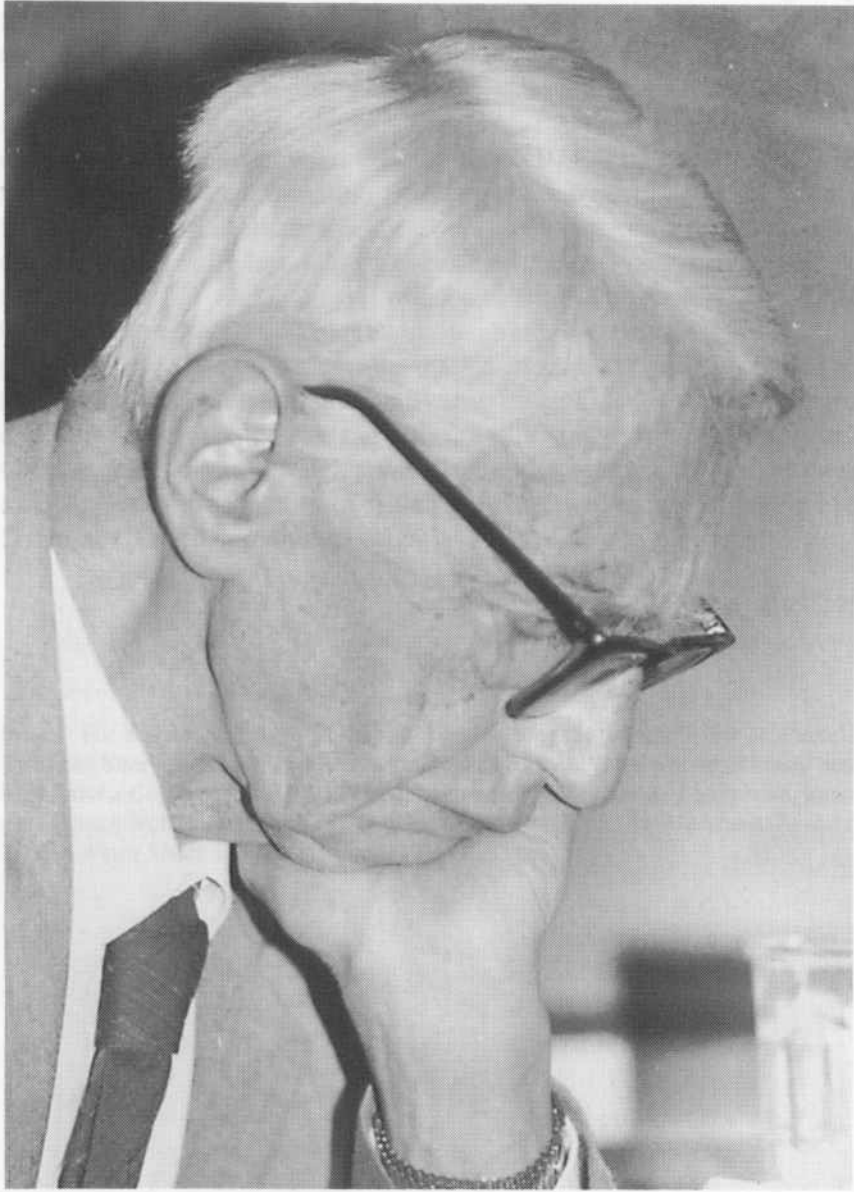


was, but only there, because he was conscious of the dangers of  
suspecting someone from Berlin. Skutsch had come a long way



OTTO SKUTSCH

## Otto Skutsch 1906–1990

OTTO SKUTSCH, youngest of the three children of the eminent Latinist Franz Skutsch and his wife Selma Dorff, was born on 6 December 1906 in Breslau. The name derives from the little town of Skuteč, 100 km east of Prague, and its bearers from a family resident there two hundred years ago.

The latter half of the nineteenth century was a period of glorious achievement for classical learning, credit for which belongs indisputably to Germany. During those years were inaugurated those great monuments of learning, for the most part un superseded today but referred to so often by scholars that their initials or the editor's name is enough to identify them. Omitting those exclusively concerned with Greek, one thinks at once of *CIL*; *RE*; *TLL*; *PIR*; Keil's *Grammatici Latini* and Roscher's mythological lexicon. Alongside these vast undertakings must be reckoned the titanic ambition of the Bibliotheca Teubneriana to bring out critical editions of all Greek and Roman authors. In this great movement Franz Skutsch played a distinguished role. He contributed new ideas to comparative linguistics, and was an active participant in the controversial study of Plautine metre, successfully disproving some of Ritschl's theories and helping to establish firmly the Law of Iambic Shortening; to *RE* he contributed, besides entries on Cornelius Gallus, the Etruscan language, and much else, an exemplary article on Ennius; with Wilhelm Kroll and Konrad Ziegler he furnished the Bibliotheca Teubneriana with the *Mathesis* of Firmicus Maternus. In a daring book, *Aus Vergils Frühzeit*, he sought to prove the priority of

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the *Ciris* over the *Eclogues* and that its author was Cornelius Gallus: even though the work ultimately fails to stand up to criticism, it is attractively written, methodically argued, and still has much to teach. Moreover, he was fully engaged on other things — for example, in 1909 he founded with Paul Kretschmer the periodical *Glotta* — and flourished until the summer of 1912, when an inoperable cancer was diagnosed. He died in September of that same year, aged forty-seven.

