 1984; sunning in deck chairs aboard the ship "Illiria" in the waters between Italy, Sicily, and Tunisia; and standing with me in the theater at Taormina, and walking around the Punic harbor of Carthage. Wendell's vividly stimulating lectures to the Harvard alumni on that trip, presenting everything from the poetry and contexts of Virgil and Catullus to the works of Pirandello and Lampedusa, are still unforgettable. Now these memories help to console me for their absences. I shall always cherish their friendship and always miss them.

David Mitten, Harvard University



A MARRIAGE

WENDELL AND MARGARET CLAUSEN

I first became acquainted with Wendell at second hand, nearly forty years ago, long before I came to know him as a colleague. As a graduate student at Oxford, I often heard my supervisor, Roger Mynors, speak warmly of this American Latinist who had made such a strong impression with his editions of Persius and Juvenal. That indirect connection continued after I moved to Toronto. Roger would come over once a year to work on the Toronto edition of Erasmus, and would then go on to Cambridge to spend a weekend with Wendell and Margaret, during which he and Wendell would discuss questions relating to their ongoing commentaries on Virgil, Wendell on the *Eclogues* and Roger on the *Georgics*. Many years later I heard Wendell recall one of those visits. On this particular occasion Roger had expressed interest in seeing the Arnold Arboretum. Wendell, not wishing to admit that he had never visited the place, drove off and promptly landed them in the wilds of Roxbury. Finally reaching the Arboretum, they amused themselves by testing Roger's knowledge of its many varieties of trees. Wendell said, "He was almost always right, but a couple of times he made a mistake; then he would say, 'Of course, certain species bear a remarkable resemblance to other species, especially in this season, in this light.'" There is something delightful in this picture of "two superannuated schoolboys" (Wendell's term) employed in this most aptly Virgilian of activities. It is a source of even greater pleasure that their commentaries, published at last, remain as a document of their

friendship and of their shared love of Virgil.

Soon after I began teaching at Harvard, Wendell and I found ourselves at a student-faculty lunch discussing course assignments for the coming year. I had said I would be willing to take over the course on Latin elegy, a course that Wendell had been accustomed to teach. He expressed pleasure and relief, then added, "I don't really think I have an elegiac soul." I recall the episode for two reasons. One is that it hints at Wendell's belief that interpreting Latin poetry was not merely a matter of intellect or scholarly technique, but that it called for one's best capacities of heart and soul, and that it could in turn deepen those capacities of feeling. The sense that Wendell was putting the very best of himself into understanding the poets he admired helps to account for the profound impact his classes and seminars made on those fortunate to attend them.

Wendell was a discriminating critic, and in his remark about his supposed lack of an elegiac soul I thought I heard a subtext, that the elegists, for all their merits, did not quite measure up to his exacting standards. Wendell firmly believed that there was more than enough first-rate poetry and first-rate scholarship to occupy him fully, and saw no need to spare time for whatever was less than excellent. He exercised the same selectivity in the students he nurtured and supported; his high opinion was not lightly bestowed, but once granted it was not lightly lost.

My memories of Wendell and Margaret are convivial ones, of

early evenings in the sitting room on Kenway Street exchanging gossip, reflections, and, above all, laughter. Wendell in his professorial persona could be formidable, conveying a depth of disapproval with a barely visible flicker of an eyebrow. (It was only after witnessing Wendell's eyebrow in operation that I properly appreciated Horace's phrase about Jupiter controlling everything with his eyebrow, *cuncta supercilio mouentis*.) But in Margaret's company he was relaxed and mellow; it was a joy to see him laugh heartily in response to one of her drily ironic observations: his shoulders would heave and his whole frame would shake in glee. It is sad that they have both left us, but there may be comfort in the thought that these two souls, truly *concordes animae*, were separated for only a short time and are now, once again, together.

