



J. B. TRAPP

Joseph Burney Trapp 1925–2005

JOSEPH BURNEY (JOE) TRAPP—librarian, editor and teacher, scholar of humanism, letters and the humanities, as well as enlightened but efficient administrator—was a man of prodigious knowledge and interdisciplinary interests. He was also, by instinct and by habit, a man of great generosity of spirit, who sought to impart his knowledge to others, freely and unostentatiously. His career, or rather his life from first encounter, was bound up with the Warburg Institute. He shaped the ethos and character of this great centre of learning and intellectual exchange as much as it shaped him. At the same time his services to the wider scholarly community were extensive and unstinting, not least in connection with the Academy and in pursuit of its aims and ideals. Devoted though he was to scholarship, he could be sharp in his criticism of academic habits and institutions. He had no time for pretension or pomposity, in scholarly discourse as elsewhere. Particular efforts of dutiful endurance at committees or lectures were often accompanied by muttered grumblings that could erupt into indignation, expressed with Antipodean emphasis. Good-humoured Erasmanian mockery was, however, a more natural mode. And the virtues of friendship and tolerance which Joe Trapp admired in the great Renaissance humanist were fundamental to his own character and outlook.

Joe Trapp was born in New Zealand, at Carterton, near Wellington, on 16 July 1925. His maternal grandfather had founded an agency there for registering and distributing land tenure, which his father, Burney Trapp, had joined. He attended Dannevirke School, a small state boarding school where his elder sister Phyllis taught English. Phyllis had a crucial part in his education. The Dannevirke curriculum included Latin, but not Greek, so she undertook the task of coaching her brother in this subject,

in which he was otherwise self-taught. Joe went on, with a national scholarship, to Victoria University College, Wellington, graduating in 1946 in English and Greek, with subsidiary qualifications in Latin and French. His MA in English language and literature, awarded in 1947, won him top marks in the university and in the country. On completing this degree he immediately found employment at the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, an institution with excellent holdings in English literature, and many rare early editions. This library experience was to be of lasting value. But he had done some part-time teaching at Victoria College in 1947–8, and in 1950 he was appointed to a post in the English Department there, in succession to his friend Robert Burchfield, who had just won a scholarship to Oxford. Joe was extrovert enough on the rugby field and the cricket pitch, but lecturing was never something he found easy; even in later life he rarely extemporised when giving talks in public, preferring to keep his eyes on a script, or at least anywhere except on the audience. Still, the courses given at Wellington by this diffident young man—ranging from Old English to twentieth-century literature—were not only meticulously researched but inspiring in their breadth of content. One of those who attended his lectures was Elayne Falla, whom he was to meet outside the university—and subsequently marry. Like Burchfield, however, Joe was drawn to Britain, and in 1951 he applied for and obtained a job in the Department of English at the University of Reading. England was still in the grip of rationing, but the Festival of Britain was underway, and the department in Reading, headed by D. J. Gordon, was bright with intellectual exchange. Frank Kermode and John Wain were on the staff, along with Ian Calder, who was soon to leave university life for the stage. Joe set up house next to Kermode in a boat, or rather a beached barge, at Caversham on the Thames. *The Unfortunate Lady*, as this leaky craft was named, in deference to Pope and nearby Mapledurham, welcomed Elayne when she arrived from New Zealand in 1953, having completed her studies; the wedding reception was held in a clearing hacked out by Joe and his neighbour on the overgrown riverbank. But meanwhile Joe had been appointed to a post as Assistant Librarian at the Warburg Institute in London.

Donald Gordon had strong connections with the Institute, and had been a close friend of its first director, Fritz Saxl. It was Saxl who had brought the threatened Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg from Hamburg to London in 1933 and effected its transformation in 1944, after many difficulties and vicissitudes, into an independent centre of cultural and intellectual history within the University of London.

Many Warburgians were regular lecturers at Reading; for their part Kermodé and Gordon were Warburg regulars, and Calder was sporadically engaged in a Ph.D. at the Institute, on the Renaissance Magus John Dee, under the supervision of Frances Yates. Shortly after his arrival in Reading Joe had written delightedly to Elayne about his introduction to the Institute by the Librarian Otto Kurz, a scholar whose encyclopaedic knowledge was as exemplary as his helpfulness and gentle humour. When a position came up in the Library in 1953 Gordon recommended Joe to the Director, the near-eastern scholar Henri Frankfort. Joe described the interview for the job, a series of successive encounters with Frankfort, Gertrud Bing and Kurz, as ‘the longest morning in my recollection’, but he was perhaps not as tongue-tied as Gordon feared he might be when he made a point of Joe’s shyness in his letter of reference. And the enthusiastic terms in which Gordon and his fellow referees recommended Joe, as someone who would be proud to serve the Institute and would in turn do it proud, proved prophetic. Joe Trapp was to become the embodiment as well as the resolute defender of the Warburg’s multidisciplinary approach and commitment to the disinterested pursuit of knowledge.

