

Neil Ripley Ker 1908–1982

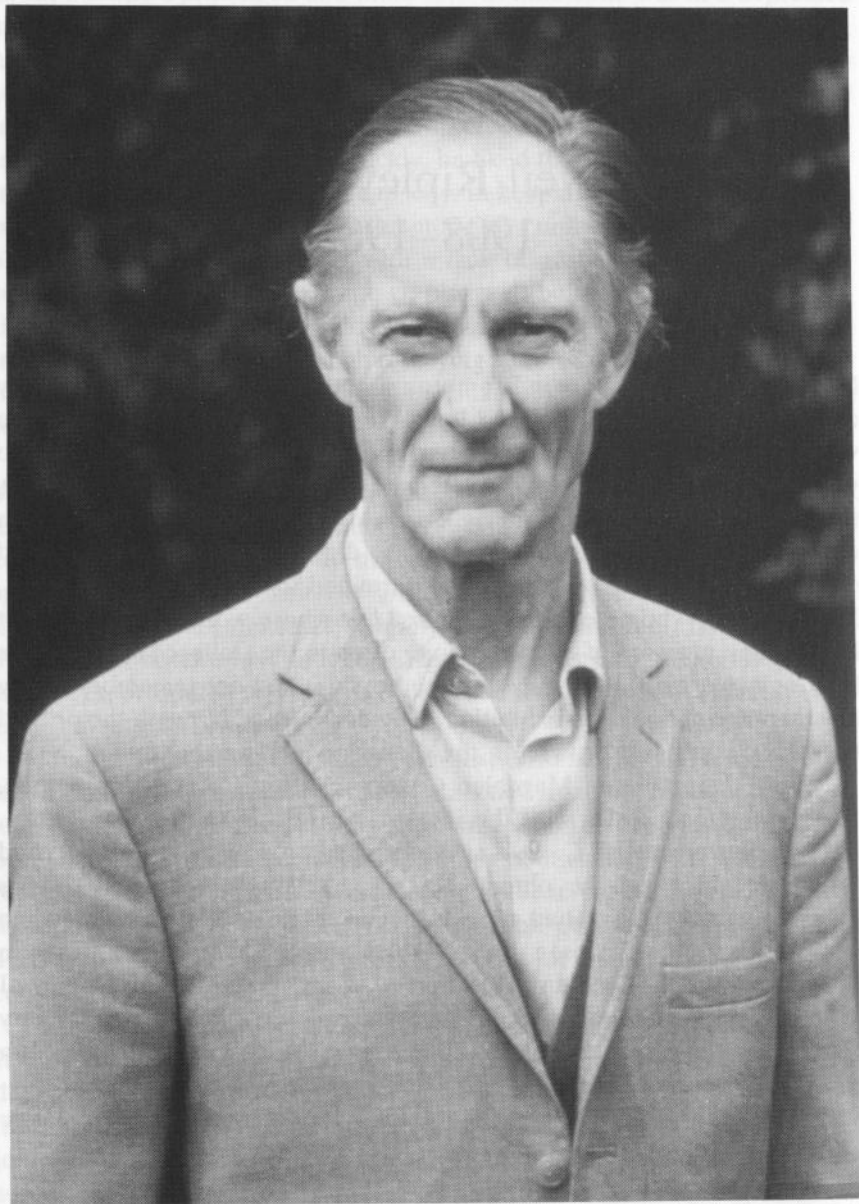
NEIL RIPLEY KER was born in Brompton, London, on 28 May 1908, the only child of Robert Macneil Ker and Lucy Winifred Strickland-Constable. He was educated at home by his mother until he was ten, and then for two years at a preparatory school in Reigate before going to Eton. He was there at the same time as Francis Wormald and Roger Mynors, although each in a different house and year and so did not know them there. And only once, in his last year, was he entertained to dinner by the Provost, M. R. James, whom he greatly admired but whose work as a medievalist he was then unaware of. He went quite often to the College Library in the hour or two a week it was open to the boys and did not remember seeing any manuscript books on exhibition, only documents, but with the printed books ‘we could just browse on the shelves, which was heaven’.¹