I would like to close with a few lines of Latin poetry. I would not dare to suggest that they would have been unfamiliar to Wendell, but they do come from a writer outside his usual orbit, the fifteenth-century poet-scholar Giovanni Gioviano Pontano. In the final poem of his collection entitled *Baiae*, Pontano includes a prayer to be spoken for himself and his wife after their death. I will read first the recently published English translation by Rodney Dennis, a keen admirer of Wendell whose premature death we also mourn at this time.

Richard Tarrant, Harvard University

GIOVANNI GIOVIANO PONTANO

To His Hendecasyllables

Hail, hendecasyllables, and hail,
You who entice me into love affairs.
Hail, of my old age best companions,
Pleasures of the country, of the baths.
5 We've had enough of playing and of jokes.
Our pleasant cleverness desires an end
And certain terminus to all this laughter.
And you boys, whenever you should read
My trifles, tender Thalia's wit,
10 Pray for some quiet for my ashes:
"May the earth be light, may violets and roses
Ever bloom by your eternal urn,
And in Elysium may your dearest wife
Accompany you in an endless dance,
15 Moistly sprinkling ambrosian liquors."
Let bitterness be absent from your loving.
Let everything be sweetness. Thus in loving
You'll while away the night-times and the day-times
With Pleasure at your side as your companion.

—Translated by Rodney G. Dennis

Ad Hendecasyllabos

Havete, hendecasyllabi, meorum,
havete, illecebrae ducesque amorum,
havete, o comites meae senectae,
ruris delitiae atque balnearum.
5 Sit lusum satis et satis iocatum:
et finem lepidi sales requirunt,
est certus quoque terminus cachinnis.
Ergo qui, iuvenes, meas legetis
nugas, qui tenerae iocos Thaliae,
10 optetis cineri meo quietem:
"Sit tellus levis et perenni in urna
non unquam violae rosaeque desint,
tecumque Elisiis beata campis
uxor perpetuas agat choreas
15 et sparsim ambrosii irrigent liquores."
Sic vobis in amore nil amarum,
nil insit nisi dulce; sic amando
et noctes pariter diesque agatis,
assistat lateri et comes Voluptas.

WENDELL AND MARGARET CLAUSEN

My memories of Wendell Clausen start in New York City, at the American Philological Association in December 1976, when I met Wendell two weeks short of thirty years ago. It may be the last time he was there, since he did not like New York, or Paris, or London (only somewhat). Rome was a different matter, but his tastes generally were for the more simple and unpretentious. We therefore met for coffee not in the elegant café of the Waldorf Astoria, but across the street in a “Choc Full o’ Nuts,” state of the art in pre-Starbucks days. We talked about Virgil, I think, but mostly we just talked, intimately from the very beginning, as Wendell did with those, young, old, and in between, with whom he felt an affinity. That affinity was based on an intensely connected humanism, on shared affection for poetry, poetic language, and the sensibility to which poetry, classical and other, is connected.

In his writing and his teaching, Wendell’s contact with the poets Catullus and Virgil in particular was precise and linguistically informed, and those of us whom he touched learned why that precision mattered. It mattered not just for the scholar whose job it was to recover the dynamics of Roman poetry, to demonstrate how it worked and how it was put together; it also mattered because, once comprehended, its aesthetic beauty became a guide for life. Wendell had strong literary views, and he was not afraid to express them. I remember one fall when, on his return from Vermont where he had reread Statius’ *Thebaid*, Wendell informed me, “Statius

is not a poet of high genius.” That was that, and whether or not it was true, it was based on a learning and power of observation and discrimination that were considerable. Wendell also knew and loved English and American poetry, and he shared that love with others. I well remember an amoebean exchange taking turns to do by heart stretches of Milton’s *Lycidas*, and at his retirement speech he paraphrased a letter of Coleridge, “Literature has been my choice. And I am amazed at my good fortune, and thankful.”