Joe Trapp’s first years in the Library were happy ones, personally as well as academically. They saw the birth of his two sons, Michael and James, and the move from the boat first to North Kensington (1955), and then, in the wake of his friends Michael and Dorothy Kauffmann, to Vyner Road in East Acton (1961). They also saw the move of the Institute, in 1958, from the Imperial Institute Building in South Kensington to purpose-built accommodation in Woburn Square. Working at the Warburg with Kurz and Alfons Barb, the expert on symbolism and ancient magic, Joe came to have an intimate and comprehensive knowledge of the Library and its contents and to understand, through his own research and the close attention he paid to the research of colleagues, how to build on its strengths, repair its weaknesses and extend its scope. He was almost always available to readers—whether on duty at the desk in the Reading Room or in his own time, after hours—and ready to lead them to the books they needed (including ones they hadn’t realised they needed). He made a special point of introducing newcomers to the Library and tailoring his introductions to individual interests—often surprising and delighting these new readers by his familiarity with their own studies and publications. He dealt just as directly and individually with books, to the point of opening every parcel that arrived (a giant wicker basket was installed in his office for the discarded packaging). He travelled on

book-buying missions too, lugging heavy suitcases back; and he forged contacts and friendships, personal and professional, throughout Europe, especially in Italy. In the early days of the Institute, Saxl and Bing had held Friday evening seminars in their house in Dulwich. Joe and Elayne turned this rather sober tradition into one of straightforward hospitality over good food and wine, entertaining foreign visitors and students as well as friends and colleagues. It was at this time too that they quietly began to assume a role which they maintained consistently thereafter, that of providing moral support, and sometimes also physical care, for any member of the Institute who needed it. The Trapps could be, and were, relied on, above all by the old and frail, for encouragement, visits and practical help. In the case of one colleague overtaken by Alzheimer's, their dedication ensured that she could remain to the end in her own home.

In his last book, *Words for Pictures* (New Haven, CT, 2003), Michael Baxandall warmly thanked Joe Trapp for help and suggestions, but particularly in his role as tactful editor and master of 'the specifically constructive scruple'. The business of editing was central to Joe's activity at the Institute. Improving Germanic English, and in the process improving lines of thought, had been the job of anglophone friends when the Warburg was first established in London, and this activity became all the more important when Saxl and his colleagues founded a journal to embody the sort of cross-disciplinary study they sought to promote. Anthony Blunt was one of those who served in this capacity; he was promoted to Editor, along with Edgar Wind and Rudolf Wittkower, in the second issue of the *Journal of the Warburg Institute* (after the third volume it became the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*). Frances Yates too was recruited as editorial assistant; she was formally appointed Editor in 1943. Besides, the *Journal* particularly welcomed foreign contributions—a special Italian issue in 1946 marked the end of the war and the re-opening of Britain to Europe. As soon as Joe arrived at the Institute, his literary instincts and talents were put to practical use. His first publication (apart, that is, from a brief history of Rugby at Victoria University College, printed in 1949) was to be the result of an editorial undertaking for the *Journal*. This was the long appendix to an article on the medieval concept of the 'Third Reich' that appeared in Volume XVIII (1955). Joe's appendix presented an edition of—and commentary on—the report by Johannes Dorsten, a late-fifteenth-century Augustinian hermit, about the Joachimist heresy; but, to judge from the grateful comments of author and editors, Joe's contribution to the article was still

more substantial. From the next issue he was himself an Editor, and from 1959, when he was appointed assistant to the new Director, Ernst Gombrich, he also took on the job of planning and editing two new series of Institute publications to supplement the long-standing *Studies of the Warburg Institute*. One was entitled *Oxford-Warburg Studies*, to be published jointly with Oxford University Press; it was in this series that books as diversely important as Jocelyn Hillgarth's *Lull and Lullism* (1971) and Anthony Grafton's *Scaliger* (1983–93) appeared, as well as Baxandall's *Giotto and the Orators* (1971). The other was *Warburg Institute Surveys* (later *Surveys and Texts*), which was inaugurated by D. J. A. Ross's catalogue of illustrated manuscripts of the medieval Alexander legend. He was also instrumental in seeing into print the major collaborative project, originally conceived by Saxl, to reconstruct from copies and fragments one of the greatest of medieval illustrated manuscripts, destroyed in 1870: Herrad of Hohenbourg's encyclopaedic *Hortus Deliciarum*. This was published with a commentary in 1979 as Volume 36 in the *Studies of the Warburg Institute*. In fact, nothing produced by or for the Institute from the mid-1950s until his retirement in 1990 was not to some degree Joe's editorial responsibility, and he continued to help with the *Journal* right up until his death. The effort he was ready to make to get to grips with the subject of a work that he was editing is reflected in the appreciative comments made by A. I. Sabra in the preface to his monumental translation and commentary on *The Optics of Ibn al-Haytham* for Volume 40 (1989) in the *Warburg Studies*: Joe's careful attention to every detail of this demanding text, with its multiple Arabic–Latin glossaries, not only resulted in 'many improvements', 'his probing queries . . . helped to uncover some mistranslations and even some omissions'. Citations such as this could be multiplied to fill the available pages of this memoir. Nor was his editorial help confined to Institute productions. Joe read, revised, translated and improved (and, when necessary, refuted and refused) countless pieces of academic prose. A consummate stylist, his neat pruning pencil set to work on redundant words and phrases. At the same time he moulded arguments from shapeless matter, turning the initial dismay of certain authors—confronted with discarded phrases, even pages, and demands for further research—into lasting gratitude. Famous scholars and close friends and colleagues were not immune from the treatment. It was partly with this in mind that Ernst Gombrich liked to remark that the Warburg Institute was 'not a mutual admiration society'.

