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Ian Campbell Cunningham (1938–2025)

by Brian Hillyard

Ian C. Cunningham *circa* 1997. Photo courtesy of National Library of Scotland.

Ian was both a manuscript librarian and an independent classical scholar who deserves to be remembered for his significant achievements in both fields, which overlapped in so far as manuscripts were at the heart of all his work.

After the local grammar school in Campbeltown, a seaside town a long way down the Kintyre Peninsula in the west of Scotland, Ian studied Classics at Glasgow University. Gaining a First-Class MA degree in 1960, he went on to Jesus College, Oxford (the then Professor of Humanity at Glasgow, C.J. Fordyce, had been a Fellow of Jesus, which may explain the choice of college), where he took a BPhil, completed in 1962; I am told that he used to reminisce about attending Eduard Fraenkel's weekly graduate seminars. In August the following year, possibly after some time spent in Hamburg, he took up a post as Assistant Keeper in the Manuscripts Department of the National

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Library of Scotland (hereafter NLS). The first important product of his work there was the compilation – jointly with Elspeth Yeo – of the *Summary Catalogue of the Advocates' Manuscripts* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1971, though it was in fact completed in 1969). These were the manuscripts transferred from the Advocates Library to NLS on its foundation in 1925, which later were the subject of his chapter "The Manuscript Collections to 1925" in the Library's tercentenary history, *For the Encouragement of Learning* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1989). Many years later, in 2004, in *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions*, he published a catalogue of the manuscripts purchased in 1698 from Sir James Balfour of Denmilne, essentially the foundation collection of the Advocates Manuscripts. These pre-1925 collections included classical manuscripts, and Ian went on to describe those in detail in articles in *Scriptorium* XXIV (1970) for Greek, and XXVII (1973) and XXXVII (1983) for Latin, and in 1982 he curated an exhibition "Greek manuscripts in Scotland", to accompany which he compiled *Greek Manuscripts in Scotland: Summary Catalogue* (Edinburgh: NLS, 1982).

Ian also published a number of articles on individual pre-1700 manuscripts in the *Transactions* (1966, 1973, 1983) of Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, of which he was a long-serving Hon. Secretary, but during his career he worked on a chronologically wide range of material. Particular mention might be made of his work for *Catalogue of Manuscripts Acquired since 1925*, Volume VI: *Scottish Foreign Mission Records 1827–1929* (Edinburgh: NLS, 1984), which was entirely his work and comprised 24 pages of description followed by 762 pages of index. His work on Scottish missionaries also extended to the David Livingstone Documentation Project (Livingstone was with the London Missionary Society): he edited, with G.W. Clendennen, *David Livingstone: a Catalogue of Documents* (Edinburgh: NLS for the DLDP, 1979), and, on his own, a *Supplement* to the same (Edinburgh: NLS for the DLDP, 1985).

In 1991 Ian was promoted to Keeper of Manuscripts, Maps and Music. The Map Library benefited greatly from his interest as a result of which in 1996 the sixteenth-century manuscript Pont maps were selected as one of the NLS's earliest digitisation projects, and he also chaired Project Pont, a five-year research project, 1996–2001,

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which took him past his retirement in September 1998. One outcome of this project was a book edited by Ian entitled *The Nation Survey'd: Essays on Late Sixteenth-century Scotland as Depicted by Timothy Pont* (East Linton: Tuckwell in association with the NLS, 2001). Pont's maps were used in Blaeu's atlas and Ian translated all the Latin texts accompanying the maps, as well as seventeen letters from Willem and Joan Blaeu to Sir John Scot of Scotstarvit held at the NLS and never before translated and published: these translations were printed in *The Blaeu Atlas of Scotland: Scotland from Theatrum orbis terrarum sive atlas novus pars quinta* (Edinburgh: Birlinn in association with the NLS, 2006). Also in this retirement period he did sterling work in co-editing N.R. Ker's *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, Volume V: *Indexes & Addenda* (Oxford, 2002), for which he contributed the majority of the indexes.

Before retirement, in addition to his official work on manuscripts of Greek and Latin texts already mentioned, Ian had been continuing his academic work on Greek texts presumably begun in Oxford. In 1964 and 1966 he published two articles on Herodas 4 and 6 & 7 in *Classical Quarterly*, and there was a short note on Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 984–986 in *Journal of Hellenic Studies* for 1966. In 1971 the Clarendon Press brought out his text and commentary of Herodas, with (typically) a complete *Index verborum*. In 1987 he edited Herodas for Teubner, with an appendix *Fragmenta mimorum papyracea*, again with a complete *Index verborum*; a corrected reprint was published in 2004. In 1993 he contributed the section on Herodas to the second edition of the Loeb of Theophrastus, *Characters,* now enlarged to include Herodas, Cercidas and the Choliambic poets; for the third edition (2002) he added Sophron's *Mimes* and *Popular Mime Fragments*. I am told that after they began in 1980 he was a fairly regular attender at the annual readings of Greek and Latin plays and other texts organised by the local branch of the Classical Association of Scotland.

But it was after his retirement from NLS that Ian began serious work on other texts. His first publication (768 pages) was the *Synagoge*: *Synagōgē lexeōn chrēsimōn: Texts of the Original Version and of MS.B* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003), the eighth-ninth century lexicon last edited by Bekker and then Bachman in the early nineteenth century. This project had long been on Ian's mind: in reviewing the second volume of Theodoridis's edition of Photius's *Lexicon* (1998) he states that Theodoridis's first

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volume (1982) had started him thinking about editing the *Synagoge*. Ian's edition was No. 10 in de Gruyter's series *Sammlung griechischer und lateinischer Grammatiker*, of which he became an editor. He then moved on to Hesychius's *Lexicon*. Kurt Latte had edited Volumes I–II (A–O), published in Copenhagen in 1953 and 1966. Following Latte's death in 1964, Peter Hansen took on the task of completing Latte's edition and produced Volume III (Π–Σ), now published by de Gruyter as *SGLG* 11/3 (2005). At the end of 2002 it became clear that the state of Hansen's health would not allow him to complete the next volume unaided and Ian, who by then had completed his work on the *Synagoge*, which I would guess made him an obvious choice to edit Hesychius, was recruited and completed Volume IV (T–Ω), *SGLG* 11/4 (2009); all after T900 was entirely Ian's work. He then went on to bring out second editions of Volume I, *SGLG* 11/1 (2018) and Volume II, *SGLG* 11/2 (2020), and also was responsible for Volume V, *Indices*, *SGLG* 11/5 (2022). So much for Greek texts. In Latin, in addition to the work on Pont-related Latin texts already mentioned, he provided valuable assistance to Patricia Bawcutt in her edition of *The Eneados: Gavin Douglas's Translation of Virgil's Aeneid* (3 volumes, Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 2020, 2021 and 2022). The title page reads "Edited by Priscilla Bawcutt with Ian Cunningham" and in the preface she writes "I must pay a special tribute to the classical learning of my colleague Ian Cunningham, who checked and revised all quotations from Latin in the Commentary".

Ian was extremely modest and self-effacing. I suspect that – outside his family anyway – very few people know of the range of his scholarly achievements and therefore I have tried to give a fairly full listing of his published work. I know next to nothing of his life away from books and manuscripts, though on one occasion he mentioned to me in passing that he was himself installing a Velux roof light in his house, and on another occasion that he was travelling to Germany to collect (I think he said) a new Mercedes sports coupé. My lasting impression of Ian is that he was a true scholar: he was the only person I ever spotted reading a Teubner Greek text over his sandwiches in the NLS staff canteen.