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Adventures With Mommsen

— Brian Croke —

Abstract

Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903) has long been considered the greatest Roman historian of the nineteenth century. Above all he was an accomplished philologist, editor and scholarly organiser. This paper provides one historian's reflections on decades of engaging with Mommsen in various contexts and in various places. It traces a personal encounter with Mommsen and his work, especially his activities in later Roman history, from undergraduate through postgraduate education, a four-decades long career outside academia, then a return to Mommsen in recent years. These various adventures with Mommsen demonstrate how much the business of doing research and writing about any individual or topic has changed especially in the last thirty years. Essentially autobiographical in approach, this paper also highlights both the role and the limits of autobiography in understanding one's own education and scholarly development.

Keywords

Mommsen, Momigliano, Judge, Syme, Wickert, Matthews, Markus, Mango, Harries, Rebenich, Demandt, Sydney, Oxford, Berlin

The first time I consciously encountered the name of 'Theodor Mommsen' was high over the Tasman Sea. It was late January 1971, or was it 1970? I was flying back to Sydney from Christchurch, or was it Wellington? Past reality duels constantly with the surety of memory. Even for historians, including those who reflect on their craft, autobiography is a tricky business. That is why historians so rarely take it on and, when they do, they tend to gloss over their professional research and teaching lives. They fear being caught out.[1] Reviews of memoirs, including historians' memoirs, supply constant proof. One thing is certain, however: on my last day in New Zealand, I was killing time in a second-hand bookshop when my eyes lighted on a red covered volume. I remembered seeing it once before, in the hands of a tutor and research student at my university. He assured me it was 'great bedtime reading'.

[1] Popkin (2005), 61–8, 160–83, with examples in Banner and Gillis (2009) and Munslow (2013). One exception, because it is actually focussed on the professional life, is Averil Cameron (2021).

Tom Hillard (Macquarie University) confirms the book and the advice, although we have differing recollections of both the year and the place of this interaction, the autobiographical problem again. I knew it was somehow relevant to my emerging enthusiasm for Greek and Roman history. In those days, I owned so few books I carefully covered each of them in durable plastic. As a result, over half a century later the book is still in good condition, even though it's been transported around the world, dog-eared and bent, has been read and re-read, marked and re-marked, loaned and re-loaned to others with enthusiastic recommendation, and eventually returned, not necessarily with reciprocal enthusiasm. That particular book always comes to mind when I hear celebrities and writers being asked that impossible question: 'What is the one book that has most influenced the course of your interests and intellectual life?', or 'What's the one book you'd take with you to a desert island?' If I'm ever asked that question myself, I know what the answer will be.

As a teenager travelling light, I could easily retrieve the book in flight. What I had not expected to find so engrossing, however, was a small, red-covered volume of essays with the off-putting title of 'Studies in Historiography' by an author named 'A. D. Momigliano'.[2] I recall being immediately awestruck by the opening 'study in historiography'. Published in 1950 and entitled 'Ancient History and the Antiquarian' it is modestly called a 'provisional map'. Yet, it was a breathtaking survey from classical to modern times about the organisation of information and the writing of history, and about how antiquarians and historians set themselves on different tracks from antiquity to the present day, only rarely converging. Its formidable annotation was also my first real encounter with serious erudition. Yet it all made sense. Only much later, did I realize that this was a truly famous and influential piece by one of the world's great intellectuals in his prime. Already, it has taken several scholars several generations to unpack and critique this single revolutionary essay on antiquarians.[3] In an era now giving shape to the history of knowledge as a new discipline, Momigliano's essay on antiquarianism and history is as

[2] Momigliano (1966). For a similar, but better informed, reaction: Grafton (2009), 234–5.

[3] Notably Miller (2007) and (2012), Philips (1996) and Janssen (2016), plus a range of perspectives on different elements of Momigliano's contribution in Crawford and Ligota (1995), especially T. J. Cornell, 'Ancient history and the antiquarian revisited' (1–14), picking up on further elaboration in Momigliano (1990), 54–79 ('The Rise of Antiquarian Research').

relevant as ever.[4] Next came 'Gibbon's Contribution to Historical Method'. At that stage, I had not read any of Edward Gibbon's monumental *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–89) but it meant that when the time came I would not treat it as just another obsolete classic of English literature, but as one of those rare antiquarian and scholarly histories still important two centuries later. What a difference it makes. Moving along, there came Momigliano's lively portraits of George Grote (British historian of Ancient Greece), Friedrich Creuzer (German student of Greek and Roman historians and mythology) and Michael Rostovtzeff (Russian historian of Greece and Rome), each essay with an arresting opening. They were followed by the friendly and timely warnings about method and bias in 'One Hundred Years after Ranke'. Here was food for thought for any apprentice historian or mere student of history. By now I was hooked.

What I hadn't appreciated at first reading of *Studies in Historiography*, however, was the fact that I kept on turning the pages because Momigliano (now the more personal 'Arnaldo' from the title page) was such an engaging and elegant author. I knew nothing about him, let alone that English might be his fourth or fifth modern language. On our first meeting, high in the sky, I was won over, simply flabbergasted in fact, by Momigliano's combination of effortless prose and effortless resort to the widest range of ancient and modern authorities covering the widest range of questions. Over half a century later, having read, at least once, almost every word he ever published in a long and productive life, I remain in awe.[5]

Discovering Mommsen

Momigliano was a big enough discovery for one day, but there was more. 'As for Roman History', explained Momigliano in his lecture on Grote, 'it was put solidly on its feet a hundred years ago by Theodor Mommsen and nobody has yet succeeded in turning it upside down'.[6] That assertion was striking enough, but half-way through 'Cassiodorus and Italian Culture of His Time' came the real lightning bolt: 'it is my considered opinion that Mommsen has already said all the right things about Roman history. I always feel uneasy when I discover that he has not yet said what I am

[4] Two examples: Gould (2014) and di Cosmo (2018). See also P. Burke, 'From Antiquarianism to Anthropology', in Miller (2007), 229–47 and Burke (2016).

[5] Most recently, but more narrowly, is the approach adopted in Croke (2023*b*), 154–82.

[6] Momigliano (1966), 57.

going to say'.[7] Thus I discovered Theodor Mommsen, but who was he? What had he 'not yet said' in the course of putting Roman History so 'solidly on its feet'? If he hasn't 'yet said what I am going to say' he must still be alive for Momigliano. In reality, however, the German scholar was nearly five years in his grave when Momigliano himself was born (September 1908). In the 1980s, when lecturing annually at the University of Chicago, he would write on the blackboard in capitals the names of the past scholars he would be mentioning in his following presentation. On reaching a name like Mommsen, he would gesture nonchalantly but reverently to the blackboard behind him. One distinguished auditor, sociologist Edward Shils (1910–95), imagined that all those scholars were actually intimate friends of Momigliano. Perched just over his shoulder, they were waiting to come to life and greet their individual acknowledgment as he spoke.[8] He might have had in mind the Roman ritual of parading one's noble ancestors at a funeral (*pompa funebris*). In any case, as Shils put it some years later: 'Arnaldo Momigliano was not to be exceeded in his respect for his great elders, living and recently or long-since dead, but he lived with them in the deferential and critical intimacy of equality; deference did not preclude disagreement'.[9]

Mommsen was certainly one of those for whom 'deference did not preclude disagreement'. Momigliano reluctantly differed with Mommsen by arguing that Cassiodorus updated his *Gothic History* in c.550 in order to win over the Goths and their regime in Italy. Moreover, it was this revised and updated version rather than the original, written in the very different political atmosphere of the 520s, which Jordanes used for his *Getica* in 551. This was Mommsen's date, never challenged by Momigliano.[10] As it turns out, Mommsen knew Cassiodorus far better than Momigliano ever did, not least because he had mastered what he called the 'God-forsaken Latin' of Cassiodorus by editing his *Variae* (1894) even though he originally avoided taking it on.[11] My own appreciation of the richness of the *Variae,* and the insight that Cassiodorus' language derived

[7] Momigliano (1966), 194.

[8] Shils (1987), 15.

[9] Shils (1997), 232 where he speaks of Momigliano's relationship with Mommsen and other great scholars.

[10] The case for 551 was made afresh in Croke (2005).

[11] Letter, Mommsen to Wilamowitz, 25 April 1889 (letter 286), in Calder III and Kirstein (2003), 484: 'Cassiodor wäre schon zu ertragen, wenn er nicht ein solches gotterverfluchtes Latein schriebe'. He had also mastered the content and context of the *Variae*, as demonstrated by his epochal studies on the Gothic organisation and administration of Italy: Mommsen (1889*a*) and (1890*b*).

from his familiarity with the Roman rhetorical tradition in administration, came from a fellow student at Corpus Christi College Oxford, an extremely accomplished Latinist named Robin Macpherson. We soon discovered that our respective research projects (my chronicles and his Cassiodorus) had one significant common factor — Mommsen, who edited and worked on both simultaneously. Although there was a recent edition of the *Variae* (Fridh 1973), Robin concluded early that any serious study of the *Variae* would be impossible without the guidance of Mommsen's edition.[12] The edition was in the *Auctores Antiquissimi* section of the patriotic collection of sources for German history, the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (*MGH*), and was assigned to Wilhelm Meyer (1846–1917). When Meyer kept missing deadlines, Mommsen had him sacked by the management committee of the *MGH* in 1886 and reluctantly took over the edition himself, with help from the precocious young Ludwig Traube (1861–1907).[13] As a scholarly and collaborative organiser, Mommsen was peerless but, when it came to business, he could be a ruthless autocrat.