Otto, who adored his father, took the blow hard. But for the whole family this was a *brutum fulmen*: his mother was forced to sell the house and the family moved in with Selma's mother and sister, where they lived in extreme privation: there was no bathroom, and every morning the ice on the water had to be broken; their diet was rigorously Spartan. The eruption of the First World War soon confronted them with fresh worries. In apprehension of Silesia being overrun by the Russians Otto was evacuated to the home of the Hammerskjölds in Sweden, a name later to be emblazoned on the scroll of history by Dag, then a boy just a year senior to Otto. Over generations they had been friends of the Skutsches. Small wonder that Otto, a natural linguist, should become proficient in Swedish and specially appreciative of the fine Latin scholarship achieved in Sweden, indeed in Scandinavia as a whole.

For the period between Otto's return to Germany and his flight from it in 1934 we have his own fascinating account in a lecture which he entitled 'Otto Skutsch Remembers', given at Leeds and other universities towards the end of his life. The typescript with permission for posthumous publication was entrusted to his friend William M. Calder III, who, assisted by Anton Bierl, enriched it with copious footnotes and published it in *HSCP* 94 (1992) 387–408.

Led by Wilhelm Kroll, who succeeded him as the *ordinarius* at Breslau, Franz's friends had ensured the publication of his *Kleine Schriften*; and it was the assiduous study of this volume (scarcely easy reading for a schoolboy) that inspired Otto to pursue a career as a classical scholar. Early Latin language and literature, and in particular Plautine metre, were soon established as his principal interests.

In England undergraduates were tied to the university which admitted them; Germany had evolved a different system. Students enjoyed the freedom of unrestricted movement and could take courses wherever they wanted; and their teachers, too, seem to have been less rooted in one place. So it was that Otto studied in various universities and met the most eminent scholars of his time, acquiring in the process

not only a just appreciation of his teachers but also a healthy independence of them.

Naturally he started at Breslau, and at first — though only at first — was disappointed with Kroll, whom however he recognised as a consummate scholar. Years later in dealing with a problem in Catullus I referred to Kroll's edition and facetiously remarked that he had got his scansion wrong. Otto was never one to let an unjust comment pass unchecked: he proceeded to give me an account of Kroll's outstanding ability and achievements, his vast knowledge and endearing humanity, and pointed out that because of a typographical error, which I should have recognised as such, I had misrepresented him as a fool. He then sent me a copy of the Kroll-Skutsch-Ziegler edition of Firmicus Maternus. As on many other occasions he administered, almost with sadness, a reproof that made one ineffably ashamed of one's shortcomings. Another teacher at Breslau was Hans Drexler (among much else *Die Iambenkürzung*, Hildesheim 1969), whose later collaboration with the Nazis Otto valiantly sought to exculpate after the war.

In his second year he went to Kiel, where he thrilled to the inspiring personalities of Felix Jacoby ('his lectures on Herodotus were magnificent'), Eduard Fraenkel (Plautine metre), and the latter's cousin Ernst, a philologist. Then back to Breslau for a short stay, and on to Berlin, where he was fortunate to attend the lectures and seminars of such giants as Wilhelm Schulze (who has taught us how to spell *Pthia* and accentuate aoristic κλυεῖν), Werner Jaeger, Eduard Norden ('Kroll on Plautus was much better'), Hiller von Gaertringen, and finally Wilamowitz himself ('I was lucky enough to hear his last course of lectures, on Hesiod'). In giving the lecture at Yale Otto uncharacteristically permitted himself an attempt at mimicry and brought the house down with his imitation of Wilamowitz's unexpectedly high-pitched voice.

One might gather from Otto's dissatisfaction with studying philology under Schulze ('we had to read endlessly boring Lithuanian fairy tales') that he had come to dislike the comparative study of languages; and in the event he decided against making this the focus of his career. But the fact is that he never lost his love for Indo-European studies, as is evident from 'Helen, her Name and Nature', his Webster Memorial Lecture, published in *JHS* 107 (1987) 188–93, and many notes in *Glotta* and the *Annals* commentary. He rejoiced at the re-establishment of the Chair of Comparative Philology at UCL and the appointment to it of Oswald Szemerényi; the only time I saw him consumed with anger was

when in an evil hour of what was ironically called rationalisation the Chair was abolished.