Wendell Clausen was above all a teacher, and he was passionately devoted to students who came to hear what he had to say. Of others his judgments could be harsh. When the Department narrowly voted to confer a *cum laude* degree on an idle student (as Wendell judged), he asked his colleagues, “Is *this* what we choose to honor?” But his judgments were generally benign and endowed with the same sense of humanity he brought to everything else. I was not myself a student of Wendell’s, although my teacher David Ross was, which once led a senior colleague to offer, without complete charity, I thought, “So you are Wendell’s grandchild.” I will therefore let a student, Sylvia Parsons, speak for him, she now a young scholar herself: “He was one of the true humanists. I remember him in class and in office hours sitting in a sort of sibylline half-darkness, speaking very slowly and deliberately, as though every thought had undergone a long, Virgilian distillation. He didn’t so much lecture as let the students in the room eavesdrop on a portion of

his own ongoing conversation with the text.”

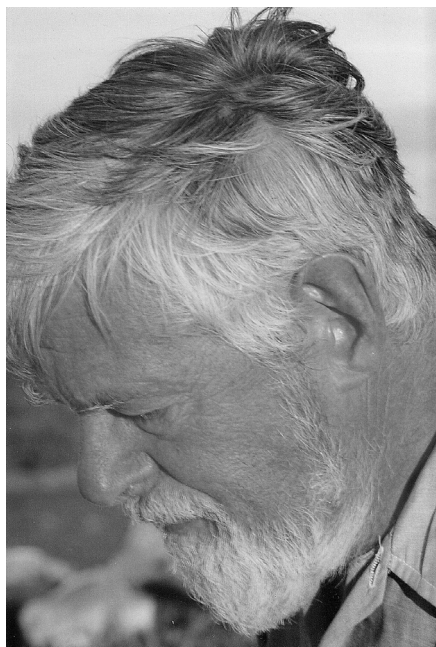
Conversation was what mattered to Wendell, and my strongest memories are of long conversations when Joan and I would visit Wendell and Margaret on Kenway Street, and particularly at their beloved Vermont summer home, to which Wendell had affixed a favorite Horatian line: *laudaturque domus, longos quae prospicit agros*: “praise for a house that looks far out over the fields”—as Wendell and Margaret’s house did. The days were spent in reading, or walking, an occasional drive, that is, after breakfast at which Margaret evoked the famous raised eyebrow as she tuned in to French pop music coming in across Lake Memphramagog. The conversation would go late into the night, to quote from the *Eclogues* he loved so much: *saepe ego longos / cantando puerum memini me condere soles*. Talk would be of Virgil, and the Classics, of politics and the world outside, of things large, but also things small, the day-lily count, the water-level in the pond where Margaret swam each day, whether Farmer Kilburn would get the second mowing done before the rain came. It was those small things that mattered to Wendell, and I consider myself lucky to have been a part of his and Margaret’s world, for a fine world it was. I thought I would end with a poem that captures what it means to have worked together now that we are apart. This, too, written north of Boston.

Richard Thomas, Harvard University

TUFTS OF FLOWERS by *ROBERT FROST*

I went to turn the grass once after one
Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.
The dew was gone that made his blade so keen
Before I came to view the leveled scene.
I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.
But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
And I must be, as he had been,—alone,
10 “As all must be,” I said within my heart,
“Whether they work together or apart.”
But as I said it, swift there passed me by
On noiseless wing a ’wilderer butterfly,
Seeking with memories grown dim o’er night
Some resting flower of yesterday’s delight.
And once I marked his flight go round and round,
As where some flower lay withering on the ground.
And then he flew as far as eye could see,
And then on tremulous wing came back to me.
20 I thought of questions that have no reply,
And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;
But he turned first, and led my eye to look
At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,
A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.
I left my place to know them by their name,
Finding them butterfly weed when I came.
The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,
30 Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him.
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.
The butterfly and I had lit upon,
Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,
That made me hear the wakening birds around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,
And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;
But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;
40 And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.
“Men work together,” I told him from the heart,
“Whether they work together or apart.”