Like Momigliano, Mommsen had lived and worked with Cassiodorus for a long time. As early as 1861 he had published a large and detailed study of Cassiodorus' chronicle.[14] Later (1894) he actually published the *Chronicle* as part of his collection of late antique chronicles, but his major contribution was the research and publication of Cassiodorus' extensive *Variae* (1894) It was in this edition that he briefly discussed the 'Gothic History' written between 526 and 533 in Ravenna, as previously elaborated in his edition of Jordanes (1882).[15] Momigliano should have been relieved to discover that Mommsen was right after all, that is to say, Cassiodorus never updated his history as an Italian refugee in Constantinople c.550, nor did it reflect the nostalgic hopes for a politically reunified Italy where Goth and Roman would live together happily ever after.[16] Attractive as this idea was, it was simply Momigliano's striking

[12] Macpherson (1989), 8: 'But above all the present work is indebted to Theodor Mommsen who has edited the *Variae* according to his usual impeccable standards'.

[13] Mommsen had little patience with Meyer because he had experienced his dilatoriness before. In the 1870s Mommsen arranged for Meyer to be funded to work on Procopius but he failed to deliver (details in Croke [2019], 136–7). Now it was his edition of Cassiodorus, as evident in the Mommsen and Wilamowitz correspondence, 1886 (letters 223–6), in Calder III and Kirstein (2003), 373–7.

[14] Mommsen (1861).

[15] Mommsen (1882), XLI–XLIV, reiterated in Mommsen (1894*b*), XI.

[16] The dismantling of Momigliano's thesis was undertaken principally by O'Donnell (1979), Appendix 4 'Momigliano's Hypothesis' and Croke (1987) and (2003), 361–3.

speculation. Despite the failure of its overall thesis, Momigliano's 'Cassiodorus' remains a rich and brilliant essay. In particular, the second half of its title ('Italian Culture of his Time') still retains its value.

Less clear-cut was his approach to another enigmatic text, the *Historia Augusta* (HA) or *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (SHA), which covers the lives of Roman emperors from Hadrian to Numerian and purports to be by six different authors writing in the late third/early fourth century. For Momigliano the HA/SHA represented 'An Unsolved Problem of Historical Forgery', to take the title of the essay in *Studies in Historiography*.[17] What he was saying is that, typifying his approach to all historical problems, he has twice surveyed the whole of the extensive scholarly literature on the HA (previously in 1937), already daunting enough by the 1950s but next to impossible now, and concluded that there is no certain proof that the HA was written later than the early fourth century, the time of Diocletian and Constantine. However frustrating he found it, his summation is at least frank: 'A negative conclusion is bound to leave the writer dissatisfied and the readers enraged'. What was a 'forgery' for Momigliano had been a 'riddle' for Mommsen. Just as a riddle has no obvious or easy solution, so Mommsen said, the HA permits a complex explanation. The Berlin professor believed his student Hermann Dessau (1856–1931) had successfully shown that there were elements in the HA that only made sense in the late fourth century, not earlier. However, Mommsen argued that these elements were the work of a late fourth-century editor of an earlier original work.[18] Thus, he saw his solution to the riddle as supporting, not contradicting, Dessau. In the end, Momigliano's position, almost heretical to the so-called modern consensus, cannot be dismissed. In the face of the explosion of research and writing on the HA since Momigliano, readers of the HA, and of Momigliano's essay on it, maintain their rage. Yet, his 'unsolved' verdict still has strong appeal.[19] At the same time, it can be said that although Mommsen's position has been consistently misrepresented in modern times it was closer to the modern consensus on the HA than Momigliano ever came.[20] The approaches of Mommsen and Momigliano to the HA

Momigliano's hypothesis of a revised Cassiodoran *History of the Goths* written in Constantinople in c.550 still has its advocates.

[17] Momigliano (1954), 143–80.

[18] Dessau (1889), Mommsen (1890*a*), 228.

[19] Repeated most recently by Alan Cameron (2014). Cameron's approach is singled out and contextualised in Kulikowski (2021).

[20] Mommsen's position, and its subsequent misrepresentation, is explained more fully in Croke (forthcoming *a*).

have been regularly linked to their personalities and biography, only to be dismissed or at least devalued.

Ancient History at Macquarie: Judge and Syme

The autobiographies of historians invariably trace their ardour for history to a childhood predilection, and a bookish household like that of Edward Gibbon (1737–94), or to travel, or to an influential teacher at school.[21] Not me. When I came to Macquarie University from the local high school in my rural hometown of Dubbo, 400km north-west of Sydney, I had not studied ancient history, although it was an option at school. Because my most inspiring teacher, and my highest grades, were for English language and literature, I saw myself as being a teacher of English. Fortunately, I also enjoyed Latin and was well taught to the most advanced level possible at school. So, choosing a small one semester course on *Augustan Rome* to fill out my first-year undergraduate university schedule seemed an easy option. After all I had studied whole books of Livy's history and Vergil's *Aeneid* in Latin at school. How wrong I was. Macquarie's Professor Edwin Judge and his *Augustan Rome* turned out to be absolutely captivating. He left his students craving for more. As a result, I progressively switched my major academic interest from English to History, both modern and ancient, always complemented by education which became my career. I would now be a school-teacher of ancient history.

While Momigliano's *Studies in Historiography* was never far away, it was really only in 1973 that my small Christchurch (or was it Wellington?) investment came into its own. For Macquarie University's history honours class that year, there were two weekly seminars: 'Ideas and Institutions in the 16th Century' and 'History and Historians in the 19th Century', along with associated courses in philosophy and methodology of history. For all of them, Momigliano had something to offer. He became a trusty guide. Familiar with his *Studies in Historiography* paper on the *Historia Augusta*, and conscious of the recent dispute over the HA with the challenging views on when and why it was written being advanced by Sir Ronald Syme (1903–89),[22] I decided to use the HA as

[21] Popkin (2005), 120–50, noting that 'Australian historian-autobiographers comment more than those from other countries on the impact of the history lessons they learned in school …' (134). For a contrast, see Averil Cameron (2021), 1–2.

[22] Most famously: Syme (1968), (1971*a*), (1971*b*) and (1983). Momigliano wrote critical reviews of Syme (1968) in Momigliano (1969), and Syme (1971*b*) in Momigliano (1973).

my methodology essay. Unlike the names Mommsen and Momigliano whose works we never read, Syme was real to us. From our various undergraduate courses (entitled *Augustan Rome*, *The Roman Nobility*, *The Roman Empire*) we were all familiar with Syme's *The Roman Revolution* (1939). Some of us had even dipped in and out of his *Tacitus* (1958), as well as his *Sallust* (1964). Oligarchy à la Syme was the explanation everywhere sought, prosopography the essential tool for any future Roman historian. Mommsen was out of sight and out of favour, suspect even. After all, he was dismissive of Cicero and Vergil but was a champion of Julius Caesar. How could he still be taken seriously? Of course, at that time we weren't aware that Syme's productive lifetime and ensuing fame depended on his ability to exploit two of the major projects initiated and supervised by Mommsen, namely, the corpus of Latin inscriptions (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*) and the prosopographical dictionary of the officials of the Roman Empire (*Prosopographia Imperii Romani*). Indeed, Mommsen would hardly be surprised to discover not only that both projects continued to be exploited after his death but that they were still being expanded and refined in the twenty-first century.

Syme was not merely someone we had read. We had actually seen him, and heard him. He was an old friend of our Roman history professor, fellow-New Zealander Edwin Judge, and paid several visits to Macquarie in those years. An inveterate traveller, he was considered the foremost Roman historian of the twentieth century and was now retired from his Oxford chair. We first listened to him in August 1971 on the Augustan poets and other topics.[23] While we did not know it at the time, and Syme never let on, not even to our teachers in private evidently, he was rehearsing material to appear later in his *History in Ovid* (Oxford 1978).[24] At Sydney University, I remember hearing him lecture on Julius Caesar, a lecture he kept on giving around the world until it was eventually published in the *New York Review of Books* as the 'transcript of a talk that was delivered at the Annual Faculty Convocation at New York University on November 14, 1984'.[25] At the time of his death in 1989, Syme was writing a book on Julius Caesar for Duckworth (London).[26] That may explain why he told me when I was driving him across Sydney in 1973 that he was carefully reading Caesar's *Gallic War*. He leaned

[23] A report on Syme's Macquarie lecture (Croke 1971) became my first publication.

[24] This challenging book is elucidated in Pitcher (2011).

[25] Syme (1985).

[26] Cf. Syme (1999), xix.

across to tell me confidentially: 'People think it's easy Latin you know. Not so.'