Back again for a brief visit to Breslau, and thence to Göttingen, where Eduard Fraenkel had become the *ordinarius*. Here occurred an unfortunate incident. Otto somehow offended Fraenkel (he once told me what it was, and it struck me as so trivial I have completely forgotten the details); but Fraenkel, who could be a tyrant, informed Otto he must no longer consider himself his pupil. Otto was hurt, and when shortly thereafter Fraenkel and most of his doctorands went to Freiburg, Otto stayed behind. However, Fraenkel seems subsequently to have relented, relations were resumed, 'and ever after he was kindness and helpfulness itself.'

Remaining at Göttingen Otto had his doctoral thesis accepted, but meanwhile made the acquaintance of other distinguished scholars. There was Hermann Fränkel (Eduard's brother-in-law, whose finest work, on early Greek poetry and philosophy and on Apollonius Rhodius, was to be produced in America), and Max Pohlenz, whose Ciceronian seminar was of course conducted in Latin, an ardent nationalist but no follower of Hitler, and Bruno Snell, as gifted a Hellenist as he was fearless as an anti-Nazi.

Otto's doctoral thesis, *Prosodische und metrische Gesetze der Iambenkürzung* (Göttingen, 1934), published through the support of friends and students of his father, is one of the few discussions of early Latin verse whose conclusions continue to be accepted without strong reservations: the first and more intricate part established the linguistic conditions under which word-end between *brevians* and *brevianda* is permissible, while the metrical section definitively refutes the view of Jachmann and others that iambic shortening is less favoured in some metrical environments than in others. To quote my colleague Thomas Cole: 'The scope and method are a model of what writing on the subject should be: investigations are confined to problems which can be plausibly solved without resorting to highly speculative and endlessly argued discussions.'

But this was the time of the Nazi revolution. Two years earlier Otto had been awarded a bursary to work at the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* in Munich, but in 1934 (having just finished the long article on *igitur*) he was told that because of his father's Jewish birth his bursary would be terminated.

This is the place to mention that Franz had never denied his Jewish extraction, but had never asserted it: truth and learning claimed his

allegiance. A man of spotless integrity he felt no guilt in converting to Lutheranism as the only way to marry his beloved. From the photograph prefixed to his *Kleine Schriften* there shines out a humanity which transcends race, religion, yes and scholarship too. Not until eight years after Franz's death did Otto discover that his father had been born Jewish. Let me say here that for him, as, I believe, for his father, religion was valueless if all it meant was an enforced acceptance of doctrinaire positions: tolerance of sincerely held beliefs was a *sine qua non* of civilised society. Otto was certainly a free thinker, but I hesitate to describe him as an atheist: he rarely touched on the subject, but I formed the impression that he acknowledged the existence of a higher power to which man was accountable. Racism of course was synonymous with barbarism.

But to return to the 1930s: agitated at now being penalised as a Jew, Otto turned to consult Pohlenz, who gave both wise advice and practical help: Otto must emigrate, at once; when he got back to Munich he should contact Professor J. H. Baxter of St Andrew's University, Scotland, who was looking for an assistant to help him with his Late Latin Dictionary. By some happy coincidence Baxter happened to be on his way to Munich. They met and Otto was appointed. The stipend was miserable, but the opportunity golden.

His translation to St Andrew's marked for Otto the reversal of fortune's disfavour. The Professor of Humanity (i.e. Latin), Wallace M. Lindsay, had been his father's most devoted follower: in a despairing obituary (*CR* 1912) he had lamented 'What shall we do now that our protagonist is gone?' and had dedicated his ambitious *Early Latin Verse* 'To the memory of Franz Skutsch, a true scholar, who would gladly learn and gladly teach.' Then Otto fell in love with Gillian, elder daughter of Sir Findlater Stewart, GCB, GIE, CSI, a truly outstanding administrator and an architect of India's readiness for self rule. His affection was returned; they married, and their children and their friends bear witness to their lifelong happiness with each other.

At St Andrew's Otto was fortunate to continue his association with men of the highest ability. Today we take Lindsay's editions of Nonius and Festus and Isidore and the Latin glossaries for granted, and if we are arrogant find fault with his editions of Plautus and Terence and Martial: but who today can claim anything like his achievement? H. J. Rose, the Professor of Greek, was another scholar of distinction: apart from authoritative works on Greek literature, mythology, and religion he was also known for feats in chess and year-round swimming. Perhaps

the star was D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, of Nobel Prize calibre, who possessed a mind of Aristotelian breadth and erudition. Not that Otto was intimidated; in going over the proofs of the revised *Greek Birds* he winced at the statement that the etymology of ἄετός was unknown. 'Sir D'Arcy, that won't do,' he said, and pointed out the connection with Latin *avis*, and the identical formation in Lithuanian *ulkatas* 'werewolf' from *ulkas* 'wolf'. 'After that,' wrote a surprised Otto, 'he gave me no more proofs to read.' But there was no future for him at St Andrew's, Baxter's dictionary project proving something of a fiasco; urged on by Douglas Young he eventually secured his first academic appointment, at Belfast, to be followed shortly by a second, bringing him back to the mainland.