In 1927 he entered Magdalen College, Oxford, to read Philosophy, Politics and Economics with the idea of a career in the Foreign Office, but, on the advice of C. S. Lewis, changed to English Language and Literature, in which he obtained a second-class degree in 1931. His interest in manuscripts had already begun as an undergraduate (when he is said to have chosen to read Old and Middle English texts in that form): ‘The Laudian collection was my first love in Bodley. I can still remember browsing through the catalogue and the Summary Catalogue addenda about 1929–30 (?) and the sort of romantic aura there was about “Jesuits of Würzburg”, that especially for some reason’.² And in 1929–30 he had attended the classes of E. A. Lowe

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¹ Letter to T. J. Brown, 29 July 1972, from Professor Brown’s papers in the Department of Palaeography, King’s College, London, made available to me by Miss S. Dormer; quoted by kind permission of Mrs Jean Ker, like subsequent extracts from his correspondence.

² Letter to R. W. Hunt, 10 June 1974, from Hunt papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, made available by Dr B. Barker-Benfield.



N. R. KER

Professor K. D. Hartzell

in palaeography.³ His *B. Litt.*, 1933, guided by Kenneth Sisam, and influenced by his belief that study of the manuscripts offered new prospects for Anglo-Saxon studies, was on the additions and alterations in Bodley MSS 340 and 342 of Aelfric's homilies. Having failed to get a Research Fellowship at Magdalen in 1934 and spent some time at the family home near Glasgow and looking at (and being allowed to foliate) manuscripts in the University Library there, he was asked in 1935 by the Oxford English Faculty to give regular lectures on Anglo-Saxon manuscripts.⁴ By 1937 he had begun the comprehensive catalogue of ones containing Old English which was to be published eventually in 1957, dedicated to Sisam, whose long encouragement he specially acknowledged.⁵ In 1938–9 he made three tours of continental libraries for the purpose (in the course of which he met Bernhard Bischoff in Brussels) and had intended to go to the U.S.A. for the same purpose in September 1939, but was prevented by the war, not getting there till 1968–9.⁶

Meanwhile he had become involved, together with R. W. Hunt, J. R. Liddell and R. A. B. Mynors, in the scheme of publishing lists of all books known to survive from medieval British institutional libraries, and of their catalogues, got off the ground by C. R. Cheney in November 1937. Ker already had, like the others (whose relationships in this matter have been well described by Sir Richard Southern),⁷ a collection of such identifications and had also 'been through a good many sale catalogues'. Initially it appears he provided somewhat fewer entries (3–400) than each of the other three (Cheney 6–700), Mynors most of all (1200), but when the latter declined the general editorship and he and Cheney were taken for war service in 1940, Ker rather reluctantly accepted the responsibility.⁸ When however Cheney wrote to him in 1941 approving the draft preface and suggesting the title *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain* he said that it was the unanimous opinion of the collaborators that Ker's name alone, under which it has since been known, should stand on the title-page: 'you have done so much more actual research than any others of us and you have had most of the burden

³ Record reported by Professor R. J. Dean via Dr M. B. Parkes, from Lowe papers, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

⁴ Letters to R. W. Hunt, 28 October 1934, 5 November 1934, 5 June 1935, 29 October 1935.

⁵ See also his memoir of Sisam, *P. B. A.* 58 (1972), 409–28, esp. 413–14, 420.

⁶ Letters to R. W. Hunt, 1937–9.

⁷ Memoir of R. W. Hunt, *P. B. A.* 67 (1981), 371–97.

