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Between East and West: Memories of the Cold War

— Oswyn Murray —

Abstract

For the last fifty years the Respublica Litterarum in classical scholarship has been dominated by the divisions brought about by the Cold War. As this traumatic period begins to fade I have tried to recall the attempts of one classical scholar to bridge this gap between east and west. Let us not forget the past in building a new future.

Keywords

Suez Canal, Ovid and the Cuban Missile Crisis, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Konopiste, Bibliotheca Academica Translationum, Tianjin

Venio in campos et lata praetoria memoriae

Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, 10, 8

And somewhere from the dim ages of history the truth dawned upon Europe that the morrow would obliterate the plans of today.

Preparations for the slaughter of mankind have always been made in the name of God or some supposed higher being which men have devised and created in their own imagination.

Jaroslav Hašek, *The Good Soldier Schweik*

The twentieth century was the bloodiest century since the seventeenth for the persecution of intellectuals. After the collapse of confidence in bourgeois liberalism in the trenches of the First World War, the terrors unleashed by Communism, Fascism, Nazism, and the threat of nuclear destruction, devastated the Western intelligentsia more effectively than any wars of religion. At a certain point one wakes up to discover that one has become truly an 'ancient historian' (as I declared my profession to be on my first passport: no-one understood, except an Italian frontier official — '*Ah, la Storia antica*'). That is, one has become not a historian, but a part of history itself.

I was born in 1937;[1] my generation came of age in the 1950s, and was dominated by the propaganda of the Cold War. In 1956 I was conscripted into the British army to fight Communism, but instead was assigned to the invasion of the Suez Canal; fortunately the Americans ordered the British to withdraw before we went out as the second wave of the occupying force. I had already decided to become a deserter, because we, who were busy painting our vehicles sand-coloured with a big white H on top (since it was intended that the Israelis should destroy the Egyptian air force before the invasion), already believed that the expedition was the result of a corrupt and secret plot between Britain, France and Israel; this fact is now revealed by the memoir of Patrick Dean, the junior British official who conducted the negotiations. The British Prime Minister burned his copy of the agreement in the fireplace of No 10 Downing Street, the French copy is 'lost'; but the Israelis preserved theirs, and it is available on the web.[2]

That taught me the essential lesson that foreign policy is always based on lies, and that politicians and generals are fools who do not understand the nature of the historical forces that they unleash. The aborted invasion of Egypt resulted only in the destruction of yet another of the greatest and most civilised cities of the modern world — Alexandria, which once again rots in decay after the expulsion of all Italians, Greeks and Jews: the city of Cavafy, Ungaretti and Lawrence Durrell was destroyed by the stupidity of politicians along with Smyrna and Salonica, and perhaps now London.[3] The same year the Soviets invaded Hungary, but because of the moral corruption of the West we were unable to intervene.

Instead I spent the rest of my military service defending the non-existent frontier between Northern Ireland and the Republic, until I was demobbed with a resoundingly ambiguous testimonial to two years military service: 'Somewhat lacking in initiative and drive. But this (*what?*) should be more apparent in his civilian life.' I had clearly joined the honourable ranks of the Good Soldier Schweik.

So I went to Oxford University and entered the ancient Republic of Letters, where I vowed to devote myself to ignoring the Iron Curtain that we were not supposed to penetrate. Friendship was my only weapon.

[1] If I had been born five years earlier, I would have been killed in the Korean War; for my battery in the Royal Artillery (170 Imjin Battery) fought at the battle of the Imjin River in 1951 alongside the 'Glorious Glosters', and like them was wiped out.

[2] A full account in Avi Shlaim, 'The Protocol of Sèvres, 1956: Anatomy of a War Plot', *International Affairs* 73 (1997) 509–30.

[3] Mark Mazower, *Salonica City of Ghosts* (London 2004); Michael Haag, *Alexandria City of Memory* (New Haven 2004). I finally visited Alexandria in November 2014.

Most of my teachers were second-rate historians, whose careers had been stunted by seven years of war work. The intellectual life of the academic world was sustained by the Jewish refugees who had fled Nazi persecution in the thirties. I was saved by two great figures of this diaspora, both of them connected to the Warburg Institute, which had transported itself from Hamburg to London in 1934. The first was the art historian Ernst Gombrich (1909–2001), Director of the Warburg from 1959 to 1972, who opened my eyes to the visual element in history. The second was my doctoral supervisor Arnaldo Momigliano (1908–87), the most learned historian of his age, a refugee from Fascist Italy. It was from him that I learned the importance of the classical tradition for the defence of European culture.