Otto's appointment at Manchester in 1939 coincided with a period of great strength in its classics department. John Davison, in my opinion England's foremost Homerist in the twentieth century (*indocti discant et ament meminisse periti*), was, if somewhat autocratic, a stimulating teacher and enormously well informed over a very wide range of literature; Günther Zuntz was a Wilamowitzian polymath, and Semple, Skemp, Westlake, and Woodcock, if lesser, were still shining lights. T. B. L. Webster, though for much of the time absent on war service at Bletchley Park, was the most brilliant and inspiring. It was then that the work on Ennius was begun and his powers as a teacher revealed, glowingly attested by Michael Coffey, Bessie Walker (Mrs Elizabeth Henry), and other distinguished associates of those years. One day, discussing German literature with him, I happened to mention that at school when I should have been studying Goethe and Schiller for Higher School Certificate I wasted precious weeks captivated by Peacock's recent book on Hölderlin. 'Ah, Ronald Peacock,' he exclaimed, and launched into an encomium of admired Manchester colleagues outside the classics department.

While he was at Manchester World War II broke out, and preposterous though it now seems — *mit der Dummheit kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens* — Otto was arrested as an enemy alien and incarcerated in an internment camp. His application for British citizenship had long since been filed and approved, and would in the normal course of events have been granted a few weeks later. Naturally Gillian and her father left no stone unturned to have him released, but it still took months. Otto's manly spirit enabled him to bear this misfortune with complete equanimity, and he was presently given a position of some authority in the camp, being put in charge of sending internees to Australia and New

Zealand. Once, when staying with us in Massachusetts, he entertained my wife and me over dinner with reminiscences of his experiences, utterly untouched by complaint or resentment, as understanding of his gaolers as compassionate toward his fellow internees, with some of whom he formed lasting friendships.

Webster's appointment at University College London in 1948 (the year I graduated from it) was a landmark. For the college he helped to recruit Momigliano as Professor of Ancient History and Turner as Professor of Papyrology, each of international renown and a very leader in his subject; and for the university he established the Institute of Classical Studies, which made London the centre of classical studies in Britain for inter-university seminars and for visitors from every corner of the world. Not the least of his services was that he saw to it that Otto succeeded J. F. Lockwood as Professor of Latin.

The appearance of the new Latin professor in Gower Street was at first greeted with some suspicion. Ian Martin, his first student and later Ancient World Librarian of the college, has testified that his deep resonant voice, strong German accent, and grave manner 'inspired not a little terror amongst us undergraduates: we had all heard dark stories of the arrival of Eduard Fraenkel in Oxford in the 'thirties. After a couple of tutorials with him we realised our fears were groundless: besides being a peerless scholar, Otto was the kindest of men.'

The same sentiments were swiftly conveyed to me (then at University College Hull) by my fellow student James Willis, the most gifted Latinist I have ever met, who had been appointed as an Assistant Lecturer in the department. Willis was then putting the finishing touches to his doctoral thesis ('The Medieval Commentators of Martianus Capella'), and in working through Cora Lutz's edition of *Iohannis Scotti Annotationes in Marcianum* had made no less than 500 emendations of the text. Some were easy, like 208,15 NIL DIFFERENS *id est nihil narrans* (read DISSERENS) and 365,4 OBTUTIBUS *id est nubibus* (read *nutibus*); but many were complex and unobvious. Not only did Otto scrupulously check all these, but here and there he spotted mistakes that Willis had missed. At 94,15 occurred the bewildering SINCIPUT *senatus caput* (PROFILE *head of the senate*[?]). Willis had let this pass — it has to be said that in Johannes Scottus one comes across many bewildering things — but Otto noticed that the manuscript read not *senatus*, an alteration of Lutz's, but *senatum*: from this he restored *sematum caput* (*side of head*), which he supported with references to Charisius and other grammarians, who actually explain *sinciput* as *sematum caput*.



My first meeting with Otto took place early in 1953, when I had to be in London. Willis kindly arranged for the three of us to have lunch together. On reaching Otto's study I was amazed how young and athletic he looked, so unlike the great Gelehrter I had conjured up in my mind. He and Willis were discussing the problems raised by Silius's apparent admission that the Roman Capitol had actually been captured: editions of Silius and Ennius lay on the table, as well as texts of Livy, Macrobius, Propertius, and Virgil; dictionaries and journals were methodically referred to as the discussion ranged far afield. I was overwhelmed by the intensity of the occasion, and the degree of concentration put into it by Otto himself and demanded of us: all else was forgotten; we had no lunch that day.

Otto's appointment at UCL marked, professionally, the summit of his ambition: there was never any question of his looking for a post elsewhere, for he was supremely happy in London and as proud of his colleagues as they of him. But, as in the days of his youth, he did not regard himself as restricted to home base: he belonged to the university of the world. So what more natural than that, having attained the eminence that permitted him to do so, he should make frequent trips abroad to the many scholars who pressed invitations upon him?