It has sometimes been said that Joe spent so much time helping others into print that he himself published less than he could or should have.

The bibliography appended to the commemorative booklet published by the Warburg Institute in 2007 would seem to contradict this notion.¹ But many of the items listed there belong to the relative freedom of his retirement. For the early part of his career, Joe's published work was more remarkable for its quality than its quantity. His ambitions were less for himself than for the advancement of knowledge, and to rescue someone's good idea from drowning in a sea of waffle or to bolster someone's novel argument with the necessary facts and references meant more to him than to see his name in print. But another impediment to publication, at least initially, was his modesty, which had to be overcome by the insistence and enthusiasm of colleagues. The self-deprecating notes he often added to presentation copies of books and offprints ('something to cure insomnia'; 'more shelf fodder') were not just rhetorical flourishes. At the same time, he never ceased to be surprised by the apparent ease with which others set out to burden library shelves with repetitious and inconsequential, if not entirely unconvincing, material. He slyly introduced subsections in certain areas of the Library to collect together the more far-fetched interpretations that still had to be made available.

Joe's first major publication was 'The Owl's Ivy and the Poet's Bays' in the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* of 1958. Subtitled 'An enquiry into poetic garlands', it took its starting point in a line in Pope's *Dunciad* and its (mis)interpretation, going on from there to survey, with learned detail and well judged irony, the story, or rather stories, of the coronation of poets in the antique mode, from jocular festivities to occasions of solemn pomp, obscure local humanists rubbing shoulders with Petrarch and Milton. It inaugurated a series of studies in a genre that Joe was to make especially his own: concise, elegant and richly documented essays on the celebration of writers and thinkers. In the 'Owl's Ivy . . .', as in later explorations of the theme of the poet laureate, auto-celebration on the part of the laureates was certainly involved, often of a shamelessly explicit kind. But on the whole these essays were less about the famous figures themselves than about the myths and mythmakers surrounding them—illustrations of the impulse to match faces to familiar names, to

¹ *A Commemoration. Professor Joseph Burney Trapp (1925–2005). A Collection of Tributes from Friends and Colleagues, delivered at the University of London on 8 December 2005, published now with a Bibliography* (London, 2007). A list of his publications before 1990 is also included in *England and the Continental Renaissance: Essays in Honour of J. B. Trapp*, ed. Edward Chaney and Peter Mack (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester, NY, 1990). Two collected volumes bring together many items: *Essays on the Renaissance and the Classical Tradition* (Aldershot, 1990), and *Studies of Petrarch and his Influence* (London, 2003).

discover (or invent) sites of pilgrimage and to mark final resting places. 'Commemoration is a universal human preoccupation . . .' began an essay on 'Virgil and the Monuments' published in 1986. And the longing to preserve lives in memory, in defiance of the finality of death, was to inspire his investigations, at once poignant and diverting, into tombs and monuments, as well as the portraiture, real and imaginary, of poets and writers from antiquity onwards. Joe Trapp was particularly intrigued by what he came to term 'learned credulity', the wishful thinking that so often overwhelmed even the most sophisticated Europeans when they were confronted with purported relics of their cultural heroes. Brought up, most of them, on a classical diet, and subscribers to the Horatian idea that the real monuments to authors, 'more lasting than bronze', are their works, they nonetheless persisted in establishing shrines and accumulating earthly traces. 'Ovid's Tomb. The growth of a legend from Eusebius to Laurence Sterne, Chateaubriand and George Richmond' appeared in 1973, followed in 1984 by 'The Grave of Vergil', a topic treated in a broader context in 'Virgil and the Monuments' (1986); there were also contributions to the *Enciclopedia Virgiliana* (1988), and a study of the illustrations of the discovery of the tomb of Archimedes (1990) as a postscript to an article submitted to the *Journal* on the tomb itself. The attempt to recover the likeness of Ovid was the subject of separate investigation, as was the iconography of Livy. The ancient master of love poetry became a medieval sage, explaining the origin of the world in terms of the constituents of an egg which provided the etymology of his name ('ovum dividens'). Livy was equally a didactic figure, at least before the 'authentic' likeness of a thin melancholic, probably based on the death mask of an unknown quattrocento individual, was established in the sixteenth century. All of these essays incidentally furnished abundant illustration of ways in which local rivalry and civic pride conspired to fuel an imaginative approach to history and its evidence. Ovid, who had to be given a public statue at Sulmona as a native, and therefore patron, of the city, was reinvented with no clearer idea than that his nose should be of a size to suit his cognomen, Naso; his birthplace was all the more important, as his banishment to the Black Sea meant that no city in Italy could claim to hold his tomb. But at Padua Livy's mortal remains could be venerated side by side with those of the Trojan Antenor, supposed founder of the city, whose sepulchre had been 'identified' already in the thirteenth century, in an excess of what Joe dubbed 'humanist-historical-local-patriotic enthusiasm'.