Then, as the Macquarie History honours year progressed, under the influence of Momigliano's Grote essay, I wrote my required historiographical research essay on 'Thomas Arnold and the Study of Roman History'. Suddenly, Mommsen returned. This time it was in the form of his 1850s *History of Rome* that swiftly supplanted the 1830s history of Arnold, even among English readers. In 1902 Mommsen won the Nobel Prize for Literature on the basis of his *History of Rome*, beating the highly favoured Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy. After three volumes Mommsen's *History* terminated unexpectedly at 46 BCE but remains a literary classic still available in every German bookstore. The seed was sown in my mind for a lifetime of curiosity about how in Germany Roman history advanced and expanded in subsequent decades, while in England it effectively stagnated until Mommsen himself inspired a new generation of scholars in the 1880s.[27]

Finally, while researching for my major thesis on the late fourth century ('The Usurpation of Eugenius and the Reaction of Theodosius, AD 392–4'), supervised and encouraged by Ammianus-expert Alanna Emmett (Nobbs), I found myself having to deal with a range of Latin texts barely touched since Mommsen had spent so much time editing them: the 'carmen contra paganos' which he was the first to edit critically from its Paris manuscript (in 1870), the Roman and Gothic histories of Jordanes (1882), the ecclesiastical history of Rufinus (1903), the law code of Theodosius II (1905), the various chronicles in the three volumes of the *Chronica Minora* (1892–8) that he produced for the *Auctores Antiquissimi* section of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (*MGH*. *AA*), and various inscriptions scattered throughout the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (*CIL*, 1863+). All of these essential documents had been made available thanks to one man — Theodor Mommsen. I relied on the assurance of Momigliano's unforgettable judgment, so I knew they were documents and editions I could trust, even though there was virtually no scholarly guidance on any of them at that point and I knew almost nothing about Mommsen either. I suspected, however, that some familiarity with these labours of Mommsen would provide an advanced perspective when we all came to Judge's two seminars on Mommsen himself and his work. They were scheduled towards the end of the nineteenth-century historiography course.

[27] A broad theme, opened up in Croke (1991) and expounded at length in Croke (forthcoming *c*).

Edwin Judge brought Mommsen to life for us all. Our introduction to Mommsen took place not in the usual seminar venue, however, but in the Macquarie University library. Edwin had arranged for the library staff to gather and lay out on a single table all the works of Mommsen and those to which he contributed in some way. Our jaws dropped, even those of us who had some acquaintance with Mommsen already. Here before us lay not only the first three volumes of the *History of Rome* (1854–6), plus volume 5 on the *Roman Provinces* (1885), as well as their English translation, but also the whole *CIL* (16 volumes, 7 Mommsen's own work), the *MGH*. *AA* (13 volumes, 6 by his own hand) and the *Prosopographia Imperii Romani* (*PIR*, 3 volumes). All three of these projects were conceived and managed by him. In fact, they all bore his imprint. Many of them he produced himself, and most others were sprinkled with his comments, corrections and suggestions. Together, they constituted thousands of pages and all in Latin. On top of that, came the eight volumes of his 'Collected Works' (*Gesammelte Schriften*, chosen and ordered by Mommsen, but mainly published after his death), the *Roman Civil Law* (*Staatsrecht*, 3 volumes in 5 parts, 1871–88, over 3,000 pages) often considered his greatest and most enduring work, and the *Roman Criminal Law* (*Strafrecht*, 1899), a single volume of over 1,100 dense and heavily annotated pages. He said that to do justice to the topic it really should have been twice as long and much more sophisticated, but already in his 80s he feared his days were numbered so he took every available short-cut.[28]

Next, there were Mommsen's remarkable edition of the *Digest* (1870), followed by his octogenarian projects, namely the editions of the *Liber Pontificalis* (1898) and the *Theodosian Code* (1905) plus the two volumes of Rufinus' Latin translation and continuation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* (1903–8), undertaken as part of the project of his former pupil Eduard Schwartz (1858–1940). Also on display were his early volumes on *Italian Dialects* (1850), *Roman Chronology* (1858), and *Roman Coinage* (900 pages, 1860), the exemplary collections of inscriptions of Naples (1852) and Switzerland (1854), proving grounds for the *CIL*, his edition of what he called the 'queen of inscriptions', the version still displayed at Ankara of the *Res Gestae* of Augustus (1883),[29] as well as several miscellaneous tomes such as the two-volume *Roman Researches* (*Römische Forschungen*, 1879). That was just the books on the shelves of a university that only commenced teaching ancient history in 1969, a full 66 years after Mommsen's death. Occupying one corner were a few books

[28] Mommsen (1899), VIII.

[29] On which, see Dessau (1929) and Dräger (2008).

about Mommsen too, most conspicuously the three forbidding volumes of his biography by Lothar Wickert (1900–89). Having worked with Wickert in Germany, Judge knew and appreciated him not only as an epigraphical student of Mommsen's protégé Dessau and historian of Caesar Augustus, but also as the biographer of Mommsen. We were told that Wickert was then working on his much-anticipated Volume 4, covering the 'Meisterjahre', the period of Mommsen's productive and scholarly dominance. Most of the books before us came from these years of his life. In three volumes, his biographer had not yet reached that far.

In my mind's eye, I've never forgotten this striking display of productivity and scholarly leadership, and the thought that a single person could have produced, inspired or managed so much in a single lifetime. We were no less surprised to find that Mommsen fathered 16 children (between 1855 and 1873, with 12 surviving him), as well as making time to be a parliamentarian, a publicist, and a poet. Nor could he ever get enough of his favourite Italian wine. We learnt all this from Judge who, although he has never published anything about Mommsen, was very familiar with his life and work, not only from his acquaintance with Wickert, but from his own classical education and research.[30] Just the previous year (1972), Judge had summed Mommsen up in a reflection on the state of education and history, including ancient history, in what was then West Germany:

> The greatest ancient historian of all time, Theodor Mommsen, has also passed into popular tradition as the prototype of all professors. He was a man of immense capacity, as the 1500 odd titles (many of them massive volumes that would individually make a man famous) of his bibliography testify. But his life was far fuller even than that. He raised a large family (the third and fourth generations are now eminent in scholarship), edited a newspaper in the 1848 revolution, sat in parliament, fought Bismarck, and defended a score of progressive causes. The effort of digesting his work, not to speak of writing his biography, exhausts the capacity of ancient historians to our own day.[31]

[30] As exemplar, there is Judge's masterly treatment of Mommsen's role in creating from Verrius Flaccus' *Fasti Praenestini* the modern notion that Augustus consciously saw himself as instituting a 'restored republic' in 27 BC (Judge 1974). Another manifestation is Mommsen's approach to *collegia* which permeates Judge's study of Roman guilds and professional groups in early Christian societies (e.g. Judge 2008*a*). Yet another, is the emphasis of both Mommsen and Judge on the family as the basis of all social/political organisation.

[31] Judge (1972), 37.

Judge himself has always displayed a streak of the Mommsen organisational zeal and aptitude. He was the pioneer leader and creator of a large and flourishing department of ancient history at Macquarie, but also the founder and editor of journals (*Antichthon*, *Journal of Religious History*, *Ancient Society: Resources for Teachers*), and book series such as *Sources in Ancient History* (Sydney University Press). He was also the conceptualiser, and then leader of projects such as the *Corpus Papyrorum Christianarum*. The *Ancient History Documentary Research Centre* at Macquarie was his creation, as well as the ten volumes of *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*. Judge also has an affinity with Momigliano, not least because of his preference for the lecture and learned essay focussed on deconstructing a text, or set of texts, to illustrate a problem and reveal a completely different and innovative interpretation. Momigliano's collected essays and lectures, the ten volumes of the *Contributi,* which link the ancient and modern worlds, find their counterpart in the various volumes of essays containing Judge's detailed output.[32] Like Momigliano, Judge has always sought to uncover the ancient origins of modern ideas and attitudes; like Momigliano, he has always been appreciative of the singular importance of religion in any ancient society, especially of Christianity to the Roman empire, although 'religion' is a term he has continually problematized and deconstructed. 'Religion', as we know it, is a relatively modern invention. Judge is famous for the question he put to A. H. M. Jones (1904–70) at Cambridge in the 1950s: 'What difference did Christianity make to the Roman empire?' and for Jones' immediate answer — 'None'.[33] Lying behind all Judge's research is a lifetime quest to explain that difference, as well as to explain Paul of Tarsus and his letters, their ideas and ideals in their contemporary literary and social context. It began with his *Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century* (1960), which is now considered the little acorn that grew into the mighty oak of Early Christian sociology. The early Christian communities sprang from the intellectual cross-currents of Hellenistic cities, not the discontented lower-class masses.[34]

A student at Canterbury College in Christchurch in the 1940s, Edwin has been alert ever since to the niceties of Roman politics and self-representation, learned from L. G. Pocock (1890–1975), Professor of

[32] Principally, the collections of articles in Judge (2007), (2008*b*), (2010), (2014), (2019*a*), (2019*b*), (2020).

[33] On publication, Judge's volume earned a fulsome review from one of the foremost students of early Christianity, Henri-Irénée Marrou (Marrou 1961), and decades later his research question became the starting point for Ramsay Macmullen's article 'What Difference did Christianity make?' (Macmullen 1986).

[34] Judge (1960) with Dvorak (2016).

Classics and father of the political and intellectual historian John (J. G. A.) Pocock (1924–2023), as well as to the strict methodology of historical thinking and research, learned from Karl Popper (1902–94), a lecturer in Philosophy then working on his famous books *The Poverty of Historicism* (1944) and *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1945).[35] The philological methods of Pocock and the forensic methods of Popper, always looking to test a proposition through its disproof, have been applied by Judge to the teaching of ancient history, to the rigorous and precise use of texts and other documentary evidence; an inscription here, a papyrus there.[36] The social and ethical dimensions of people's behaviour emphasised by Judge complement Mommsen's emphasis on legal constructs. So, we were encouraged by Judge to think about Mommsen as an activist historian of the Roman world, to appreciate his command of sources especially contemporary texts (inscriptions, coins, laws), but above all to see his work in terms of where it leads and how it has been built on, or superseded. In every generation, history is made by individual human beings and the relationships between them. That was the lesson. Mommsen's hostility to Cicero and Vergil mattered little, after all.