⁸ Letters from C. R. Cheney to R. W. Hunt, 12, 18 November 1937, Hunt papers; letters from Hunt to Cheney, 14, 30 November 1937, presumably passed by Cheney to Ker, in box on origins of *MLGB* assembled by the latter, Ker papers, Bodleian Library, made available by Professor A. G. Watson.

of the final editing'.⁹ And although they and others went on to contribute corrigenda and addenda for the master file of cards, housed in the Bodleian Library, it was under Ker's prime care and it was by him that the second edition in 1964 was greatly enlarged, including now the extant holdings of cathedral and college libraries, and a digest and index of persons connected with the medieval acquisitions (as desired by Cheney in 1940); he also prepared most of the supplement, completed by Andrew Watson, which came out posthumously in 1987. Nevertheless he was unhappy as late as 1974 'about the card index . . . being called Mr Ker's', and particularly about Cheney's original share not having been made clear enough in the later edition.¹⁰ It was this work of a very happy convergence of interests and talents in Oxford in the 1930s and a remarkably rapid compilation steered to press by Cheney (as Literary Director of the Royal Historical Society) that has not unjustly made Ker's name most widely known, long envied and more recently emulated in other parts of Europe.¹¹ With future supplements and no doubt eventual reissues, if the studies it condenses continue to flourish, it will always be an indispensable guide to the evidence for intellectual and artistic history, when used in the ways he indicated.

In 1941 he had been formally appointed Lecturer in Palaeography and although in 1942 he was registered as a conscientious objector and directed to full-time work as a porter at the Radcliffe Infirmary (which he enjoyed except for night duty), he was nevertheless able to get on with a few of his own studies, publishing a number of notes and articles on various subjects, and even hoped to do his lecturing 'if I have any pupils', though he also helped to prepare other pacifists for their tribunals.¹² During the war years he was also able to visit some provincial libraries, such as Worcester Cathedral,¹³ Ushaw College and Downside Abbey, and to 'spend what spare time I have' on descriptions of the Magdalen medieval manuscripts, where he gradually developed his methods and criteria: 'I've learnt that all manuscripts need looking at in the way that Lowe has looked at the oldest manuscripts, with due attention to the pricking, ruling, etc., and that a small book needs to be written on the subject'.¹⁴ Though he himself regrettably never carried out the last notion, apart from making an

⁹ Cheney to Ker, 1 April 1941, Ker papers.

¹⁰ Ker to Hunt, 14 April 1974, Hunt papers.

¹¹ E.g. E. Van Balberghe *et al.*, 'Medieval Libraries of Belgium', *Scriptorium* 26 (1972), 348–57; 27 (1973), 102–6; 28 (1974), 103–9; S. Krämer, *Handschriftenerbe des Deutschen Mittelalters, Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge Deutschlands und der Schweiz, Ergänzungsband I*, 2 vols (Munich, 1989).

¹² Ker to Hunt, 4 October 1942, 2 July 1943, Hunt papers.

¹³ Ker to Hunt, 15 February 1941: at Worcester 'I saw about 180 manuscripts in three days'.

¹⁴ Ker to Hunt, 16 January 1944, and list July 1944.

unpublished list of periods of changing practices, from the beginning of the twelfth century to the fifteenth, which he must have used in his teaching, the introduction to his *Catalogue of Manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon* (1957) has a masterly account for its centuries, many such observations occur in *English Manuscripts in the Century after the Norman Conquest* (1960), some are found in the introduction to *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, volume 1 (1969), and many are indicated in the facsimiles and editions to which he contributed palaeographical matter, as well as in individual articles, notably that on above and below top line (1960), the findings of which have recently been freshly and more extensively vindicated.¹⁵

It was also during the war that he followed up Mr James Fairhurst's discovery, amongst the remains of John Selden's and Sir Matthew Hales's collections, of Patrick Young's, James I's librarian's, catalogues of the manuscripts of five cathedral libraries, of which Ker edited three, enabling him to identify additional items from their medieval collections and to trace the occasions and agents of losses; and the whole area of early post-medieval ownership of manuscripts was one (led by M. R. James) which he developed in showing the value of, in specific cases, such as those now at Antwerp, Thomas Allen's, Sir John Prise's and others.