Petrarch had been instrumental in promoting the cult of Livy at Padua, and his tomb, erected at nearby Arquà, bears a distinct resemblance to the

Paduan monument of Antenor. Petrarch's own cult at Padua—as well as in several other stopping places—was to be still more substantial than those of either of the ancient heroes. And in the last two decades of Joe's life, when Petrarch's image and fame became a dominant theme of his research, the objects and sites associated with the poet–humanist—along with his celebrated Laura—likewise came under scrutiny. 'Petrarch's Laura: the portrait of an imaginary beloved', which appeared in 2001, was a sustained and intricate account of the iconography of the elusive figure who, dead as much as alive, was the focus of unremitting Petrarchan devotion, as well as the model for many later, often equally imaginary, literary muse-mistresses. Like Byron, who in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* was suitably devout before the tomb at Arquà, Joe was occasionally tempted to exasperation at Laura's clerical lover with his 'well-sung woes', recalling the dismissive reference in *Don Juan* to Petrarch as 'the Platonic pimp of all posterity'. Earlier 'Petrarch's inkstand and his cat' (1994) had examined two distinctly dubious items said to have belonged to the writer (the animal in question preserved as a mummified specimen). Joe wittily resumed the story of these relics and expanded on the theme of the search for the poet's traces (for there were more seekers after the author of the sonnets than the purveyor of Latin humanism) in 'Petrarchan places. An essay in the iconography of commemoration' (2006), which as a bonus featured full consideration of Petrarchan pets. This article, a journey of cultural discovery through time, media and space, was just about to go to press when he died.

Combining sympathy with detachment as they interweave travellers' tales, pictorial inventions, literary references and archaeology to tease fact from fiction, these essays show the Trapp style at its most characteristic. There is much original thought and observation in them, and they include a mass of scholarly discoveries and rectifications, but the novelties, untrumpeted, are obvious only to the specialists whose contributions are scrupulously credited in the footnotes. Joe was not one for programmatic and methodological pronouncements, and his published work rarely takes the form of an argument (as a corollary, disagreements and refutations tend to be left implicit). Yet these studies clearly form part of a wider enterprise, around the central Warburgian theme of the *Nachleben der Antike*, the continuing relevance of classical antiquity to later ages. They illuminate with telling examples how certain European Christians, particularly in the period from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, accommodated and took comfort in their secular, indeed largely pagan, 'saints'. (One piece, of 1998, was entitled 'Homage to Petrarch as human-

ist saint'.) And from his earliest work, Joe exhibited a deep understanding of the importance of the legacy of ancient Greek and Roman culture for Europe. His training in English literature meant that he came to appreciate and address this theme first in the context of the English Renaissance, a topic he approached in many ways, and at many levels. (At a general level, the modestly produced booklet of 1974, which he edited and contributed to, *Background to the English Renaissance*, provides an exceptionally useful introduction.) Here he was especially drawn to the figure in whose life and work the contradictions inherent in Christian humanism were perhaps most vividly illustrated: Thomas More, scholar, politician and sainted martyr of the Catholic Church.