Yet, my first real encounter with Mommsen in these seminars left me wondering not only about an old chestnut, the missing volume 4 of Mommsen's *Roman History*, but also about two quite different questions in particular: (1) if he spent so much time on the sources for later Roman history between the 1840s and 1903, why had scholars devoted so little attention to them since? The answer was expected to be found in the forthcoming volume 4 of Wickert's biography, and (2) if Mommsen was such a major figure for Momigliano, as I had already learnt from his *Studies in Historiography*, then why was Mommsen not yet the subject of one of his marvellous scholarly portraits? Why was there nothing similar to his evocative depictions of Grote or Rostovtzeff, for example? Perhaps he was saving it up. It never came, so the puzzle remains. Dealing with the first question, however, became a long and winding road.

Getting up close and personal, Oxford

Another town, another bookshop. In 1974 Oxford had several incomparable bookshops when I arrived there as a graduate student at Corpus

[35] Other historians have acknowledged the formative influence of Popper's Christchurch teaching on their methodology: Munz (2013), 143 and Badian, whose correspondence with Popper on Aristotle is included in Shearmur and Norris (2014), 214–18.

[36] Typical of his method is Judge (1977).

Christi College, the place where Thomas Arnold was once a student reading and rereading his Livy. My Mommsen questions were always in the back of my mind. One day, in the latter part of 1974 (but it could have been 1975), I spied the three fat blue volumes of Wickert's biography of Mommsen in Thornton's Bookshop.[37] I figured I might find them valuable one day. These volumes would at least help satiate my curiosity about Mommsen and prepare me for Wickert's crucial fourth volume when it came. I was immediately intrigued to see that the previous owner had inscribed his name and date of purchase inside — 'Eduard Fraenkel 1969' for the third volume, the two previous being inscribed '1959' and '1964' respectively, the years of their publication. To my untrained eye, the latest volume looked unread. It probably was. Only weeks, at most months, after his purchase, Fraenkel ended his life (5 February 1970). Assuming he purchased it in Germany in the summer of 1969, or ordered it immediately on publication that year, perhaps he never got the chance to read it.

Fraenkel was someone I certainly knew about. As the Corpus Christi Professor of Latin, he had been from my own college. We would gather for seminars in the room he made his own, now officially dubbed the 'Fraenkel Room' (since renamed the 'Refugee Scholars Room'). I had some idea, therefore, of his status and legacy as a Latin scholar but not much. At that stage, I was not aware that Fraenkel's major work was a three-volume commentary on a Greek play (Aeschylus' *Agamemnon)*, nor that for Fraenkel, unlike for Momigliano, Mommsen was always very much alive. Indeed, they both lived in the same place at the same time. When Fraenkel was born (1888) the great Berlin Professor was still commanding the field. Fraenkel was in a Berlin high school when Mommsen died fifteen years later. If Fraenkel had never met Mommsen, it's very possible the boy once recognised the maestro on the street, as did most Berliners. In any event, Fraenkel's father's cousin, the renowned palaeographer Ludwig Traube (1861–1907) at Munich, was a highly regarded ally of Mommsen. Further, Fraenkel later studied at Berlin under Mommsen's formidable son-in-law Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848–1931), normally just Wilamowitz, then proceeded to Göttingen with another of Mommsen's protégées, Friedrich Leo (1851–1914), whose own papers Wilamowitz later edited. Mommsen the man, not to mention his scholarly legacy, was unavoidable for Fraenkel, year after year. Why he would want to own Wickert's biography of Mommsen is perfectly understandable. Now that the volumes were mine, I felt a sort of vicarious debt to Fraenkel and doubly obliged to make the most of

[37] Wickert (1959), (1964) and (1969).

them. What I failed to appreciate at the time was that Fraenkel was a Jewish refugee from Germany in 1934, just as Momigliano was to be from Italy in 1939. Oxford had welcomed them both and became their new home, English their new language. Momigliano even participated in Fraenkel's Oxford seminar,[38] as did Averil Cameron who recalls it vividly at a later period.[39]

As a novice postgraduate research student, I suspected that Mommsen would keep intruding in my life. Originally, I found myself attracted by the idea of exploring historiography in the period from Eusebius in the fourth century to Bede in the eighth century. I soon purchased two of the three uncut *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* volumes of the *Chronica Minora* (1892–8) edited, and helpfully indexed, by Mommsen. Blackwell's bookshop in Oxford was one of the few places in the world where you could buy such items off the shelf, as it was for another of Fraenkel's pupils, Alan Cameron (1938–2017), whose lifetime of scholarly productivity began in the late summer of 1961 with his purchase of the Mommsen-supervised *MGH* volumes of Claudian and Symmachus. As he said, 'I left [Blackwell's] staggering under the weight of Theodor Birt's great edition of Claudian (1892) and Otto Seeck's irreplaceable Symmachus (1883), two books that were to change the direction of my life [...]. By the time I had worked my way through the 200-page small print Latin prefaces of Birt and Seeck, I knew that I wanted to write on Claudian'.[40] Cameron was led to seek out Claudian and Symmachus by a reading of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* on a summer holiday in the Black Forest. Now, all these volumes are instantly accessible online.

While my genial supervisor, John Matthews, a pupil and good friend of Syme,[41] was sympathetic to my ambition, we agreed that, for doctoral purposes, it would be best to confine attention to just one of the chronicles. That scenario was anticipated, and I had already decided that Marcellinus seemed to fit the bill. I felt safe because Marcellinus was the one chronicler I knew from reading Momigliano. He was part of the largely unexplored Latin speaking communities in sixth-century Constantinople first elucidated by Momigliano.[42] It mattered too that Mommsen had already studied and edited the chronicle in his *MGH*

[38] Momigliano (1994), 56.

[39] Averil Cameron (2021), 3.

[40] Alan Cameron (2015), 134.

[41] Matthews later had the opportunity of reflecting on Syme in the first (1992) of the biennial lectures held in Wellington in memory of Syme, published as Matthews (1993).

[42] Particularly in Momigliano (1956).

volumes. A translation with commentary was an orthodox and proven Oxford model for a thesis, and his chronicle had never been translated into any modern language. There would not be enough in any chronicle to make an authorial study possible. After all, Marcellinus was no Tacitus or Tertullian or Fronto, the model Oxford products of, respectively, Syme, Timothy Barnes and Edward Champlin. Marcellinus came from the Latin-speaking region of the Balkans, wrote several lost works as well as his chronicle, once worked for the Roman emperor Justinian (reigned 527–65) at Constantinople. What more was there to say?

As anyone who embarks on the thesis journey discovers, the daily routine of research takes on a life of its own. You never know where it will lead you, but resistance is unwise. A rough translation was completed in the first few weeks. However, the translation and commentary model was soon abandoned when it became clear that there were, in fact, several cultural, historical and historiographical issues to explore in Marcellinus' chronicle after all.[43] One urgent issue to resolve concerned the manuscript of the chronicle held in the local Bodleian library. It involved a story of its own, even though that story remained hidden to me at that time. The Bodleian had acquired the manuscript (known as *Auct. T. 2. 26* and now permanently available to the whole world online[44]) as part of a collection bought by the librarian Thomas Gaisford (1779–1855) at a sale in The Hague in 1824. While all the manuscripts were subsequently added to the library collection, by the 1880s there was still no published catalogue for the whole library. Not surprisingly, at least one manuscript slipped through the net. Its significance was only revealed when it was brought by mistake to a German scholar in 1888. He had requested a neighbouring manuscript. Although it was not the manuscript he was expecting, he immediately recognised its content and importance, suggesting that the best person to evaluate it was Theodor Mommsen in Berlin.

What the library had, unknowingly, was nothing less than the oldest manuscript (fifth century) of Jerome's chronicle (fourth century) and a copy of Marcellinus' sixth-century continuation of Jerome's chronicle, written within a generation or two of its autograph original. It turned out to be the oldest non-biblical Latin manuscript in England. The librarian, E. W. B. Nicholson (1849–1912), kept the discovery to himself. Mommsen

[43] Croke (2001). A translation and brief commentary was published as Croke, (1995).

[44] At the Bodleian: https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_777, in Galway's 'Earlier Latin Manuscripts' collection: https://elmss.nuigalway.ie/catalogue/551 and detailed in Steffens' *Paléographie latine* (1910): https://www.icar.beniculturali.it/biblio/pdf/Steffens/028_tav017.pdf.

had been at the Bodleian examining manuscripts of the late Roman chronicles in 1885 before the Jerome/Marcellinus manuscript was discovered, but he returned in March 1889 with the aim of collating manuscripts of Cassiodorus' *Variae* which he was then editing. On 18 March 1889 Nicholson divulged his secret to Mommsen, a meeting so important it was reported in the London *Times* shortly after.[45] Mommsen himself soon reported its discovery to the academic world[46] and a full collation of the manuscript was then made for him by E. G. Hardy (1852–1925).[47] Although Mommsen was not involved in editing Jerome's chronicle, he was involved with that of Marcellinus for which the Oxford manuscript was fundamental.