RODNEY GOVE DENNIS



Rodney Gove Dennis, who died on October 12, 2006, after a short illness, wrote poetry and made music while curating manuscripts at Harvard's Houghton Library. In his retirement he reconnected with the study of Latin, using his poetic skills to translate the works of Catullus, Tibullus, and the Renaissance Latin poet Giovanni Pontano. His life was like a diamond, brilliant and many-faceted.

The Reverend Peter Gomes writes: "He wore his considerable learning lightly, and with a ready wit, and his capacity for friendship and conversation across the ages was enormous. He was also a man of faith whose theological erudition helped enliven many a discussion. I will miss him in many places and in many ways."

Rodney (it would be unnatural to refer to him as Mr. Dennis) was born in New York City in 1930, attended the Allen Stevenson School, and

graduated from Putney School in 1948. He attended Yale University for two years. Then, after one year in a bookstore (where he tackled a book thief fleeing down Fifth Avenue) and another in the army, he entered the Manhattan School of Music and there took a bachelor's degree in Viola and a master's in Musicology. He then moved to Germany with his first wife, Joan (Akeeyah) Browne, and their young son to pursue a doctoral program in Music History at the University of Frankfurt. His special study was the music of the Provençal troubadours. While there he worked for the Central Intelligence Agency. After returning from Germany he was employed at Harvard's Houghton Library as a cataloguer and rose rapidly to become in 1965 the curator of manuscripts in the Harvard College Library, a position he held until his retirement in 1991.

As curator he oversaw such heroic cataloging projects as Trotsky's exile correspondence (which opened to the public in 1980) and the archives of the Republic of Georgia (on deposit at Houghton in 1975), and he created records for the huge collection of manuscripts from all periods and of all kinds in the Philip Hofer deposit (1960s) and bequest (late 1980s). Among collections Rodney brought to the Harvard College Library were papers of poets Robert Lowell, John Ashbery, William Empson, Pedro Salinas, Jorge Guillen; authors John Updike, Harold Brodkey, John Cheever, Victoria O'Campo; musicians Rudolph Kolish and Louis Krasner, as well as twentieth-century composers in the Hans Moldenhauer collection. He was instrumental in

the acquisition of the Little Brown archive, and he converted from deposits to gifts both the papers of Houghton Mifflin and the journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

His marriage to Akeeyah ended in 1964. His friend David Lattimore writes that at around that time, "He renewed contact with the formidable Norwood Hinkle, musical luminary of the Putney School, and under his influence resumed the viola, playing chamber music in groups of accomplished amateurs. In 1966 he married an old Putney friend, Christie Poindexter. Together they did much volunteer work with the homeless and addicted." Most recently they spent time with their son Simon in Louisiana to help rebuild after Katrina.

Rodney was a student for twenty-six years of Michael Zaretsky of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. They would meet every Thursday morning at 8:30 to play and talk. Rodney also played in groups. Professor Lewis Lockwood of Harvard writes: "Especially memorable was our playing together in a string quartet, for many years, with Martha Kim as first violinist and with the late Adrienne Galimir Krasner, wife of Louis Krasner and sister of Felix Galimir. We played regularly in that group and, on occasion, in other chamber music groups."

With Elizabeth A. Falsey, Rodney edited *The Marks in the Fields, Essays on the Uses of Manuscript*. In this publication they chose thirty-five Houghton Library manuscripts to illustrate various scholarly principles and methods, and commissioned scholars to write them up. The result was published on the occasion of the opening of an ex-

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hibition of them and a symposium and dinner in his honor. Ms. Falsey writes: "Pleasure and pride in the catalogue work, fascination with the expressiveness of the objects, and appreciation of the team of people immediately around him—the energy and creativity of his partnership with Roger Stoddard is especially legendary—gave him work he loved every day until he retired at the end of 1991."