From the late 1950s More's work, both English and Latin, became a preoccupation. It was at this time that Joe Trapp was commissioned to edit the volume on the *Apology* for the *Complete Works of More* for Yale University Press. The *Apology* (1533) is a defence of the Church's position on clerical power against the *Treatise concerning the Division between the Spirituality and Temporality*, which had been published anonymously the previous year as part of a campaign conducted by Henry VIII's agents to further the case for royal supremacy. The *Apology* is also a defence against assaults on More's personal integrity, particularly in his dealings with heretics, and amid the strident rhetoric there are revealing insights into the complex character of the Lord Chancellor as he seeks to maintain the case for ecclesiastical authority without directly addressing problematic implications in relation to the king's impending divorce. Understanding the *Apology* in its context and elucidating the details of the argument demanded an unusual range of historical and literary expertise, and the commentary involved Joe in a great deal of research into the political and theological controversies of the period. It also allowed him a rare leave of absence from the Warburg Institute when he was invited to Yale by the St Thomas More Project to pursue his investigations. He and Elayne had a memorable stay from September 1960 till May 1961 at New Haven, punctuated by an additional study trip to the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC. On his return to the Warburg he continued to work on More. Indeed, he committed himself to his subject to the extent of becoming a founder member of the Friends of Thomas More, and thereafter contributed learned notes to that society's Journal, *Moreana*. Not that this commitment dampened his interest in More's confessional opponents, above all his great English adversary, William Tyndale. Joe wrote eloquently about the qualities of Tyndale's vigorous prose, especially in his translation of the Bible. The truth is that,

as far as English usage was concerned—and perhaps also political stance—he really preferred Tyndale to More.

Joe Trapp's duties and responsibilities at the Institute had multiplied when he returned from leave and became, first, Librarian, in succession to Kurz (1966), and then, on the retirement of Gombrich in 1976, Director and Professor of the History of the Classical Tradition. All this meant that progress on the edition of the *Apology* was slow. At the same time, the text benefited from the wider and more profound engagement with More's work, life, image and reputation that Joe had meanwhile undertaken. Published in 1979, with a dedication to his sister, Phyllis, the Trapp *Apology* is as illuminating on More's style, language and content as it is lucid in its presentation of Reformation debate. It also shows Joe, a humanist in the modern as well as the Renaissance sense of the word, coming to grips with aspects of More's thought and personality that were, inevitably, less than attractive to him. This Renaissance man, friend of Erasmus and letters, deviser of the fantastic (and tolerant) community that was Utopia, liberal educator of his daughters along with his son, patron of Holbein, a hero in his moral consistency and his resolution in confronting its consequences, was, by the same token, ready to use all severity against any challenge to religious orthodoxy and to condemn impenitent offenders to a grim death—to see them, in More's own phrase, 'well and worthily burned'. Erasmus's claim that no heretic was executed under More's chancellorship was wishful thinking. In the end (and most explicitly in the reflective review-essay 'Midwinter', published in 1983), Joe came to see More less as the man for all seasons (*omnium horarum homo*) of Erasmus's affectionate encomium than as one in whom a humanist spring withered into a chilly winter, characterised by 'a hardness, a ferocity, which is the direct result of the drawing of the lines with Luther . . .'. The hair shirt that this family-loving layman secretly wore under his Tudor finery is perhaps the item that best reveals the style of More's uncompromising virtue and piety.

In his final days, 'not willinge to haue it seene', Thomas More had sent his hair shirt from the Tower along with his last words of blessing to his family. A fragment of the garment, enclosed in a reliquary which long predates More's official beatification and canonisation by the Church (1886; 1935), was included in the exhibition held at the National Portrait Gallery in 1977–8 to mark the fifth centenary of his birth. This comprehensive show was perhaps the most significant project undertaken by Joe Trapp during his working years, not least in being addressed to a wide public, as well as to scholars. Planned with the help of fellow Morist

Hubertus Schulte-Herbrüggen, it was a great success; and the accompanying guide (*'The King's Good Servant'. Sir Thomas More 1477/8–1535: Ipswich, 1977*) continues to provide an unparalleled means of access to More's life, career, and historical and cultural significance. In this book Joe made a virtue of the restrictive format prescribed by the catalogue, in which sections with short introductions lead to entries on individual items; he patently enjoyed the challenge of summarising, with pointed clarity, the biography of a figure portrayed, or the content of a book, or the history of an object. Many of these last were significant works of art. If the family portrait by Holbein, long lost, could be present only in copies, there was still a wonderful group of individual likenesses, painted and drawn, by the artist. And the exhibition reunited the images of Erasmus (from Rome) and Peter Gillis (from Longford Castle), from the great diptych painted by Quentin Massys as a joint gift to More from the friends portrayed in it. (In an article written shortly afterwards with Lorne Campbell and Margaret Mann Phillips as well as Schulte-Herbrüggen the original version of the Erasmus portrait was identified in a picture in the royal collection.) Circumstances decreed, however, that one important section of the display would be inadequate: More's books, with his goods, were, at his condemnation, declared forfeit to the Crown and so dispersed. It was a real achievement, then, that of the six volumes identifiable as having been owned, or probably owned, by More, five were able to be put on show, including the *Book of Hours* he annotated in prison in meditative preparation for his execution.