When I first viewed the manuscript myself in the Bodleian Library I had to sign the covering slip. The slip post-dated Mommsen, but there were two signatories ahead of me: Momigliano in the 1950s and Robert Markus (1924–2010) only quite recently in the 1970s. The thought that I was handling a manuscript once handled by both Mommsen and Momigliano impressed its importance upon me instantly. I knew what they were looking for. Markus, however, was a complete surprise. Knowing him only as an expert on Augustine of Hippo, I was puzzled why he should have been examining the manuscript, and so recently. Before too long, we met in Oxford and he supplied me with my answer. He had just written a major piece on the literary and intellectual context of Marcellinus' chronicle and the question of its relation to the lost *Roman History* of Symmachus.[48] Alas, Markus' piece was never actually published but it helped shape the future direction of my own research. Born a Hungarian Jew, trained and worked as a chemist, a Lutheran and then a Catholic, later a Dominican seminarian, ultimately a distinguished philosopher, professor of Medieval History, Catholic intellectual and outspoken opponent of nuclear arms, Markus turned out to be a valuable sounding board on chronicles and historiography in general. He was also a kindred spirit in many ways.[49] A firm friendship resulted. I still treasure his inscribed gift of the edition of John Malalas (1831) by Ludwig Dindorf (1805–71) when he learned of my growing involvement with Malalas' chronicle in the early 1980s. We were having afternoon tea in the British

[45] *Times,* Saturday 30 March 1889, 6.

[46] Mommsen (1889*b*).

[47] Cf. Hardy (1890), 277–87. For full details of the manuscript: Fotheringham (1905).

[48] Markus (unpublished).

[49] Knowing my friendship with Markus and our common interests, I was grateful to Wolf Liebeschuetz (1927–2022) for kindly sending me a copy of his memoir: Liebeschuetz (2012).

Museum when he pulled the book out of his bag. This was a time when such volumes were virtually unobtainable and expensive to copy. I was very grateful to accept it.

Dindorf's *Malalas* was part of what is known, misleadingly, as the 'Bonn Corpus' of Byzantine historians, founded and co-ordinated by Barthold Niebuhr (1776–1831) in the late 1820s but mainly published at Berlin. My seat in the Corpus Christi College library which I occupied day and night, in my case late into the night, was located right next to the library's complete set of the Bonn Corpus so I could consult all the Byzantine chronicles directly whenever I needed. Now, of course, anyone can do that anywhere, since all the volumes are available online.[50] As my research progressed, and with counsel from Cyril Mango (1928–2021), whose seminar on the Byzantine chronicler Theophanes I attended, but always on a steep learning curve, it became clearer that my Marcellinus was really a Byzantine chronicle. At least to understand him properly the Byzantine background required teasing out. The best place to do that, so I was advised, was Harvard University's Dumbarton Oaks (DO) 'Center for Byzantine Studies' in Washington DC. Mango had spent the formative part of his career at DO, one of the few places where he could easily combine his superior linguistic, topographical, archaeological and artistic knowledge. As a Junior Fellow at DO (1976–8), I got to know better the texts and background of sixth-century Constantinople, including Malalas and Theophanes, as well as the vast expanse of Byzantine history and culture more generally.[51] Still, Mommsen kept raising his head. As the editor of Marcellinus and the other Latin chronicles, I was living with him daily. The more familiar I became with all the other chronicles, the more I came to appreciate Mommsen's daunting insight that each manuscript more or less represents a unique chronicle and deserves close attention. In the 1880s and 1890s he had himself inspected, and had conscripted others to inspect and report back, literally thousands of manuscripts. It was a sort of addiction, or a 'chronicle illness', as he once confessed to his son-in-law.[52]

In August 1978, Robert Markus and Cyril Mango were the examiners of my thesis. An oral examination in Oxford in summer is a sparse affair. There were just the three of us dressed up for the occasion in our academic regalia in a fairly deserted High Street, then led in procession

[50] At http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/25_90_1828-1897-_Corpus_Scriptorum_Historiae_Byzantinae.html

[51] Experience drawn upon in Croke (1979), (2006), (2010), and (2022).

[52] Letter, Mommsen to Wilamowitz, 16 July 1893 (Calder III and Kirstein, 2003), 617: 'die chronische Krankheit'.

by one of the university officials to a capacious room in the Examination Schools, an imposing building completed in 1882, not long before Mommsen first visited Oxford. Mango had taken his copy on a summer expedition to southern Turkey. It was still covered with local dust. As he opened it up and methodically spread out his topographical maps of Turkey and Mesopotamia, I thought we were in for a long, hard afternoon. The examiners turned out to be merciful and mercifully brief. With the thesis approved and the formalities completed, we all adjourned to the pub, the examiners to their pipes. They made me promise to waste no time having it published.

Embarking on new adventures

Returning to Australia in September 1978, then adopting a career outside the academy for the next forty years, meant that dealing with Mommsen quickly descended the list of priorities. Higher up was seeing through to publication the volume of translated documents that Jill Harries and I had constructed from the Oxford seminar on 'Christians and Pagans' in 1976, under the aegis of our common mentor, John Matthews.[53] Over several weeks, this seminar brought into focus the careers of key Roman aristocrats. It also gave rise to English translations of a diverse range of documents we had prepared for the seminar: career inscriptions from the city of Rome contained in *CIL* VI, relevant but little studied documents such as the *carmen contra paganos* (edited by Mommsen), key laws from the Theodosian Code (edited by Mommsen), as well as some letters and reports (*relationes*) of Symmachus (edited at Mommsen's behest by his pupil Otto Seeck). Mommsen's shadow hung over this little book not least because it was Edwin Judge, the 'Sources in Ancient History' series founder and editor for Sydney University Press, who quickly saw the possibility of a novel volume then helped shape it.[54] Crucially, around the same time, Judge also encouraged me to pursue my own adventures in Mommsen, beginning with a Sydney conference where he arranged for me to work up an old paper on 'Mommsen's Pompey'.[55]

[53] Note the legacy of Matthews, as, well as his influence on both Croke and Harries, in McGill, Sogno and Watts (2010), 1–10 (on Matthews); 73–92: J. Harries, 'Constantine the Lawgiver' (explaining why Constantine's legislation is traditional and Roman rather than novel and Christian), and 241–64: B. Croke, 'Reinventing Constantinople: Theodosius I's imprint on the city' (Theodosius I as the real founder of Constantinople by occupying and embellishing it), rp. in Croke (2021), 6–28.

[54] Croke and Harries (1982).

[55] Later published as Croke (1985*a*).

In 1980 arose the chance to be involved in what became the 'Australian Malalas Project', although it never started out that way at all. As Elizabeth Jeffreys (1941–2023) used to tell the story, we came together to read Malalas (on a weekday evening in Elizabeth and Michael Jeffreys' house) as a way of helping me keep up my Greek.[56] It may have achieved that, but it soon became clear to all of us that Malalas' chronicle was actually an important but totally neglected text. Perhaps we should do something more substantial with it. Yet, it could only be tackled, or best tackled, collectively. So, the project was conceptualised (mainly by Elizabeth and Michael), others were hastily identified and enlisted, purpose stiffened, roles allotted or negotiated, and work began. Meanwhile, as we had been gradually translating Book 18 (on Justinian), Elizabeth discovered that Roger Scott in Melbourne had already done something similar. She and Roger knew each other from their student days at Cambridge. So, the Sydney-Melbourne Malalas project was born.[57]

Before long, Mommsen reared his head once more. He'd already been there too. As early as 1857 he was urging that someone ought to comb through the Byzantine chronicles such as that of John Malalas, seeking out the genuine information on earlier Roman history preserved in them from unknown sources. This was one reason, opined Mommsen, that the Bonn Byzantine Corpus volumes were not so user-friendly as the contemporary Latin *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* volumes which identified sources.[58] He was showing the way himself with an item from Kedrenos. Until now, so it appeared, nobody had taken up his challenge. Later, he demonstrated his intimate knowledge of the text of Malalas while drawing attention to the Byzantine Greek translations of Eutropius and how they reinforced the fact that Eutropius originally proclaimed his work as originating in a summary of Livy,[59] but of particular importance was his demonstration that an Escorial Library (Spain) manuscript of Constantine Porphyrogenitus' tenth-century collection of historical

[56] On the record, Elizabeth had this to say: 'And he was lamenting — was Brian — that his hard-won knowledge of Greek was getting rusty. So, what could we do about it? So, I said, "Right, let's have a sort of fun series of evenings reading Greek." And he came 'round, and we found a few more friends and we wondered what to read and for some reason I thought Book 18 of Malalas might be quite interesting because Brian is a sixth century person and it's an interesting linguistic thing', quoted from an interview at https://www.doaks.org/research/library-archives/dumbarton-oaks-archives/historical-records/oral-history-project/elizabeth-and-michael-jeffreys .

[57] The resulting volumes were Jeffreys, Jeffreys and Scott (1986) and Jeffreys (1990).

[58] Mommsen (1857), 626.

[59] Mommsen (1866), 468.

extracts contained hitherto unknown portions of Malalas and John of Antioch. Mommsen was the first to publish them, promising a great service for any 'young historian' who could provide a new edition of Malalas, based not only on the Oxford manuscript (*Cod. Barocc.* 182) but also using the Constantinian excerpts and the traces of Malalas in later Byzantine chronicles. Such a scholar would have to be a keen philologist and prepared to deal with the curious 'semi-Greek' of the Syrian Malalas.[60] It was Mommsen's advice that the Australian team followed up in preparing its translation.[61] At the same time, it was becoming clear that somehow or other the text of Malalas was related to that of another John, also from Antioch, but known simply as 'John of Antioch'. Often, the Australian Malalas team thought that, once Malalas was behind us, we would take up John of Antioch. It was not to be. However, more recently, two substantial but different editions of John of Antioch appeared within a few years. Together they demonstrated that the question of identifying the real John of Antioch, and establishing when he wrote, remains a controversial question.[62] Pondering these and other issues led eventually to the publication of 'Mommsen and Byzantium' (1985).[63] Some years later, in 1996, with Malalas completed, Elizabeth succeeded Cyril Mango as Bywater and Sotheby Professor of Medieval and Modern Greek at Oxford, while Michael moved there too after retiring as Professor of Modern Greek at Sydney.