His first visit was to Harvard in 1958. My friend Warren Myers still remembers Otto's course on Cicero's *De Republica*, in which he stunned the graduate students by revealing to them the extent of their ignorance of Classics: this he did not so much by castigation as by opening up the gates of his knowledge. Like Momigliano on his visits later, Otto shared in the life of the students and completely won their hearts. That year the Harvard Classical Club was putting on a performance of the *Rudens*; Otto assumed the role of a football coach, as it were, tirelessly drilling them in the pronunciation and rhythms of the Latin text.

He spent one term at Pittsburgh and twice held fellowships at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton to work on Ennius; conscious that it would be his last visit to America he ended with a coast-to-coast tour in 1985. Nearer home, he participated in a conference at the Fondation Hardt in Switzerland, and made several trips to Sweden, to Italy, and many to Germany and Austria. He never wavered in his love for his native land, its scenery, its literature, its traditions, above all his friends there, particularly Andreas Thierfelder and Hans Joachim Mette. In 1987 he attended a rousing reunion of his old school, the Friedrichs-Gymnasium ('the oldest boy there left the equivalent of the Fifth Form

to fight in the First World War, and the youngest were 10 years old when Breslau was evacuated in 1944'). Friends elsewhere were legion; his correspondence with them, as I could tell by references to them in letters to me, must have been enormous: in 1959, while I was at the University of Manitoba, he pressed me to join him in an attempt to persuade Basil Blackwell to publish Housman's collected papers. For a time it looked as though we might be successful, but on the advice of referees, who thought that in the face of Housman's express prohibition this was unethical, Blackwell declined the proposal. Fortunately James Diggle and Frank Goodyear were later able to persuade the Cambridge University Press otherwise and produced three impeccably edited volumes.

Mark Pattison says: 'Learning is a peculiar compound of memory, imagination, scientific habit, accurate observation, all concentrated through a prolonged period, on the analysis of the remains of literature. The result of this sustained mental endeavour is not a book, but a man.' The observation might well have been provoked by *The Annals of Quintus Ennius* (Oxford, 1985), which it fits remarkably. The enterprise began when in his Manchester years Otto, on the recommendation of Fraenkel, was commissioned by the Delegates to the Oxford Press to produce an edition of the fragments of Ennius to replace that of Johannes Vahlen, whose editions (1st, 1854; 2nd, 1903) had long held the field. Five years was deemed enough for the job. But not only had his sponsors failed to appreciate the magnitude of the task, involving as it does the textual criticism of scores of authors and sources and a deep knowledge of such disparate areas as early Roman history and the lost plays of Euripides, but they had no inkling of Otto's conception of the undertaking. It was to be a monument to his father, irrefutable proof that he was a worthy student of Fraenkel's, the expression of his gratitude to Wallace Lindsay, and a work to be ranked in the same class as Housman's *Manilius*. In his mind (whatever his tongue had sworn) there was no question of a deadline; but it is not surprising that after a decade both Fraenkel and the Oxford Press became impatient. Then occurred a regrettable misjudgement, for Otto's mandate was reduced to an edition of the *Annals* fragments alone. This simply encouraged him to devote even more time and attention to the *Annals*, for he had never neglected the other works: his working copy of Vahlen, which I possess, is covered from beginning to end with marginalia, and to supplement the margins extra pages have been inserted not only into the *Annales* but also into the *Scaenica* and

*Hedyphagetica*. One thing is certain. From his arrival in London he worked incessantly on Ennius, and as a foretaste of what was in store — perhaps he sensed other people's criticism of his slowness — he published *Studia Enniana* in 1967, containing not merely his inspiring inaugural lecture and articles on the *Annals* but various papers on the scenic fragments, all of which had previously appeared in journals but now in their collected form laid to rest any doubt of the outstanding quality of his work. Early in the 1970s, as he prepared for publication, a carbon copy of the typescript of his commentary on each book of the *Annals* was kept in the department at University College and made freely available to colleagues for comment and criticism. After his retirement he regularly worked at the Institute and gave occasional afternoon seminars on Ennius. Once during the lunch-hour preceding one such meeting he was troubled at not being able to lay his hands on Lindsay's edition of Nonius, which he needed to verify some key references; he ruefully reflected that to consult the copy in the Reading Room of the British Museum he would have to wait several hours, but then he brightened up, for he realised that there would be no delay in the manuscript room, where he could read Nonius in the ninth-century Codex Harleianus 2719 without much likelihood of discommoding another reader. And so it turned out, as he triumphantly told us later that afternoon.

This is not the place to review Otto's *Annals*, but for a commentary on Latin texts known to scholars for centuries it is extraordinarily imaginative and original. Fragments sundered from their context are necessarily cryptic, but somehow the revealing beam of a searchlight is here cast upon them; and the reader has the constant sensation of being escorted by a wizard. Much is speculative, and it would be too much to expect that these speculations always hit the mark. But even when probably wrong, Otto, like Bentley, greatest of scholars, opens up to us vistas of knowledge of which we should otherwise have been unaware. In the Skutsch Festschrift, Timpanaro well points out the completeness and honesty with which Otto has faced *all* the problems and the courage and conviction which have gone to the expression of his solutions. Who but the rarest of scholars would have dared even to conceive, let alone argue, that *Musae, quae pedibus magnum pulsatis Olympum* was not the first line of Ennius's epic? The touching description of the good companion preserved by Gellius, superficially so straightforward, is shown to bristle with problems, for all of which he offers solutions. Nor were these hastily reached or uncritically clung to,

for again and again he would invite his friends to refute or improve on them. Moreover, he was conscious that Ennian research was not his exclusive preserve, and he welcomed the contributions of Sebastiano Timpanaro and Scevola Mariotti, for whom he entertained the highest regard.