'The library was the world of the humanist; in destroying it More's enemies hoped to shatter the very centre of his existence.' Thus wrote the man who devoted so much of his research to the fate of books and libraries: the collections of scholars and writers, the history of printing and editing, the activity of scribes and illustrators, and the evidence about literacy and habits of reading, particularly of humanist writings. Authoritative surveys of these themes are contained in the chapters he contributed to the *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, 1400–1557*, which he edited with Lotte Hellinga, and which appeared in 1999. And an engaging footnote to the general theme is provided in 'Dioscorides in Utopia' (2002), which identifies the books from which More's Utopians supposedly learned Greek. Preceding this were many individual studies, some of them conveniently assembled in *Essays on the Renaissance and the Classical Tradition* (1990) and *Studies of Petrarch and his Influence* (2003)—the latter, by taking a long view of Petrarchan influence, embraces characters as remote as Tyndale and the founder of St Paul's School, Dean

Colet. In addition, the uses of books were investigated in different ways in the Panizzi lectures at the British Library, published as *Erasmus, Colet and More: the Early Tudor Humanists and their Books* (1991). As part of the wide-ranging picture given there of the progress of Renaissance learning in England (and occasionally Scotland), Joe surveyed the libraries of many 'sub-humanists' such as Christopher Urswick, who was Dean of York and of Windsor, before retreating to a parish at Hackney. In this last case the books involved were largely manuscript, and altogether Joe made a major contribution to the understanding of the continuing role of manuscripts after the invention of printing. The conference he organised on this subject at the Warburg Institute in 1982 (with the papers published the following year as *Manuscripts in the Fifty Years after the Invention of Printing*) was a revelation for many students of the period.

In fact, all of Joe Trapp's writings are in some way about books. But then books and libraries were as significant to him as to the humanists he studied. Moreover, the library he cared for was no private sanctuary, but the five floors of open stacks of the Warburg Institute. The preservation and expansion of this place he would have seen as his monument—above anything he himself ever published, however important that was to him or to others. Much of his time, as Librarian and, even more, as Director, had to be devoted to fighting the Warburgian cause, particularly in the face of university retrenchment as well as attempts to encroach on the identity of the Institute and its Library. The Trust Deed by which the Warburg family formally transferred the Institute to the University of London in 1944 had specified that it be preserved and adequately maintained in perpetuity as an independent unit. But, in the climate of 1980s Thatcherism, cuts and other educational 'rationalisations' constantly threatened, including proposals to merge the libraries of the University of London. At the time the most specific danger seemed to be the policy of 'convergence' advocated in the Naylor Report of 1987 on 'The Future of the University of London Library and of Co-ordinating Arrangements within the University of London'. In the face of this the University established in 1989 the University of London Institutes for Advanced Study (ULIAS)—these were the years when uncomfortable acronyms began to proliferate—and the Warburg sought shelter within this loose confederation, which some time later was to mutate into the School of Advanced Study (SAS), the body within which at present the Institute operates, and continues to assert its independence.

That Joe Trapp should have become Librarian when Kurz transferred to the teaching staff in 1966 was a natural development. The Directorship

of the Institute, which came to him ten years later, was something Joe took on more reluctantly, hesitating to allow his name to be attached to the resounding series of Saxl, Frankfort, Bing and Gombrich. He was persuaded to do so only by the realisation that members of staff were united in their approval of the idea. They were of course aware of the extent to which, as Gombrich's deputy, Joe was already involved in the management of the Institute's affairs. Still more importantly, they appreciated how well he represented the Warburg at home and abroad through his work and through his example. In his retirement speech, Gombrich expressed his relief that he would be succeeded by someone who really deserved to carry the title of Professor of the 'History of the Classical Tradition'—the phrase devised by the Institute and the University as the best approximation available in English to the German *Nachleben der Antike*. Once in charge, Joe himself appointed no deputy. Dutifully and (usually) stoically, he undertook the necessary engagements with bureaucracy; he delegated little, since he saw part of his role as enabling his staff to get on with the work they were best at. He could, however, depend on the tireless support of the Registrar, Anne Marie Meyer, who had joined the Institute as a secretary in 1937 at the age of eighteen and had gradually taken on more duties and roles. The effect was that, for the most part, staff members were protected from anxiety about the future as well as from burdensome committee work. In truth the Trapp regime was characterised by a benign paternalism, of a sort no longer possible in today's university climate. Under it, promotion did not have to be bargained for, or rights asserted, or subject interests fought over, at least for those who played their part wholeheartedly within the organisation: there was a confidence that Joe would see that everything was done fairly, for he made it his business to know the merits of every person and every case. Nothing about the life of the Institute was without interest to him; and there was no job he was not prepared to undertake, whether it was proofreading, or shifting bookshelves, or washing up after a reception—an attitude which, to his delight, bemused certain fellow academics. And he was almost always ready to put aside whatever he was doing to commiserate or celebrate, and, when the occasion called for it, to do so over a glass of wine or a drop of whisky.