It was also around this time that another lightning bolt jolted me: I discovered that Mommsen himself had explicitly confessed that, if he could have his time over again, he would devote it entirely to the period from the fourth century onwards.[64] As I already knew well, in the single busy life he had lived Mommsen had arguably contributed more than any other scholar to this period, but it was never his central scholarly concern as far as anyone could tell. Even so, he clearly felt that in all he had

[60] Mommsen (1872*b*), 383. Just recently, he had shown that Byzantine material attributed to Dio Cassius was derived from a Greek translation of Eutropius and from John of Antioch (Mommsen 1872*a*). Incidentally, the transcript of the Escorial manuscript was made for Mommsen by Franz Geppert, then donated by Mommsen to the Imperial library at Berlin (Rose [1893], 222). Mommsen's contribution to Malalas is discussed more fully in Croke (1990*c*) and (1990*d*).

[61] Jeffreys, Jeffreys and Scott (1986) which became the structural basis for the subsequent edition by Thurn (2000).

[62] Roberto (2005) and Mariev (2008), with the guidance of Van Nuffelen (2012).

[63] Croke (1985*b*).

[64] Croke (1990*a*), with Ramsay (1906), 393: 'Twelve years ago, the greatest of living historians, Professor Theodor Mommsen, said to the present writer that, if he were now beginning a new life of scholarship, he would take up the period between Diocletian and Justinian'.

accomplished he had only scratched the surface. There was more than enough to keep him occupied for another lifetime. What, then, would be his agenda for this second life, I wondered?

In 1980, the much anticipated fourth volume of Wickert's biography of Mommsen also appeared.[65] It would tell the story of the years when he was professor at Berlin (1863–85) and the years that followed. This was the best documented, and most productive, period of Mommsen's life and work. For decades Wickert had privileged access to the voluminous Mommsen archive and his first three volumes included copious documentary extracts. High expectations were held for Volume 4, therefore. On several fronts, however, it proved an anticlimax. It was not entitled 'Meisterjahre' as long expected, but 'Grösse und Grenzen', 'Size and Limits', a somewhat puzzling title explained by the author in his foreword as a response to Mommsen's own warning not to turn biography into panegyric. Even so, for those anticipating the answer to why Mommsen never wrote volume 4 of his *History of Rome,* there was nothing new on offer. For someone like me, anticipating the first full discussion of Mommsen's extensive labours on the history and documents from the fourth to the seventh centuries, combined with insight into his overall approach to the period, Wickert's volume was disappointing. He basically ignored this vast tract of Mommsen's work. Why had Wickert simply avoided this integral part of his subject? I could also tell by then that his few pages on Mommsen and England were superficial and rushed as well.

What to do? Another conversation with Edwin Judge; encouragement and purpose were stiffened once more. In the absence of anything better the only answer was — 'start filling the gap yourself'. Meanwhile, the recently published articles on Mommsen brought me to the attention of one of the few active scholars with deep knowledge of Mommsen and Mommsen's own contemporaries — William M. Calder III (then Boulder, later Urbana). He proved to be a very reassuring correspondent with a passionate and masterful knowledge of Mommsen's place (Berlin), era (nineteenth century) and predilection (philology). My paper on 'Mommsen's Pompey' (1985) led to an invitation to participate in the international symposium Calder was organising for November 1987 on Eduard Meyer in Bad Homburg (Germany) with a designated contribution on Caesar and Pompey, based on Meyer's great work (*Caesars Monarchie und das Principat des Pompeius,* 1918). Inevitably, it involved comparison with Mommsen's *History of Rome*, as well as taking me back to Syme's *Roman Revolution* (1939). In the end, my work commitments

[65] Wickert (1980).

prevented me from attending the symposium, but the already prepared paper was later published.[66]

Journeys with Mommsen's letters

When it came to filling the lacuna in Wickert's biography, Calder's example and advice was to 'start with the letters'. The letters to Mommsen from his multifarious correspondents were then very difficult to obtain. They were held in what was East Berlin, behind the famous wall, in the Staatsbibliothek of the German Democratic Republic, as well as in the archives of the Prussian Academy. From Australia at least, securing access was a major undertaking, especially compared to now. Official letters from East Berlin came on fragile and poor-quality paper and the post was extremely slow. The Staatsbibliothek could not make photo-copies but would create a microfilm which would be sent to a nearby university library (Macquarie) for use in the library only, strictly not to be copied, and then to be returned to Berlin after a specified period. Compared to modern technology and access this was difficult enough, made more so by my virtual inability to get to the library during opening hours on a weekday. These were the letters to Mommsen, held in Berlin.

Mommsen's own letters to correspondents outside Berlin were scattered throughout Europe and elsewhere. Even acquiring copies of them turned out to be quite an adventure. Catalogues were not online of course and, even where published, often omitted archives and private papers in their possession. The first Mommsen letters I sought and received were those to his pupil and later co-editor on the edition of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, Eduard Schwartz. They were scrappy and very difficult to decipher. Mommsen's cryptic handwriting defeated even local German speakers on occasion. They remain unpublished. Next came the letters to Louis Duchesne (1843–1922), sent on a microform roll from the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris early in 1985. They were all in French and much easier to decipher. Unlike the Berlin letters, they could be copied and kept. Duchesne had produced a remarkable edition of the *Liber Pontificalis* in two volumes (1886, 1892), while Mommsen edited the first part of the same work in his customary thorough style in 1898. They disagreed on much, even dating the *Liber* a full century apart (sixth century: Duchesne; seventh: Mommsen). Yet, as Mommsen's letters showed, they remained good friends.[67]

[66] Croke (1992*a*).

[67] For the warm and respectful relationship between the French cleric and the Berlin professor, despite their editorial differences: Franklin, (2017) and (2018).

Around the same time, meeting with John Matthews at Oxford while on a family vacation in the mid-1980s, Mommsen cropped up again. John had not forgotten my curiosity about Mommsen a decade earlier. There were apparently some letters from Mommsen that were kept in a box in the office of the director of the Ashmolean Museum, so John had been told. We should go together and ask the director if we could look at them. We did. They turned out to be Mommsen's letters to Francis Haverfield (1860–1919), historian of Roman Britain and its inscriptions, and one-time Camden Professor of Ancient History at Oxford. The letters were clearly written, by Mommsen's standards at least, and in excellent English. Now they are properly inventoried and accessible in the Bodleian Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library.[68] That led back to Berlin, and the letters to Mommsen from Haverfield. These, however, were in the Oxford don's very flowery German. They were mainly about inscriptions but a few at one stage covered the assistance provided by Haverfield in Oxford to Mommsen's editing of the Theodosian Code. Having both sides of the correspondence I started to set them in order.[69] Then I discovered that Mommsen's letters to Ingram Bywater (1840–1914) were in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Before long, I also had acquired from Berlin Bywater's letters to Mommsen. Both sides of the correspondence for Haverfield and Bywater was illuminating by itself. Here was the core of Mommsen's bridge to England.[70] More extensive, however, were the letters to Mommsen from William Ramsay (1851–1939), written from Oxford and Aberdeen, over a number of years.[71] Unfortunately, I've never managed to locate the letters from Mommsen to Ramsay.

From her home in St Andrews, my Oxford friend and co-author, Jill Harries, rang me one night in Sydney in 1990. She explained she was planning a conference on the fifth-century *Theodosian Code* (*Codex Theodosianus*) the following summer and wondered if I could offer something on how Mommsen went about his edition of the *Code*. When we were students together in the mid-1970s she had often heard me expounding on Mommsen and his editorial activity on late Roman texts, including the *Theodosian Code*. It was time to deliver. Another family holiday happily coincided with the planned St Andrews conference (July 1991) and the presentation was developed accordingly, drawing heavily

[68] https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/9dda0175-744d-323c-ae40-ba0c2220017e

[69] My draft edition of the correspondence was provided, and well utilized, in Freeman (2007).

[70] I plan to finally publish the correspondence between Mommsen and both Bywater and Haverfield in Croke (forthcoming *b*).

[71] Croke (1993*a*).

on the Mommsen-Haverfield correspondence.[72] It was also at St Andrews that I met Stefan Rebenich. At last, here was another young scholar interested in Mommsen. Moreover, we had a common ambition to redress the missing link, namely, Mommsen's considerable contribution to the period from the fourth century onwards. Stefan was someone who not only knew the later Roman empire, but he too had spent time in Oxford under the tutelage of John Matthews and was already mastering what the Germans call 'Wissenschaftsgeschichte', the history of scholars and scholarship. My own papers on Mommsen were just appearing,[73] but the conditions for studying Mommsen's archive and related documentation were already rapidly changing. While I had merely skated over the surface of Mommsen's later Roman projects from published sources, Stefan was able to bring depth and detail by utilising the increasingly accessible archives in Berlin and elsewhere. His incomparable edition of the extensive Mommsen-Harnack correspondence, followed by that (with G. Franke) on Mommsen's correspondence with Friedrich Althoff set both a standard and a model for such work.[74] Illuminating too have been his many supplementary studies on Mommsen, his pupils and his contemporaries.[75] Then came his authoritative and balanced biography.[76] There is still nothing comparable in English, or any other language for that matter.