In 1945 he was elected a Fellow of Magdalen and in 1946 he succeeded Lowe and Denholm-Young as Reader in Palaeography. Besides manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon period he normally gave classes on writing in England from 1100 to the sixteenth century and on the description of manuscript books, leaving other Latin topics to Richard Hunt as a part-time lecturer besides being Keeper of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. Ker's modesty of manner meant that as a teacher he was most effective by example, and as much through influence on people who had never sat in his classes but who asked him about particular manuscripts or read with attention what he wrote.¹⁶ When questioned he was usually reluctant to risk generalisation, except by way of report on his own experience, but what emerged from his acute and systematic observations has frequently more than narrow applicability.

His interest and expertise were not primarily in script, despite his very sharp eye and memory for its details, but in the ensemble of evidence about the making and history of medieval manuscript books, effectually

¹⁵ M. Palma, 'Modifiche di alcuni aspetti materiali della produzione libraria latina nei secoli XII e XIII', *Scrittura e Civiltà* 12 (1988), 119–33. The comments by Jacques Lemaire, *Introduction à la codicologie* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1989), pp. 164–5, concerning earlier and later occurrences, miss the limits of Ker's observations.

¹⁶ The present writer cannot speak at first hand of his official teaching, only of a single seminar and a lecture (that published on cathedral libraries), which was very well received.

codicology, before the word was invented or imported.¹⁷ Nonetheless in the field of pure palaeography he made without fuss specific advances ranging from the late ninth to the fifteenth century, and was adept in demonstrating crucial scribal identities in diverse conditions (e.g. Aldred, 1943, and William of Malmesbury, 1944). His establishment of the term 'anglicana' (with medieval precedent) for the traditional English cursive script of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, after a period when he had used the ambiguous 'chancery' for it (in private notes), was affected by growing awareness of the continental discussions of nomenclature, through the Comité International de Paléographie, of which he became a member;¹⁸ yet, like his complementary naming of the competing late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century 'secretary' script (from its Tudor descendant), it was chiefly from the wish to characterise more distinctly the types and mixtures of writing he found in the late medieval books he wanted to catalogue.¹⁹ Similarly, he decided it was desirable, in order to avoid ambiguity, to refine his form of stating broadly mid-century dates from that (s. xiii) in the first edition (1941) to that (s. xiii med.) in the second (1964) of *Medieval Libraries*.²⁰

During the war, as a result of his work for *Medieval Libraries*, he had got to know the book-collector J. P. R. Lyell, who at his death in 1949 left 100 of his medieval manuscripts to the Bodleian Library and an endowment for an annual Readership in Bibliography at Oxford, of which in 1952–3 Ker was the first holder. The first lecture, by the donor's wish, was on Lyell's collection (published in the introduction to the catalogue of the Lyell manuscripts by Albinia de la Mare in 1971), and the remainder appeared as *English Manuscripts in the Century after the Norman Conquest* (1960). This was perhaps his most discursive work; hearers and readers may, like the present writer, have wished that it had been longer, revealing even more of his perceptions and reflections about books produced in that era.

His intimate knowledge of Oxford libraries, and that not simply of material in Oxford, was shown in an innovatory work, *Pastedowns in Oxford Bindings* (1954), which both identifies over two thousand fragments of medieval manuscripts (some of copies recorded in early catalogues),

¹⁷ The French term is said to have been introduced by A. Dain, *Les Manuscrits* (Paris, 1949), in a more restricted sense than its later usage; the first instance in English in the Supplement (1972) to the Oxford English Dictionary is of 1953.

¹⁸ G. Battelli *et al.*, *Nomenclature des écritures livresques du 9^e au 16^e siècle* (Paris, 1954).

¹⁹ *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, I (Oxford, 1969), xi–xii, II (1977), vi; elaborated by M. B. Parkes in an Oxford B. Litt. thesis and *English Cursive Book Hands* (Oxford, 1969), pp. xiv–xxiv.