But naturally it was in scholarly matters that his leadership was most significant. This he gave by taking the Warburgian theme in its widest sense, as the investigation of European culture in its interactions both with the classical past and with other civilisations. It is interesting that when asked to reflect on the term 'Warburgian' for the Dutch periodical

Theoretische geschiedenis in 1986, Joe began with a witty survey of current usage of the word (ranging in meaning from ‘ferociously mandarin’ to popular and educative), and went on to pay tribute to the ‘diversity of topic and approach’ accommodated by the Institute, and—something that he hoped would always remain true—‘the degree to which each of us is happy to contribute to another’s work’.

Joe’s attendance at every lecture, colloquium and seminar could be taken for granted. In this he maintained an old Warburgian tradition, but he did so at a time when the expanding programme of the Institute meant that there were more, and more varied, items on offer than ever before. Here a sense of courtesy and of duty combined with genuine curiosity, and along with it the desire to sustain the notion of an intellectual community with a shared enterprise. But although he was ready to countenance many modes of historical research and even of eccentricity (‘provided it didn’t frighten the horses’) on the part of staff, fellows and students, any colleague who sought to pursue his or her specialism in isolation, shunning participation, was likely to receive a sharp, and usually salutary, rebuke.

That the Institute had an expanding programme was in fact very much Joe Trapp’s doing. The Saxl Fund brought many scholars from Eastern Europe and, when financial constraint put an end to the scheme of Warburg Fellowships, the revenue from the estate of Frances Yates (d. 1981) was used for a continuing series of long-term and short-term Fellowships in her name. Joe was responsible, too, for other initiatives, such as the reinvigoration of the old project of the ‘Census of Antique Works of Art and Architecture known in the Renaissance’ by setting up, with funding from the J. Paul Getty Trust, a programme of digitisation, now continued at the Humboldt University in Berlin. All the time Joe participated fully in the Institute’s teaching programme, contributing to the postgraduate Renaissance course with classes that focused on English Humanism and on Petrarch and his legacy, and devising a special subject on England and Italy for the undergraduate ‘Renaissance’ option in history taught at the Institute on an intercollegiate basis. He also supervised M.Phil. and doctoral theses on a wide range of topics: for example, commentaries on classical authors, English humanism, Holbein, Reformation themes, Renaissance tomb-sculpture, travellers to Italy, French festivals, Neo-Latin poetry, treatises on the soul, and Milton.

Writing about Anne Marie Meyer after her death in 2004, Joe talked of the scholarly and administrative work she undertook, as Honorary Fellow of the Institute, in her ‘nominal retirement’. The phrase applies

with even more force to Joe's later years. True, his retirement as Director in 1990 was marked by a CBE and the Festschrift organised by two of his former students, Edward Chaney and Peter Mack. And the three months immediately following were occupied with a fellowship at I Tatti, the Renaissance outpost of Harvard in Berenson's former home; here he could enjoy the Tuscan countryside with Elayne while pursuing research on Petrarch illumination. There were also extended holidays in France, as well as Italy, which they both loved. But after a token pause to allow the new Director, Nicholas Mann, to settle in, Joe was again regularly at the Institute, attending lectures and other events just as before, though occupying a seat at the back. At the same time he took on new responsibilities outside the Warburg. Most notable among these was the role of Foreign Secretary to the British Academy, a combined burden and honour that involved him in much committee work but also invigorating trips to institutions of all kinds in other lands, from Turkey to Georgia and the Baltic States. Joe's wide learning, open-minded attitudes, dependability and straightforward moral probity had been quickly appreciated when he was elected a Fellow in 1980, and he was appointed Vice-President from 1983–5; but it was only when retirement was imminent that he felt he could accept the post of Foreign Secretary. Despite the tedium of certain official occasions (admittedly reflected in his expression in some commemorative photographs), Joe greatly valued the opportunities this position allowed to make academic and personal contacts worldwide and to cement these with convivial hospitality. Already while Director he had been asked to undertake many other public duties: for example, on the advisory boards of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Library, the Council of the British School at Rome, and as Chairman and trustee of Lambeth Palace Library, as well as on the editorial boards of many journals and series of publications. He continued to serve on most of these. Still, the effect of the release from responsibility is seen, among other things, in the flow of important publications that marked the years of retirement.