But no more than Timpanaro will I praise Otto's *Annals* without reserve. It is a pity that, like other twentieth-century editors of Ennius, he chose to impose his own numeration on the fragments. Better to have kept Vahlen's, which by being standardised in the lexicons, the grammars, the handbooks, and the commentaries on Latin authors has virtually become canonised as the correct method of referring to the text. Of course Vahlen's *order* of printing the fragments is often wrong—but it is an easy matter to set up signposts in the text and thus dispense with the inconvenience of concordances which, so long as each successive editor yields to the vanity of renumbering the fragments according to his own views, will continue to confuse and disgruntle all those who work on the father of Roman poetry.

After his commentary on the *Annals* was published I learned from Otto that the Press had accepted his offer to edit all Ennius's fragments as an item in the Oxford Classical Texts series, and he had forthwith begun work on this. Something, however, caused the acceptance to be withdrawn, but the project was accepted by Teubner. I have inherited all Otto's materials and have pledged myself to produce his intended volume.

Of course Otto's Latin interests were not confined to Plautine metre or the fragments of Ennius. He nurtured a genuine love of Latin poetry. (In the 1970s, exchanging confidences with Paul Naiditch, he wrote down on the back of a railway ticket what he judged his most appropriate epitaph: *Huic amor et studium Musa Latina fuit.*) His natural instinct to expose error and to add to the understanding of the poets led him to publish many *adversaria*. I think of his certain emendation in Catullus 6.12 *nil perstare valet, nihil tacere* (where *nil* and *nihil* require to be followed by two balancing words, cf. 64.146), and his perceptive punctuation of 10.25 '*quaeso,*' *inquit mihi, 'mi Catulle, . . .'* (where *mihi* had been wrongly taken with *commoda* in the next line). Incidentally he was very sensitive to the correct placement of pronouns: once, browsing in Dillon's during the lunch-hour, he came across a new edition: taking it down he opened it at the dedication page and read *MEO PATRI*. Dolefully closing the book he returned it to the shelves, and when he got back to his students gave them a lecture on the Latin for

'my father'. He enjoyed grappling with the problems of Propertius, and for some years our correspondence was enlivened by such messages as: 'Dear George, I won't waste time refuting the emendation you sent me, because when you read mine, I flatter myself that you will regard this crux as settled once and for all.' Then would follow some flabbergasting and all but compelling conjecture, itself to be followed a few days later by a retraction. One of his notable contributions to Propertius, however, was his structural analysis of the poems of Book I (*CP* 58 [1963] 238): here what is so impressive is less the scheme he drew up than his demonstration (using metrical criteria) that some of Propertius's poems were not primarily inspired by the divine afflatus but rather by the poet's resolve to complete his architectural scheme. A related but much more controversial interest concerned the numerical relationships between poems and parts of poems, an interest possibly sparked by George E. Duckworth's announcement that he had discovered in Virgil so much evidence of 'Golden Mean' proportions that this could hardly be accidental. Unfortunately Duckworth became so convinced of the ubiquity of the Golden Mean that he went on to produce A/B ratios by such manipulations as  $a + c + e / b + d$ . Otto was not altogether immune from such self-deception. On the other hand, when he noted remarkable features about certain line-numbers in Virgil and Propertius, the Einstein in him demanded that the possibility of significance as against meaningless coincidence be properly investigated. To take an example: in the *Georgics* Virgil apostrophises Maecenas four times (1.2; 2.41; 3.41; 4.2). Otto contemplated the possibility that Virgil used columns of twenty lines and deliberately brought in his patron's name in an unobtrusive but symmetrical way. Such deliberation carries with it some very challenging implications. That Virgil cared about precise line-numbers I have no doubt, and at least am persuaded by Otto's refusal to accept *Ecl.* 8.28a and his deletion of 8.76.