²⁰ This of course could hardly apply to datings he had not reviewed in the interval and, out of step, the older form is used in *MMBL*, I (1969), vii, much of the work for which however had been done in the earlier 1960s; for the revised form see II (1977), vii, III (1983), vii.

utilised by Oxford binders in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and dates and groups the tools they used and the colleges they worked for, with ample indexes; it was soon followed by the Sandars Lectures at Cambridge in 1955 on 'Oxford College Libraries in the Sixteenth Century' (not published till 1959) and an exhibition with a catalogue, 1956, on Oxford College Libraries in 1556; later came *Records of All Souls College Library* (1971) and posthumously 'The Provision of Books' in the History of the University, volume III, on the sixteenth century (1986). He was intended to contribute the parallel chapter to volume II, on the middle ages, a task taken over by M. B. Parkes after his death, but he already had drawn up, as a piece of the ordered documentation on which all his work is based, a chronological list of cautions, notes of book pledges in loan chests, incorporating contributions from Graham Pollard (with whom over the years he exchanged much other information on the university book-trade), which should be published eventually.²¹ He also left notes on early sixteenth-century Cambridge bindings which have manuscript pastedowns. The results of his regular rubbing of early English blind-stamped bindings wherever he came across them, and any evidence of their provenance, had long been communicated to J. B. Oldham, and names of graduate book-owners to A. B. Emden, to the benefit of their respective publications.²² And the significance of other binding details (such as marks of chaining) in relation to provenance is just one of the aspects he drew attention to in a number of articles and catalogues.

The *Catalogue of Manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon* (1957), and a *Supplement* (1976) reissued with it (1990), definitively replaced the corresponding portion of the survey by Humfrey Wanley in the *Catalogus Librorum Septentrionalium* (1705), for which Ker had great esteem, but added many more items, describing most of them minutely at first hand, with full notice of previous discussions and editions, and relating them to each other, contemporary charters (excluded from the catalogue) and wholly Latin codices. One may now overlook how greatly this stout volume, with its packed introduction and elaborate index, transformed the palaeography and codicology of the field and promoted further research.²³

From a very early stage in his career Ker seems to have resolved to see all the medieval manuscript books in British repositories outside the major centres, and any printed books which could have evidence of

²¹ Bodleian Library, Ker papers.

²² J. B. Oldham, *English Blind-Stamped Bindings* (Cambridge, 1952); *Blind Panels of English Binders* (1958); A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A. D. 1500*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1957); *1501–40* (1974); *Cambridge* (1963).

²³ Evidence may be seen in the Supplement (1976) and the annual bibliography of *Anglo-Saxon England*.

fifteenth- or sixteenth-century British ownership, including early bindings, which meant constant journeying throughout his life. From this as a by-product came much of the information in the influential report on *The Parochial Libraries of the Church of England* (1959). By 1960 he was already engaged on cataloguing in London libraries for his last and largest enterprise, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, intended to deal with all institutional collections not yet adequately described in print, with the exception of the British Library, the Bodleian, Cambridge University Library and a few others for which separate catalogues were known to be in preparation. The first volume, for London, appeared in 1969, the year after he took early retirement from Oxford in order to concentrate on this work. The second volume, Abbotsford – Keele, came out in 1977; in 1982, when he had completed all but the introduction of the third, Lampeter – Oxford, he anticipated that the remainder might take a further five years. Volume 3, then in proof, finished by his literary executor Andrew Watson, appeared in 1983, and volume 4, Paisley – York, for which Ker's drafts were all checked with the manuscripts and augmented, and descriptions for Parkminster and some in other places done *ab initio*, by A. J. Piper, has been published in 1992. Although adopted by the Manuscripts Sub-Committee of the Standing Conference of National and University Libraries, it was done entirely at Ker's own initiative and largely at his expense, including heavy subsidies for the printing of the first two volumes, though the Committee obtained British Library and Academy grants towards the third and fourth. Indexing of this huge assemblage of information still remains to be done, an urgent need of users all over the world, for the contents are as much European in origin as British, and deserves to be done as well as the compiler himself would have done it or seen it done. As Julian Brown said in a moving memorial address, Ker's bent, from his first publications, as a schoolboy, of churchyard gravestones, was to catalogue, as faithfully as possible, what he saw, while he showed in it fresh patterns of significance. It would be more difficult to draw these out of the miscellaneous matter of his last great work than from the coherent categories of his other catalogues, but he certainly would have been able to point to instructive instances of contrasting practices in different places and centuries, and varieties of format in relation to custom and function, in his quiet way.