Rodney also edited *Poemata Humanistica Decem*, translations of Neo-Latin poets with the Latin facing. "The translators," he wrote in his introduction, "classicists, poets, librarians, and amateurs, were chosen with a strict rigor not unmixed with the power of affection." Among them were John Updike, David Ferry, Mason Hammond, and himself.

Rodney's translation of the poems entitled *Baiae* by the foremost (in his opinion) Renaissance Latin poet, Giovanni Gioviano Pontano, was published in 2006 in the I Tatti Renaissance Library by the Harvard University Press. His translation of Catullus was published in a collector's edition by the Thornwillow Press; the trade edition is due to be published by David R. Godine in December of 2007. He also translated from the medieval Latin "The Epistle of Secrets" (circa 1487), the earliest text of the Christian kabbalah. Rodney's translation of the poems of Tibullus has yet to be published. His books of poetry include *Domestic Poems* (1991), *Five Old Poems, 1960-1963* (1991), *Carolyn: Poems* (1996), and *City Limits* (2001).

Rodney held a teaching appointment in the English Department at

Harvard. Beginning in 1985 and through 1992 he offered, with Roger E. Stoddard, *Medieval Studies* 105, the production of manuscripts and printed books before 1600. Mr. Stoddard writes: "He was a natural on account of his early and extensive readings of English poetry, his research under German masters, his wide-ranging *Kulturgeschichte*: he seemed to know just everything!"

After retirement he was a student in the Harvard Classics Department and was one of the founders and the poetry editor of the journal *Persephone*. This publication, now in its twelfth year, offers the general reader prose, poetry, translation, and artwork relevant to the Classics.

David Ferry, poet, translator, and frequent contributor to *Persephone*, writes: "When he was alive Rodney Dennis was about twice as alive as everybody else. It's said that when he was curator of manuscripts at Harvard his 'special fields' were Medieval Paleography and Codicology. Well, yes, but his special fields were also his poems, as in his wonderful book of poems *Carolyn*, and his translations (Catullus and Tibullus and Pontano), his love of language, English, German, Latin, and of the way human life keeps getting kept alive by poems, whether his own or those of the others he translated. His love of music was like this, too. And his most special field was his amazing charm, which came from his love of pleasure, and his pleasure was to love and admire, and sometimes tenderly make fun of, the life in other people."

In the early nineties Rodney converted to Catholicism. Sister Mary Frances, a Benedictine nun of the

St. Scholastica Priory in Petersham, met Rodney in 1988 in search of some medieval manuscripts. She writes: "His generosity at that first meeting, his boundless well of knowledge and lively joy in sharing it, in learning and teaching, continued through the years of our friendship. His early academic work had been in medieval music, and he wanted to learn to sing the Latin psalms with their Gregorian tones. For a while the manuscript department resounded with his strong singing voice: 'Gloria Patri et Filio NO DAMMIT!' He later attended Vespers at our monastery with his wife Christie, and was bowled over by the liturgy: our processing in, small though our chapel was, and especially particular small phrases of chant which had been the basis of his doctoral studies in early polyphony so many years ago. It was experiencing the liturgy that he had studied and actually lived that made such a deep impression on him, and was one of the factors in his subsequent conversion to the Catholic Church a few years later. After he retired from Houghton, Rodney came out to give our monastery a talk on one of the Latin poets, Catullus. He fretted, 'Do you think the material is too racy for the community?' 'If anyone can pull it off, you can.' And he did. It was so successful that a reading course was set up for some community members. He generously gave of his time and knowledge; every couple of weeks we worked through the works of several Latin writers. Recent scheduling conflicts postponed our finishing Horace's last *Ode*. To our great sadness, it will remain unfinished."

RODNEY GOVE DENNIS

There was something Roman about Rodney's relationship with Harvard Square. Returning to Cambridge from the AA meeting, he would attend Mass at St. Paul's, and walk from there to the Greenhouse Coffee House for breakfast, then to Widener for work, to Bartley's or Grafton Street for lunch on his own or with an old friend, then back to Widener, and then on to Starbucks on Mass. Avenue to chat with a waitress he had befriended. In all these places he had friends who could count on his returning.