Meanwhile, another door had blown open in the study of Mommsen, and another adventure beckoned. In November 1980, Alexander Demandt had some time on his hands between trains in Nürnberg, on his way home to West Berlin where he was a professor at the *Freie Universität*. In the nearby E. and R. Kistner's *Antiquariat* (second-hand bookstore) he noticed in their catalogue an entry entitled 'Mommsen. History of Rome under the Emperors' and another 'Mommsen. From Diocletian to Honorius'. On helpfully pointing out to the proprietor that there must be a mistake because Mommsen never wrote his much-anticipated history of the empire, let alone as far as the fourth century AD, Demandt received the reply that it was certainly no mistake. The volumes would be fetched for him. What Demandt soon held in his hands were a student's full transcription of Mommsen's Berlin lectures in 1882/3 and 1885/6 on the Roman Empire, covering the period from Augustus

[72] Croke (1993*b*).

[73] In particular, Croke (1990*a*) and (1990*b*).

[74] Rebenich (1997); Rebenich and Franke (2012).

[75] Rebenich (1993), (1995), (1996), (1997), (1998), (1999), (2004), (2005), (2009), (2015).

[76] Rebenich (2002).

(reigned 31 BC to AD 14) to Honorius (reigned AD 395–423). Instantly, he recognised its importance and the need to make its contents widely known. Fortunately for him, his wife Barbara was equally enthusiastic.

In the scholarly world, this was a major chance discovery. The news spread fast. I first heard about it from Calder, then upon sharing the news with Edwin Judge he sensed an opportunity immediately. He suggested to me that I organise, or manage, an English translation. A query to Demandt established its feasibility and his own blessing for such a translation. Then, a proposal was drawn up and we arranged for a potential translator (Lena Cansdale, Macquarie ancient history graduate and Danzig refugee) to meet with Demandt in what was still West Berlin. In the end, however, work and family commitments intruded before it became clear that Thomas Wiedemann (1950–2001) had the same thought and, as Professor of Latin at Nottingham and a native German/English speaker, was already in a better position to make the translation a reality. Demandt's volume was eventually published by C. H. Beck (Munich) in 1992, creating headline news across Germany. In 1996, the English translation was published by Routledge (London and New York). It went largely unnoticed.

Mommsen and Papyri

By the early 1990s, with the combined demands of a young family and a career where both responsibility and time were increasing, it was getting more difficult to find space for any kind of serious historical work, let alone research on Mommsen. In any event, my Oxford thesis remained unpublished and would have to become the absolute priority at some stage. The urgency of the task was being pressed by mentors and friends. Also on the horizon by now was Judge's retirement from his position at Macquarie University. There was to be a conference in his honour in the middle of 1993 and I immediately accepted an invitation to participate. It was Edwin who had really opened my mind to Mommsen twenty years earlier and had encouraged me to persevere along my various tracks of interest. He was no longer Professor of History, but was now Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Macquarie and busy enough with university administration. Otherwise, he was mainly preoccupied with managing a project for collecting and editing papyri related to early Christianity, at that point called the *Corpus Papyrorum Christianorum*. There was a *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* (3 vols. 1957–64), but not yet a Christian

counterpart.[77] Hence, a presentation on Mommsen's contribution to papyrology seemed appropriate. The modern study of papyrology emerged late in Mommsen's career but he immediately grasped its significance and its applicability to Roman History. Like Mommsen's daily diet of inscriptions, coins and laws, the papyri were simply another form of contemporary documentation, and Mommsen himself predicted that the twentieth century would become the 'Papyrology century'. First, the papyri needed to be gathered together by a knowledgeable team — a *Corpus Papyrorum* was immediately proposed. As so often, the concept may have been Mommsen's, but he inspired others to do the work involved. On this occasion it was his pupil Ulrich Wilcken (1862–1944), so my tribute to Judge was focussed on the significance for papyrology of the relationship between Mommsen and Wilcken.[78]

The conference turned out to be an enormous affair and an enormous success. Scholars came from all over the world to participate in honouring Judge.[79] His published oeuvre may have been limited at that point, but his reputation was worldwide. Among the participants were John Matthews from Oxford and Robert Markus from Nottingham. They were not pleased that my Marcellinus thesis (1978) was still lying untouched. Once more I promised, but it still took a few years to make the required time for it. Be that as it may, it was at the large Judge retirement dinner in July 1993 which I had the honour of compering, that I had a chance to chat with Harvard's distinguished ancient historian, Ernst Badian (1925–2011). Although not exact contemporaries, he and Judge had been at school and university together in New Zealand, hence his presence in Sydney at the Judge farewell. They had teachers in common at Canterbury, including Pocock and Popper. In the early 1950s Badian went to Oxford to learn from his fellow-New Zealander, Syme, while Judge went to Cambridge to learn from A. H. M. Jones and F. E. Adcock (1886–1968). Also at Cambridge was another fellow-New Zealander, Alex (A. H.) McDonald (1908–79). By now he was a world authority on the Roman historian Livy. Earlier he had been at Sydney University (1939–51) where he had been responsible for both ancient history at the university and promoting its study in schools. Judge later took on a similar role, influencing generations of ancient history teachers and students, both at university and school, with his wide vista of the ancient world combined

[77] The project has since been reformulated, renamed as *Papyri from the Rise of Christianity in Egypt* and remains unpublished.

[78] Croke (1998).

[79] The conference papers were published in Hillard, Kearsley, Nixon and Nobbs (1998).

with his capacity to make meaning of the smallest surviving fragment from that world.

At the same function, I also met Colleen McCullough (1937–2015). We knew about each other, but we'd not actually met before. She was of course a famous novelist whose *Thorn Birds* was set in Australia, so I discovered in Washington DC in 1977 from some enclosed nuns at nearby Georgetown Visitation School where my spouse was teaching. Now, she was working on her set of Roman novels, but she prided herself on their historical accuracy. As a forensic physiologist by trade, she had an eye for exact detail. At the same time, she was also funding a research project on republican Rome at Macquarie University. At her home on Norfolk Island, Colleen had assembled every book on Roman history she could buy anywhere. Besides Gore Vidal (1925–2012), for instance, she is the only person I know to have bought a full collection of the Loeb Classical Library of Greek and Latin texts and translations for home use. Curiously enough, so she confessed to a mutual friend, Macquarie historian Alanna Nobbs, the one item she had not been able to obtain in any bookshop was Mommsen's *History of Rome*, that is to say, in Dickson's 1860s English translation. Alanna explained that she knew I had my own copy, which she felt sure I'd be happy to offer Colleen on an extended loan for as long as she required it. I'd bought the volumes in Oxford in the mid-1970s for the princely sum of 5 pounds, but they were well worn and some of the covers were hanging off. Naturally, I agreed. So, when we met at last, for Colleen I was the 'Mommsen person'. Some years later, and it was years, Alanna returned the Mommsen volumes I'd lent to Colleen. Extracting them from their wrapping I was bowled over by the stunning aroma. Colleen had taken them to New York with her, had her personal bookbinder (Weitz and Coleman, Lexington Avenue) rebind my tatty old books in Moroccan calfskin with marbled endpapers, and fully embossed in gold-leaf. I was very impressed. They are now priceless, standing out on my shelf like misfits. I am almost afraid to open them. Whether Mommsen made any difference to Colleen's version of Roman politicians I have no way of telling, never having read the novels, although I'm told her Cicero was no hero. Still, Colleen's gesture was certainly a generous one.

Opening the World to Mommsen

For all concerned, 1993 was still the pre-email and pre-internet era, but now Mommsen's *History of Rome* is easily accessible online.[80] If Colleen

[80] https://gutenberg.org/ebooks/10701.

were starting now, she would not need to buy the Loeb library, nor would I need to lend her my copy of Mommsen's *History*. She could just download her own copy at home. Apart from the internet making nearly all of Mommsen's works accessible, much has changed in the half century since I first encountered Momigliano and Mommsen, especially since the conference of 1993. Not only do we know much more about both of them, thanks to a flood of research on their lives and their scholarly output. Momigliano's productivity kept going after his death, as unpublished works were discovered and given an audience, most notably his 1962 Sather lectures at Berkeley (*The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, 1990) and the 1940 lectures on *Peace and Liberty*, written in the immediate aftermath of his exile from Italy.[81] The field he pioneered in the English-speaking world of history of historiography has developed and its vision enlarged. Mommsen too has been the beneficiary of a new generation of scholarship focussed on parts of his massive correspondence and the publication of lost material. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany have had a major impact on Mommsen studies. That full Macquarie University library table of Mommsen's works in 1973 could now be expanded by the volume of the Roman empire lectures discovered by Demandt in 1980, the massive volumes of correspondence produced by Stefan Rebenich and Mauro Buonocore (1954–2022) in particular.[82] Then there is the revised edition of the Wilamowitz-Mommsen correspondence and various smaller caches of letters. More is to come, including the correspondence with Haverfield and Bywater and other English scholars.

Over the years, linking my career (education) and my hobby (history) has been a special interest, only made possible by an occasional involvement in the teaching of History in schools. Having played a role in getting formal study of historiography introduced into the local advanced history syllabus for teenage students in the senior school years in 2001, I was soon under pressure to contribute to its development, to help make it easier for teachers and students. Part of the course enables students to study a particular historian or historians in depth. Students may be studying separately, but simultaneously, Modern History or Ancient History, or both. Choosing a modern scholar of modern history like A. J. P. Taylor (1906–90), Eric Hobsbawm (1917–2012) or Manning Clark (1915–91) was never difficult. Modern scholars of ancient history were

[81] First published in Italian in Momigliano (1996) and in the original English in Momigliano (2013). They elaborate on themes Momigliano had advanced in his inaugural lecture at Turin, aged 27, in 1936. For background: Murray (2017).