In a work of such a wide reach, carried out over twenty years and in diverse conditions, published in instalments, there will be inevitably some inconsistencies, unconscious and conscious, as he learned more and adapted his methods, and possibly some failures to cite relevant literature, although Ker went back everywhere to check and fill out his first descriptions, in the light of researches he had to pursue elsewhere:

'I am bad at getting to the point where I don't need to see a described manuscript again'.²⁴ Many of the manuscripts included were of foreign origin, some of types with which previously he had not many dealings, and with texts or annotations in difficult hands and spellings, but he usually knew when and where to get help with them. Despite his remarkable visual memory, and his meticulous description of the details of the hierarchy of decoration, he explicitly limited his listing of illustration,²⁵ and generally avoided giving stylistic judgements related to region and period of origin, unless cited from another authority. This was presumably deliberate in an area where, surprisingly, he did not feel confident of his own assessment or realise the sorts of help enquirers want. More understandably he eschewed venturing on watermark identification before the techniques had been more fully developed. And over his whole career he concentrated on manuscript books, not documents (significantly having declined F. M. Powicke's suggestion of succeeding Cheney as Reader in Diplomatic in 1945), though he did not hesitate to discuss their contents and forms if apposite, and to use telling evidence from the content of archives.

His correspondence grew as his publications and the range of his expertise became gradually known throughout the world, and his readiness to reply rapidly and helpfully. Indeed he frequently took the initiative: as Sir Richard Southern writes, 'he remembered what everyone was doing and sent abrupt little notes about any discoveries he had made that would help; I imagine he did this for scores of people'.²⁶ There was however nothing abrupt in the following-up and continuing relationships. One looked forward keenly to what one would learn from his letters and visits. Acknowledgments to him appear in innumerable prefaces, introductions and footnotes. More than one obituarist remembered his Sunday mornings devoted to letter-writing and remarked on his personal approachability by young students and foreign scholars. His usual informality of dress and manner went with the happy division of his time and attention between lecture room, libraries and study on the one hand, and family and outdoor activities on the other. On a visit of more than a night to a place with manuscripts he would try to fit in afternoon or evening walks as he did at home, and he travelled with very simple luggage, though often burdened with annotated copies of crucial books. As an undergraduate he had been President of the University Mountaineering Club and he continued to resort to Switzerland and Scotland (where there were family homes), eventually retiring to the latter, and by a sad aptness it was on a walk there with his

²⁴ Letter to T. J. Brown, 21 July 1973, Brown papers, Department of Palaeography, King's College, London.

²⁵ *MMBL*, I, xii–xiii; cf. M. R. James's lengthy lists.

²⁶ Letter to present writer, 8 January 1991.

wife, looking for bilberries, that he had his fatal fall, on 23 August 1982, in the midst of undiminished activity of mind and hand.

He had a remarkable capacity for switching from and back to unperturbed concentration on a task, to produce systematic and accurate, if at first sight untidy, notes, transcripts or typing. Although disinclined to some forms of sociability and academic life, he rarely betrayed it, was extremely unwilling to criticise other people, and took a due share of college responsibilities. He was Librarian of Magdalen, succeeding C. T. Onions, from 1956 to 1968, but already active in cataloguing its manuscripts and assisting enquirers, and he was Vice-President in 1962–3, playing his part in college business and entertaining guests at High Table then, as at other times, very conscientiously and kindly. He was a Curator of the Bodleian Library from 1949, and a member of the Standing Committee from 1960 (meeting fortnightly), until 1968, a length of service reflecting the value of his interest and support, as a long and constant reader, college librarian and frequent benefactor. It was not only the Bodleian but also other libraries and archives outside Oxford to which he gave books and documents and offered timely sums towards purchases thought particularly suitable, and through Bodley he helped institutions lacking their own facilities to get manuscripts and bindings repaired. He also served in the 1960s and 1970s on the Sub-Committee on Manuscripts of SCONUL, which besides making representations on such questions as export controls and arranging training seminars and conferences, took on the sponsorship of *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries* and the catalogues of dated manuscripts in Britain for the Comité International de Paléographie, of which the other British members sat on the Sub-Committee, under the chairmanship of Richard Hunt. Ker himself became the first chairman of the British Academy's Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues when it was eventually established in 1979, forty-eight years after the first notion of it was voiced by Roger Mynors, though the first volume did not appear until after both their deaths, in 1990. He was a Vice-President of the Bibliographical Society from 1966 till his death but declined the Presidency when it was his turn because of his removal to Scotland and wish to concentrate on *MML*. It was a handsome gift of money from him in 1977 that helped to revive the union catalogue of printed books up to 1700 in the cathedral libraries of England and Wales begun by Miss M. S. G. Hands in 1944, of which the first volume was published in 1984 and the second may appear in 1993.