Many of these were concerned with the illustration of Petrarch. Working at the Warburg, Joe had been always in contact with images and studies related to them: Aby Warburg had valued images as particularly sensitive indicators of culture, and they have been, and remain, central to research carried out at the Institute he founded. But Joe was already, so to speak, iconographically inclined when he arrived there in 1953. His letter of application listed among his interests 'Tapestried and painted poems used as wall-decorations; the illuminations and later illustrations

to Troilus and Criseyde and the Canterbury Tales'. At the same time it is clear that, despite the plentiful evidence in his writings of art-historical expertise, Joe generally preferred to limit his consideration of works of art to questions of literary relationships. On the one hand, he undertook studies of the portraiture of authors, ancient and modern; on the other, he investigated verbal accompaniment to images or visual illustration of texts. All three aspects were often covered together: for example, in the splendid essay on Thomas More and the visual arts which appeared in 1984. But even the impressive piece on the iconography of the Fall of Man, published in 1968, was prompted by his reading of Milton, and written for a volume about the poet. When he fixed on Petrarch illustration as the topic of his Lyell Lectures in Bibliography for 1993–4, and subsequently set out to write a book on the subject, it was the conformity (or not) of the imagery to the relevant text that he was principally concerned with; he seems to have made a conscious decision to keep comment on stylistic and other features to a minimum. The book he planned was to be entitled *Illustrations of Petrarch: an Iconographic Survey*. In it he was both inspired and impeded by the fundamental study of 1902 by the Prince d'Essling and Eugène Müntz: *Pétrarque: ses études d'art, son influence sur les artistes, ses portraits et ceux de Laure, l'illustration de ses écrits*. Essling and Müntz had dealt in detail with the iconography of the Trionfi, but in relatively summary fashion with other works, so it was in this respect that their book most needed revision. In the essays published in the last decade or so of his life, many of them gathered in the volume of 2003, there is abundant perceptive comment on the Trionfi and its illustration, in manuscript and in print—the discussion of tapestries of the Triumph of Death in a piece written in honour of Hubertus Schulte-Herbrüggen in 2002 is particularly illuminating; but Joe's sense of the limited time he had left led him to conclude that his own book should be devoted to the other works. He therefore excluded what, by his own admission, is by far the most interesting and extensive aspect of Petrarchan imagery, and one too for which a clear picture of an artistic tradition, or series of traditions, can be discerned. The *Canzoniere* undoubtedly contains greater poems, but the inspiration of these to artists was at best sporadic, while for some of the Latin works an author portrait in an initial is all that we have in the way of illumination. All of this made it harder to order the material in a coherent narrative, especially as Joe took it as his ambition to include every known illustration. It certainly is hoped that this monumental survey and corpus will be printed in some appropriate form; but in the meantime Joe's published studies on aspects of Petrarchan iconog-

raphy (the *Secretum*, the *De remediis utriusque fortunae*, the *Letters*, and the overview of the whole theme in *Quaderni Petrarqueschi IX–X*) provide essential analyses.

Joe was famous for his characterisations of people. His speeches at retirement parties, and the obituaries he wrote for public and private contexts, were models of penetrating insight, wit and tact. Somehow he could capture the achievements and ambitions along with the failures and longings of an individual with understanding and affection, yet without sentimentality. He was just as acute about people of the past. Here he is on his admired Erasmus, in a review article of 1993 ('The Miller's Tale', reprinted in the volume of 2003):

Timid and fearful, except with a pen in his hand, recoiling from violence, pacific, secretive, paranoid, valetudinarian, temporising, capable of cringing to the patrons on whom his livelihood depended, he maintained personal and doctrinal equilibrium. . . .

If Joe Trapp's *oeuvre* has one lacuna, it is a book on Erasmus. A short one would have been fine, perhaps drawing contrasts and comparison with More: Joe was in any case good at short things. Fortunately, however, he allowed himself at times, in some of the published essays, to reflect generally and freely on Renaissance issues and on the lives, characters and motivation of the great Renaissance figures, Erasmus among them. Besides, the comparison of Erasmus and More became the central chapter in the book of the Panizzi Lectures.

* * *

Joe once observed of John Colet that, 'like most of his contemporaries, [he] did not read for pleasure, but for edification, which could be transmitted to others'. Joe of course read for pleasure, and abundantly; and he sought to help others to do so, not least by his edition of the medieval volume of the *Oxford Anthology of English Literature*, first published in 1973 and now available in paperback, as well as his contribution to the Renaissance volume of that series. The last months of his life, spent with Elayne at home in Acton while waiting for the hip operation that should have been routine but proved fatal, were accompanied by literary favourites, including all the plays of Shakespeare, reread in sequence. There were also the shared pleasures of music, above all the operas of Mozart, films (from Bogart classics to the Marx Brothers) and the visits of friends and family, especially the five beloved grandchildren with their parents. Yet Joe also continued working and was regularly in touch by

telephone and otherwise with colleagues who looked forward confidently, as he apparently did, to his imminent return to mobility and to the Institute. Only a couple of days before he went into hospital he handed over to the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* the final version of the essay on 'Petrarchan Places'; like the obituary of his friend Anne Marie Meyer, it had to be published posthumously. He died on 13 July 2005.

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Fellow of the Academy

Note. I have been assisted greatly in writing this memoir by the tributes to Joe Trapp published in newspapers and journals at the time of his death, as well as in the commemorative booklet produced by the Warburg Institute in 2007. The authors of these tributes have additionally helped with comment and advice, as have other colleagues and friends, above all Elayne Trapp.