More than anyone I have ever met Otto was prepared to hazard all on his judgement of evidence. I think of his utter certainty that Catullus 29.5 *cinaede Romule* refers to Rome and that Propertius at 1.12.2 wrote *conscie*. This was not mere dogmatism, but was more an earnest of intellectual courage and sincerity, for the trait ran through his character. Some extraordinary stories told of him are relevant. In the earliest days of the Nazi movement he was walking in a Berlin street when a tumult arose because a horse was running away with its SS rider. Now Otto knew that a horse will always stop short of an obstruction that is too high for it to jump over. He therefore placed himself in the runaway's

line of flight and stretched out his arms horizontally from the shoulders to make the horse think he was a fence; the horse clapped on its brakes and screeched to a halt. A similar confidence was shown many years later when he was swimming off the Irish coast and suddenly saw a triangular fin in his neighbourhood. At first he thought it was a shark, but then he remembered a passage in Pliny which enabled him to identify it as a porpoise, so he continued swimming. I anticipate the scepticism of those who have looked in vain for such a passage in Pliny and in any case would not risk their lives on any statement made by that far from infallible encyclopaedist. But if the story is distinctly fishy, the report of it is amply attested, and it provoked much hilarity in the UCL Classics department.

Some Latin scholars plume themselves on being able to compose models of Ciceronian prose or elegiacs that one would swear had come from Ovid's pen. But few indeed possess the ability to speak Latin spontaneously and unaffectedly and well. Otto was one such. His classical training in Germany undoubtedly helped, but his linguistic gifts and his fearlessness in communicating his thoughts made him quite exceptional. Once or twice at international conferences I found myself in his company when he met scholars whose command of English or German was inadequate to the occasion. Otto would initiate a conversation in Latin and continue effortlessly, discussing the weather, the city, the conference, and even details of lectures with a fluent clarity that put to shame one's bashful interjections of *recte tu quidem* and *ita vero*. Timpanaro, prince of Latinists, admitting his own laboured efforts, recalls (*BICS Suppl.* 51 [1988] 3) an occasion when he, Mariotti, Wolfgang Schmid and Otto were dining somewhere in the north of Italy: 'What language to use? From the beginning we resorted to Latin. Skutsch's was perfect.' Not merely apt and correct, but full of wit and elegance, as when Timpanaro recommended a choice spaghetti dish, which Otto regretfully declined on the grounds *cum serpentibus luctari nequeo*. 'No one,' writes Michael Coffey of his spoken Latin, 'will forget the dignified euphony of that deep voice and the pure joy of Virgil so delivered.'

Though Otto's English was articulated with an unmistakably Teutonic tone, it was phonetically and grammatically correct, idiomatically native, and stylistically elegant. His centenary lecture on Housman (London, 1960) is an admirable example. Indeed, his English became so good that his German seems to have suffered. When during his first visit to Germany after the war he sojourned in the Black Forest, he was

mortified to receive the compliment of an inn-keeper that, for an Englishman, his German was excellent: in twenty-five years he had developed an English accent.

Otto was blessed in his family. His wife, who taught chemistry in a girls' school, became a biochemist, securing her doctorate and publishing a number of articles in *The Lancet* and elsewhere. Their eldest child, Elizabeth (Mrs Tony Waterston) spent some years in Africa doing medical work; my wife and I met her and her family in Zimbabwe in 1981; she is now a general practitioner in Newcastle. John is an irrigation and drainage engineer, and has left monuments of his professional prowess in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and New Zealand. Margaret (Mrs Michael McCall), a university lecturer in the Netherlands, is a geographer, with a special interest in forestry which led her to spend years in Tanzania and in Sri Lanka. Catherine (Mrs Sedge Thomas) is the youngest ('the best business brain amongst us,' says John), a successful estate manager and adviser to developers, perhaps the most independent of the Skutsches. Let so much be said to indicate the extraordinary talents and generous humanitarian spirit of Otto's family; so far from dominating them, he was, if anything, awed by them, and his feelings were those of purest pride.

From earliest times the atmosphere of a happy family reigned. Once one of the children, wishing to use the plural of 'octopus' had uttered the form 'octopi'. Otto, who was nothing if not a stickler for correctness, goodnaturedly delivered an etymological homily and prescribed 'octopodes' or, perhaps, 'octopods.' This was received with shrieks of laughter, and their father was promptly dubbed Ottopod. Fortunately, perhaps, the nickname never caught on. Not unnaturally Otto would have liked his children to be brought up bilingual, but it soon became clear that this was a pipe-dream. The children were encouraged to keep pets; and cats, dogs, rabbits, mice, and hamsters augmented the Skutsch household. Otto himself walking the dog on Hampstead Heath was a familiar sight. Of an evening he occasionally entertained the children with humorous stories and poems (one was on St George and the Dragon). This brings me to another point. To academics generally, especially those who knew him only through the printed word, he must have seemed the embodiment of seriousness. To a certain extent he was. But inside the sober scholar reposed peals of laughter dying to be released. He was as avid a reader of P. G. Wodehouse as he was a viewer of 'Fawlty Towers'. He even fantasised about introducing his formal lectures with witticisms of a rather *risqué* character. One (on metre) was to have begun: 'Statistics

are like bikinis: whilst they reveal much that is fascinating, they conceal all that is essential'. Another (I forget the theme): 'In tackling the multitudinous problems of this subject I feel very much like King Solomon when he got into bed with his seven hundred wives: I know what to do, but I don't know where to begin.'