He was president of the Club of Odd Volumes, and the Signet Associates, and a member of the Grolier Club, the Century Association, and of the Tavern Club and Harvard Shop Club.

He is survived by one half-brother, Charles Dennis; by his wife Christie; by Rodney Strong ("Sam") Dennis of West Roxbury and Sarah Dennis of Cambridge, children by his first marriage; by Simon Dennis, a son by his second marriage; by two stepsons, Dr. John Lafleur and Nicholas Lafleur; and by one granddaughter, Alexandra Dennis, already an accomplished violinist.

Reprinted, with permission and minor revisions, from the obituary by John Cobb which appeared on October 26, 2006, in the Harvard University Gazette.



Rodney and I were Classics students at Harvard in the nineties. We read Cicero's orations with Christopher Mackay, Catullus and Virgil's *Aeneid* with Richard Thomas, Neronian literature with Richard Tarrant, the letters of Cicero and Pliny with Carolyn Higbie, and the *Odes* of Horace with Alessandro Barchiesi. Rodney was particularly good at connecting with our fellow students, one or two generations younger, and his comradeship made all the difference to me. As a single old geezer in a class of twenty-year-olds, I would have felt a bit of a freak. Two old geezers were more like a circus. For both of us this was a return to our youthful studies (and an opportunity to lift our grade-point average from rather low levels). We rediscovered a world both old and new.

When Gregory Nagy called on us to take on a project for the Department, we suggested a journal of the Classics for the general reader. So *Persephone* was born. The idea was mine, but Rodney's was the spark without which it would not have started or kept going. He wanted to name the magazine *Camilla*, after the Volscian "bellatrix" in the *Aeneid*, who "came above the rest leading her troop of cavalry and squadrons flowering bronze" and, with a "woman's love" of the beautiful armor and clothing of her foe, pursued him recklessly (*incauta*) to her death. Unfortunately, less imaginative heads prevailed.

After our late-life college experience, I went on to teach Greek, and Rodney to translate Latin poetry. With our wives we spent four months in Rome wandering the streets and learning some Italian, Rodney much more than the rest of us. This was a high point in our lives.

John Cobb, Harvard University

I am writing this from the Bay of Naples, about five miles away from Baiae, the setting for Pontano's poetical collection of the same name.

Yesterday morning I lit a candle in Rodney's memory in the *tempietto* on via del Proconsolo built by Pontano to commemorate his wife Ariane, and which eventually contained his own remains. Pontano himself wrote an inscription there in the classical manner to visitors who might visit the place in the future. The inscription reminds the visitor that the tomb contains only the body but that the true self, the soul, is with God. It also bids the visitor to keep Pontano's memory green. I thought of the literary fates that linked Giovanni Gioviano Pontano with another Catholic poet who also enjoyed life, friendship, and classical poetry, our dear Rodney Dennis of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Rodney's translation of Pontano is the volume of the I Tatti Renaissance Library I take down most often from the shelf to read for pure pleasure. It seems to me that Rodney had forged the perfect voice to represent the charm and ease of Pontano's hendecasyllabics, by turns grave and merry, and that this voice was also somehow his own. I had looked forward to many years of friendship and collaboration with Rodney on Pontano and other Renaissance Latin poets, but the fates willed otherwise. Goodbye, dear Rodney, *dis manibus sis sacer*.

James Hankins, Harvard University and editor of the I Tatti Renaissance Library, in which Rodney published his translation of Giovanni Gioviano Pontano's Baiae

REMEMBRANCES

I don't remember when I first met Rodney Dennis. It must have been soon after I came to Harvard in 1977, when I got to know Rodney, in the way we get to know and not know those we come into contact with at Harvard.