[82] Rebenich (1997), Rebenich and Franke (2012); Buonocore (2003); Buonocore (2017).

more problematic. In response to requests from teachers mainly, I gave occasional conference and seminar presentations with the aim of making more accessible an otherwise (to them) inaccessible historian. I started with Gibbon, then responded to a demand for Mommsen. The published versions of these presentations to teachers and students were designed to propose and facilitate a pathway into the person and the historical work of Gibbon and Mommsen, as well as Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886) as an ancient historian.[83] J. B. Bury (1861–1927), spanning the ancient and modern world as he does, not to mention all points in between, was to be next, as I am occasionally reminded. At least I had something to say about him years ago in a lecture honouring the retirement of my teacher of Greek History at Macquarie, Bruce Harris (1921–2022), another New Zealander and Oxford graduate, who lived to eclipse his century.[84] An expert in Dio of Prusa, Bruce shared with Bury a wide vision of the ancient world and succeeding civilisations.[85]

Mommsen's Berlin

Despite many abortive plans over the years, I finally reached Berlin for the first time in 2012. Modern Berlin guidebooks fail to mention Mommsen but, just as Momigliano formed his own mental map of George Grote's 1840s London, I had developed my own mental map of Mommsen's Berlin. In Mommsen's heyday he was a local celebrity, a prominent and recognisable figure on the streets of the city and commuting on its tramcars. The 1890 Baedeker guide to Northern Germany, for example, tells you that in Berlin, on the first floor of the National Gallery in Room I, you could find the famous 1881 portrait of Mommsen by Ludwig Knaus (1829–1910).[86] While the Doric Greek-style building was severely bombed in 1944 and its contents removed for safe keeping, it has been reborn as the 'Old National Gallery' and Knaus' portrait of Mommsen hangs there once more. The scholar with piercing black eyes and flowing grey hair is depicted with quill in hand as he looks up from his work, surrounded by books and papers on his desk and on the floor. He was probably writing his 'Roman Public Law' (*Staatsrecht*) at the time. A bust of Julius Caesar watches over him. Then, on the left-

[83] Croke (2012), (2016*a*), (2016*b*).

[84] Croke (1986).

[85] As exemplified in Harris (1980).

[86] Baedeker (1890), 47. The same portrait was still there in 1897 (Baedeker [1897], 52) but by 1903 it had evidently been replaced by another, later and striking portrait, by Franz Lenbach (Baedeker [1903], 101).

hand side in the forecourt as you enter the Humboldt University, just the 'University of Berlin' in Mommsen's day, there is the statue of Mommsen himself declaiming with book in hand from his professorial chair. Originally executed in 1909 by renowned sculptor Adolf Brütt (1855–1939), the monument was secreted away for safe-keeping while the bombs rained down on Berlin in 1944. Only later was it reinstalled. In the mezzanine gallery inside the main university building, just up the central staircase, is a row of portraits of the University's Nobel Prize winners, beginning with Mommsen (Literature 1902).

Other sites of Mommsen's Berlin deserve a visit too, but the determined traveller finds little trace of him in the city he made his own. Certainly, his mortal remains are there, buried in the Dreifaltigkeits-friedhof II cemetery near the former Templehof airport. His body was conveyed there in November 1903 through the streets of Berlin from the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church on Kurfurstandamm, not far from Mommsenstrasse, which begins near the Charlottenburg station and still sports many of the elegant old buildings from Mommsen's era. It runs parallel to the much shorter Niebuhrstrasse. The Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church was built in the 1890s in a Byzantine-style, complete with mosaics. It was targeted by allied bombers during the Second World War, so only a shell of the original church remains, a deliberate reminder of the horrors of war.

On first moving to Berlin in 1858, the Mommsen family lived at 10 Schöneberger Strasse before it became a busy thoroughfare of imperial days. By then, with a steadily growing family, the Mommsens moved in 1874 to a much larger house, in fact an imposing three-storey villa, at 8 Marchstrasse in Charlottenburg, west of the Tiergarten but with a direct tramline, first horse-drawn then electric, to the university at the bottom end of Unter den Linden. There is a photograph of the whole family outside the house, another of them taking tea on the upstairs balcony, yet others of Mommsen by himself in his home office or 'workroom' and sitting in the garden reading with a slumbering dog at his feet.[87] In the summer of 1880, while Mommsen was working away in his office at 2 a.m. a gas explosion caused it to be burnt out. He soon escaped to safety, covered in ash with his flowing hair singed and his hands badly burned from trying to salvage documents from his desk. All of the great scholar's papers, notes and books were destroyed in an instant, among them, so it was feared and rumoured, was the long-awaited Volume 4 of the *History of Rome*. Some manuscripts of Jordanes on loan from English and

[87] The one place all these photos can be found is in Köpf (2004).

European libraries, were also lost. While the manuscripts were irreplaceable, the books were replaced by the donations and subscriptions of friends and supporters, including those in England. Despite the loss of his notes, drafts and other papers, Mommsen pressed on with new vigour in the 1880s and 1890s, like a 'phoenix arising from the ashes',[88] although libraries stopped lending him manuscripts altogether, or insisted they be placed in a fireproof container. It was in the Charlottenburg house that Mommsen died in his sleep on 1 November 1903. His personal library was subsequently dispersed and the tracing of some of his books from owner to owner provides a riveting detective story.[89] Eventually the house too disappeared, a victim of wartime destruction. Now its site is taken up by the forecourt of the Architecture Faculty of the Technical University of Berlin, near a major traffic roundabout, at Ernst Reuter Platz.[90] In December 2017 a memorial plaque was unveiled proclaiming that on this site once stood the house of Theodor Mommsen, 'Ancient Historian and Liberal Politician'.[91] That is how Berlin remembers him.

Learnings

One learning from this essentially personal story is how much easier this sort of historical research, if not all historical research, has become in the twenty-first century. That is to say, without leaving home, any individual now has access to Mommsen's *Roman History* and most of his other works including his three-volume edition of the *Chronica Minora*,[92] to the manuscript of Jerome's chronicle he had to travel to Oxford to consult, to the full collection of Byzantine historians, the 'Bonn Corpus', only available in a specialist library, and other essential tools. Further, anyone embarking on research into the late Roman/early Byzantine chronicles, or an individual chronicle, has a host of instructive material to draw on. Anyone researching Malalas, for example, in the 2020s as opposed to the 1980s, has the Oxford manuscript online, plus a modern critical edition (Thurn 2000), the bibliographical riches of the internet and the digital world, plus other Mommsen-inspired tools such as the

[88] The explanation for the apt title of the exhibition of Mommsen's letters, notes and drafts mounted by the office of the MGH in 2005 (Mentzel-Reuters et al [2005]).

[89] Diliberto (2003).

[90] Photographs of both the Mommsen house and the building which replaced it, side by side, can be found in Mentzel-Reuters et al (2005), 10.

[91] Photograph at https://www.gedenktafeln-in-berlin.de/nc/gedenktafeln/gedenktafel-anzeige/tid/theodor-mommsen-1.

[92] Mommsen (1892), (1894a), 1898.

Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire. An on-line commentary is being developed at Tübingen.[93] While the digital revolution has made the scholar's life much easier in several fundamental respects, certain perennial challenges can never be diminished: resolving on a topic to investigate; conceptualising how to approach, then tell, the story; how to operate within the defined boundaries of the discipline and its preferred norms and traditions.[94]

Another learning from this series of adventures with Mommsen is that he saw the totality of Roman history from the very start. He did not work in compartments, or on different periods successively, but holistically and simultaneously. In other words, he operated all his working life with a detailed knowledge and understanding of Roman history as beginning with the earliest documented inhabitants of Italy and progressing into what we call the 'Byzantine' era. What held together this breadth of vision was his grasp of Roman law and institutions as they changed over time. Mommsen's unified view of Roman History meant that he worked on all periods and problems simultaneously. His substantial involvement with the sources for the later Roman Empire, for instance, was not a later career discovery and preoccupation. One can only imagine what Mommsen would have managed with the tools he actually created but failed to live long enough to take full advantage of himself, let alone what someone of his calibre might have achieved, or might still achieve, with the sort of digital tools now available to anyone, anywhere.

Like any other segment of past times, the study of the history and culture of the Roman world progresses from generation to generation, from one historian like Mommsen to another like Momigliano, or Syme, or Judge. Understanding Rome is inevitably based on knowing the distinguished modern students of Rome, along with their preferences and limitations. Most scholarly careers depend on the ability to grasp changing opportunities, fashions and funding. They can also depend on the individual's flexibility, adaptability, tenacity and willingness to learn new things and be led in unexpected directions. Only in retrospect does the historian's path, or the development of a field of knowledge such as Roman history, look logical, straight and inevitable. That is why, albeit rare, self-reflection is such an important and valuable prompt to others.

[93] Details at https://www.hadw-bw.de/forschung/forschungsstelle/malalas-kommentar. It is generously funded by the Heidelberg Academy.

[94] As illustrated for sociology by the autobiography of a distinguished social theorist: Turner (2022).

It was an acolyte of Momigliano, historian of historians Peter Burke, who summed it up best: 'Even one's own past is a foreign country'.[95]

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[95] Burke (2013), 172.

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