The distinction of his work was recognised by his election as Fellow of the British Academy, 1958, a Corresponding Fellow of the Mediaeval Academy of America, 1971, and of the Bavarian Academy in 1977, conferment of honorary doctorates at Reading, 1964, Leiden, 1972,

and Cambridge, 1975, the Israel Gollancz Memorial Prize of the British Academy, 1959, the Gold Medal of the Bibliographical Society, 1975, and the C.B.E., 1979. Friends and pupils presented him with a Festschrift in 1978²⁷ and after his death an appeal (to which besides friends and pupils his family contributed generously) has provided a permanent endowment for a Memorial Fund administered by the British Academy giving grants annually to assist research, travel and publication concerning medieval manuscripts, especially ones connected with the British Isles.

In 1938 he married his second cousin, Jean Frances, daughter of Brigadier Charles Bannatyne Findlay; she survives him, with a son and three daughters. Many British and foreign scholars enjoyed their hospitality in Oxford, at Kirtlington, in Edinburgh and Perthshire, and other kindnesses.

It is not easy to write a wholly fresh memoir after a lapse of nine years, since a number of admirable obituaries appeared then which cannot now be bettered in expressing the professional and personal characteristics of the subject, one of which may most appropriately be quoted: 'It is no exaggeration to say that in the field of medieval manuscripts he was the greatest scholar that Britain has ever produced. His output matched that of M. R. James in volume and far surpassed it in authoritative precision'.²⁸

There can be few scholars who have done more enduring work and merited more gratitude.

A. I. DOYLE

Fellow of the British Academy

²⁷ *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries*, ed. M. B. Parkes & A. G. Watson (London, 1978): includes a list of his publications pp. 371–9; supplement in the selection of his essays, *Books, Collectors and Libraries: Studies in the Medieval Heritage*, ed. A. G. Watson (London, 1985), pp. xiii–xiv.

²⁸ [B. Barker-Benfield] *Bodleian Library Record*, vol. 11, no. 2, May 1983, pp. 64–5; in fairness it may be noted that though the list of M. R. James's publications on manuscripts is shorter than Ker's, he must have catalogued at least twice as many books, and he published more than as much again on other subjects. The other obituaries I have seen are: [G. R. C. Davis] *The Times*, 25 August 1982; T. J. Brown, Address at memorial service, 13 November 1982, edition of 300 copies, Glendale (California), May 1983, also (with errors) in *Magdalen College Record*, 1983, pp. 35–40; P. Robinson, *Mediaeval English Studies Newsletter* (Tokyo), no. 7, December 1982, pp. 1–2; [A. I. Doyle] *The Library*, 6th series, vol. 5, no. 1, March 1983, pp. 171–3; C. R. Cheney, *Archives*, vol. 16, no. 9, April 1983, pp. 86–7; R. J. Dean, P. J. Meyvaert, J. C. Pope, R. H. Rouse, *Speculum*, vol. 58, no. 3, July 1983, pp. 870–2; H. Gneuss, *Jahrbuch der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1983; T. Webber, *Dictionary of National Biography 1981–85* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 221–2. Besides friends mentioned here and in notes above my thanks are also owing to Dr G. L. Harriss and several others I have consulted.