Often in presuming some lack of accomplishment on Otto's part, one was in for a shock. I had never thought he took any pleasure in music (Housman didn't, nor did Denys Page). Now my wife and I were habitués of Covent Garden, but on one occasion she was at the last moment unexpectedly prevented from joining me. The opera was *Der Freischütz*, which I hadn't seen before and was particularly anxious not to miss. Diffidently I asked Otto if he would like to come with me. Indeed he would! Very much! It was the first opera he had seen as a youth, and he astounded me by singing the beautiful aria *Und ob die Wolke* from beginning to end. In the event what made my evening was his indescribable delight at Caspar's midnight invocation of the devil: *Samiel! Erschein'! Bei des Zaub'ers Hirngebein, Samiel, erschein'!* Otto had become a schoolboy once again.

Self-disciplined without being puritanically abstemious he enjoyed excellent health nearly all his life; until his last years he was accustomed to walk for miles and exhibited the stamina of a young man. In the late sixties, during an American visit he quite unexpectedly had to undergo a prostate operation, and some time later he had a pacemaker fitted. Had he not confided in me I should never have known. In 1987 he took a sentimental walk along the Neckar valley, repeating a feat he had accomplished in the late fifties. 'Admittedly,' he confessed, 'it took me four days instead of two, as it did then.' His last holiday on the continent found him in Aquitaine: the family had preceded him, and when Otto arrived by train, he discovered that there was no one to meet him and that the village where they were staying was three miles away; hardly giving the matter a thought Otto picked up his bag and walked. However, that winter his sight began to give way; and the next summer I received an anguished letter from him in which, vainly trying by humour to dissimulate his alarm, he wrote: 'I am losing my marbles'; it emerged that he would find himself in central London with no idea where he was or why, and that he would forget appointments and without realising it cause Gillian horrendous anxieties. My wife and I paid our last visit to Wild Hatch in the summer of 1990, and with Gillian and John and Otto had a convivial tea in the garden. But he was unusually subdued. His last letter to me was dictated to Margaret, who



in a separate letter of her own wrote: 'He can't really read. But he is happy enough, and we like to think he enjoys having his children and grandchildren around him.' Later in the autumn John phoned to inform us that his father was failing. But Otto stubbornly resisted and would not yield until a little after his eighty-fourth birthday, when on 8 December he passed peacefully away.

He was survived not only by his wife and children, but also by his eldest sibling, Anna Luise. She had made her way to Glasgow in 1938 and worked for many years in a hospital. Otto's elder brother Karl had died in 1957, but he had a varied and exciting life: no academic, he held a position in the tea-importing business; we can only guess at his adventures during the war, which he spent in Berlin, successfully eluding the Gestapo, once by hiding in a flour-barrel; afterwards he became the director of an art gallery.

An individualist to the very end Otto did not attend his own funeral: true to his principles he had willed his body to medical research. A memorial service was held at the University Church of Christ the King on 31 May 1991.

His work secures for Otto Skutsch an honoured and lasting place in the history of Latin scholarship. He had harboured no ambition for honours, but was quietly satisfied when on the publication of his *Ennius* they began to flow in: Padua in 1986 awarded him an honorary degree, and in the following year, St Andrews; then he was elected as an Honorary Fellow of the British Academy and a Corresponding Member of the Royal Society of Göteborg. To that we, his admirers, can record for posterity his simple saintliness as a human being. His finest hour came when Latinists from all parts of the world joined to celebrate his eightieth birthday, which felicitously occurred within a few days of his fiftieth wedding anniversary. A conference was arranged at the Institute of Classical Studies by Nicholas Horsfall, papers were given, and several of his closest friends whom distance prevented from attending contributed articles to his *Festschrift*, *Vir bonus discendi peritus*. He ever kept before him the shining example of his father, and to be judged worthy of him was the highest praise he could have desired. In his *LCM* obituary Harry Jocelyn splendidly applies to Otto the moving tribute which Wilhelm Kroll paid to his father: it is the perfect epitaph for one of the noblest of men.

*Es ist nicht möglich, zu schildern, was er seinen Freunden, Kollegen und Schülern gewesen ist. Denn es ging von ihm der ganze Segen einer starken*

*und reinen Persönlichkeit aus, die ganz für alle Dinge ganz einsetzt. Wen er einmal in sein Herz geschlossen hatte, dem gehörte er ganz und gar und hielt ihm die Treue in guten wie bösen Tagen.*

G. P. GOOLD

*Fellow of the Academy*

*Note.* Of the many who have contributed to this memoir I owe a special debt of acknowledgement to John Skutsch; to Otto's colleagues James Willis, Michael Coffey, Ian Martin and Nicholas Horsfall; and to William M. Calder III, Paul Naiditch, and John van Sickle. In addition to notices in the English press, an obituary by H. D. Jocelyn appeared in *Gnomon* 63 (1991) 746–9, and one by Nicholas Horsfall in *Atene e Roma* (1991) 103–7. The latter produced a definitive bibliography of Otto Skutsch in *BICS* 27 (1980) and added a supplement in *BICS Suppl.* 51 (1988) ix.