Rodney was soon revealed to me as one of those people who made Harvard's libraries, and therefore Harvard itself, the only place a young humanist wanted to be.

Our passing acquaintance began the first of many upward transitions, again I'm not sure when, but it must have been some time after I returned as a senior member in 1987. Rodney appeared at my office, looked me in the eye as only he would look you in the eye, and with that characteristic enthusiasm that he brought to everything, announced, "I want to learn Latin properly." "Well," I think I replied, "that can be done; why don't you take my Extension School course." And so he did, a few of them, as I recall, and then courses in the College: Catullus and Horace, Virgil, Cicero, and others, too. Only later did it emerge that Rodney's initial motives had to do with singing Gregorian chants at a priory in Western Massachusetts.

He was a delight to teach: his enthusiasm was infectious (as the undergraduates who shared class with him will attest), he would cheerfully but seriously take himself to task if he made a slip, and he was a friend and guide to his younger classmates. Things progressed, and I well remember his next major speech act, again with the same firmness, "I'm translating Catullus." We know the rest.

Rodney was a poet, a man who cared about poetry, knew why poetry mattered, and who lived in our midst as a student, teacher, and friend. That he died on the same day as Wendell

Clausen is a bitter pill for those of us to whom literature and literary community matter. But through their example, our community keeps on going: *at genus immortale manet*.

Richard Thomas, Harvard University

The sudden passing of Rodney Dennis cheated me of the chance to thank him properly for all that he contributed to my life. My engagement with him resulted from his generosity in reaching out to involve me in activities in Houghton. First he arranged for me to participate in a symposium on Neo-Latin poetry. A few years later he involved me in a similar event on the twelfth century. Just by themselves these two invitations would have been generous, but the much greater kindness was in how he exposed me to specific objects—in one case an early printed book, in another a twelfth-century manuscript—that formed the starting points for the talks that I gave. "Exposed" is a poor choice of word, since such was Rodney's fond intimacy with his books and manuscripts that when he showed you one of them, he made an introduction of the sort that is usually reserved for human beings. He was a matchmaker.

The twelfth-century manuscript fascinated me enough that I published an article on it in *Harvard Library Bulletin*—once again owing to Rodney—but my study barely scratched the surface. (Rodney, forgive me for applying to an object in a rare books library a metaphor of scratching: I can never resist teasing.) Rodney would be happy to know that I passed on his fondness for this particular object across another generation, since in the intervening fifteen years I have encouraged graduate stu-

dents with a taste for unedited texts to try their hand at the unedited materials in this manuscript. Our collective efforts will be published this very spring, with a dedication to Rodney that will have to stand in lieu of spoken words of appreciation. But maybe that is exactly how he would have liked it—a project that brought people together around parchment, that led to print, and that had him as godfather: Don Rodney of Houghton.

Let me not neglect to stress that the poems are in Latin. Rodney's life was long and rich, and the part of it with which most of us are most familiar, his work, revolved around materials that he loved so much, he could almost not conceive of his job as work. If one thing was lacking, it was the chance to engage contemplatively with the Classics. And so he retired to Latin and Greek, which meant that we in the Department of the Classics could continue to cross paths with him at least occasionally. We were much the richer for that intermittent acquaintance. Thank you, Rodney.

Jan Ziolkowski, Harvard University

The generosity of his spirit was evident in discussions of the content of *Persephone*, where his vigorous defense of a poem or a translation often made its attackers see it in a new light. A discerning ear, an intractable sense of humor, and a mind sensitive to the mysterious effects of language made him an ideal reader. "I never liked a poem I fully understood," he often said, as though what exceeded him was also dear and familiar.

Henry Walters, Harvard University ('07) and former editor of Persephone (2003-06)

RODNEY GOVE DENNIS

Gallant Fox was a talented and charming racehorse in the thirties whose quirk was to be unpredictably diverted by something that caught his interest, and was known to stop mid-race to follow the trajectory of a bird flying overhead. As some of you know, I taught Rodney to drive—something I perhaps should not admit to—which brought us one day to the intersection of Brattle Street and Route 16, with the light turning green and Rodney at the wheel. The jockeying and turning of the cars and the fact that they didn't collide so amazed Rodney that he forgot he was driving and came more or less to a halt, to much resonant annoyance. I called him Gallant Fox. He liked that. There is probably no one in this sanctuary who has not been brought to a halt mid-passage by Rodney's arresting interest in a phrase of a poem—something from the vast library of Latin, English, and German literature he carried inside him—that he wanted to communicate.

It sometimes seemed that what Rodney wanted most was to communicate his interest in these things—to be interesting. But my life with him showed me daily that what he wanted most was to be a good man. And what that meant to him was taking on the demons of his own nature. He often told me that when setting the table for dinner it was a nightly struggle to give me the better fork.

It was not only that he gave up smoking and then drinking—both of which he loved—but that he struggled against the consuming demands of a personal, inward dream.

Rodney and I recently finished the new translation of *Don Quixote*—Rodney reading aloud to me—and he was extraordinarily moved by the ending. In the end, Don Quixote comes home to die, having been defeated by the Knight of the White Moon. To the surprise of all, he says, “Señores, let me go slowly, for there are no birds in yesterday's nests. I was mad and now am sane. I was Don Quixote of La Mancha and now am Alonso the Good . . .” I don't know exactly why this meant so much to Rodney. He was often heard to say that reading *Don Quixote* was one of the high points of his life. I can only guess that the enthusiasms, the self-delusions, the gravely mistaken quests, the heroic mythologizing love, the dramatic dressings Don Quixote gave the world touched Rodney—he understood that—and the poignancy and strength, the acceptance, in Don's final words—he understood that, too.

At 7:10 every morning I would see from my bed the light go on in the next room and I would get up. Rodney, returned from his AA meeting—being retired, he never felt the need to protect his anonymity, in fact was proud of his membership in the fellowship—reading the *Globe* (the *Times* would come later with breakfast), would be sitting in his

accustomed chair. As soon as he saw me, whatever the inner or outer weather, Rodney would always open his arms wide, ready to give a hug. That was Rodney. He was a man of many parts, and that part embraced them all.

Christie Dennis

When Rodney converted to Catholicism, he was given the task of aiding someone less fortunate. Carolyn, an African-American woman with AIDS, was to become a dear friend for many years to come. Before she died, Rodney used her name as the title of a booklet of poems, and his subsequent booklet, *City Limits*, was about his experiences during his time with Carolyn and her friends and family. When she finally succumbed to AIDS, he stayed in touch with her family, helping out when needed. This part of Rodney's life was not charity; it was a time when he developed important friendships.

He considered himself to have narrowly escaped being “self taught,” but his extraordinary appreciation for the written word, for music, and for European culture gave him the tools he needed to find his niche as curator of manuscripts at Harvard.

It is hard not to admire how fully he lived his life in his unique way.

Rodney (Sam) Dennis

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CATULLUS V

Viuiamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus,
rumoresque senum seueriorum
omnes unius aestimemus assis!
soles occidere et redire possunt;
nobis cum semel occidit breuis lux,
nox est perpetua una dormienda.
da mi basia mille, deinde centum,
dein mille altera, dein secunda centum,
deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum.
dein, cum milia multa fecerimus,
conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus,
aut ne quis malus inuidere possit,
cum tantum sciat esse basiorum.

Let us live, my Lesbia, and let us love,
and let us value the mutterings of the earnest
elderly at around one nickel.
Suns can set then they rise again;
our short day sets once and for all,
and night consists of one long sleep.
Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred,
another thousand, then a second hundred,
and another thousand, one more hundred.
And, having accumulated so many thousands,
let's jumble them up till we lose count.
Then no one else will have any reason
to envy us for having kissed so much.

—*Translated by Rodney G. Dennis*