As a penniless graduate student, I made money by teaching Latin to less than enthusiastic young women. I recall a traumatic moment on 27th October 1962, the day of the Cuban missile crisis. We were translating Ovid's *Ars amatoria* (which I had selected as a suitable text to interest a bored young girl), when I became aware of an immense throbbing noise in the air: in order not to be caught on the ground, all the B52 bombers from the American airbases were circling above Oxford, fully armed with nuclear warheads. I continued my lesson, reflecting that if this was to be the last day of Western civilization, there could be no better way to die 'waiting for the barbarian' than studying Ovid. Nevertheless it caused me to join the Aldermaston March of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in 1963.[4]

My first eastern friend was the Polish archaeologist and papyrologist Zbigniew Borkowski (1936–91). In 1970 the Fondation Hardt in Switzerland was the only place where Western and Eastern scholars could meet; we bonded late at night over the Baron's last bottle of whisky. We agreed that we had both been fools deluded by propaganda: we searched vainly for the Red Star in the night sky. Zbigniew told me that he had once been a member of the Communist Youth: 'I am so convinced I even denounce my grandmother because she is reactionary'. 'But I thought all grandmothers were by definition reactionary.' 'Yes,' he replied with Polish Catholic logic, 'But she is MY grandmother'.

[4] The Aldermarston Marches from the Nuclear Weapons Research Establishment, Aldermaston to Central London (52 miles) were a mass protest against nuclear weapons that began in 1958; organised by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament they took place at Easter each year, and had a considerable effect on public opinion and ultimately government policy.

Zbigniew taught me to understand the holes that allowed transit through the Iron Curtain.[5] In 1946 the great papyrologist Raphael Taubenschlag had gathered in Warsaw the best collection of legal papyri, and founded the very specialised *Journal of Juristic Papyrology*. In the Communist era, because of his marriage connection with the Polish Communist leadership, it was thought essential to maintain its publication; so Polish papyrologists were permitted to travel abroad to Western institutions to consult other collections. While on a mission in Syria (to Palmyra?) Zbigniew and his group were ordered to go to Alexandria and transform themselves into archaeologists (where he published the inscriptions from the late Roman hippodrome). They sent a telegram, 'Arrivons jeudi complètement ivres'.

The reason for this sudden change of career was hidden deep in the economic arcana of the Cold War. After Suez the Soviets were secretly rearming the Egyptians with weapons made mainly in Czechoslovakia. But the Egyptians had no foreign currency to pay for these weapons. So the Soviets ordered the Poles to undertake major excavations and restoration work in Egypt, in order to supply the necessary Soviet bloc currency.[6] Thus archaeology was turned into armaments.

Later Zbigniew visited Oxford to work on the Oxyrhynchus archive, and lived with me. In the summer evenings after work we would depart with a bottle of whisky in my camping van to the woods nearby, and spend the night singing Russian folksongs — the most haunting one I remember was 'The girl on the high trapeze'. He would talk of the trackless forests of eastern Poland that we would one day visit together. Alas, twenty years later he died on just such an expedition, unwilling to go to hospital for a minor complaint.

In the late Seventies I met Gert Audring from the East German Academy of Sciences when he was on an official visit to England: he invited me to visit East Berlin. I well remember the fear with which I passed through Checkpoint Charlie, famous from so many spy stories: Gert was waiting for me discreetly hidden about a hundred yards into the Soviet Zone, and showed me round the remnants of former German culture, the Altes Museum, the Pergamon Museum, the opera house Unter den Linden and the other side of the Berlin Wall. He was very brave to offer friendship to a Western colleague. It was then that I formed the

[5] Years later I read the wonderful book of Ryszard Kapuscinski, *Travels with Herodotus* (London 2007), and understood the great gulf that separated Poland from the West in the Fifties.

[6] See Z. Borkowski, *Inscriptions des factions à Alexandrie* (Warsaw 1981); *Queen Hatshepsut and her Temple 3500 Years Later,* ed. Z. E. Szafrański (Warsaw University Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology in Cairo 2001).

opinion that one day Germany might perhaps be reunited; but no, all my young West German colleagues said it was impossible. I have not seen Audring since the reunification of 1992, but know that he has devoted himself to publishing the papers of the ancient historian Eduard Meyer.

Gert told me that if I ever went to Prague I must visit the great epigraphist and archaeologist, Jan Pecirka (1926–93), who possessed the best collection of Western books in the East, thanks to his friend in Cambridge, Moses Finley, who would send them to him: every Eastern scholar, he said, would visit Pecirka in his private flat for study, despite the fact that he had been expelled from the university for political reasons. Later I did indeed visit him, towards the end of his life: his work in the Crimea had been prevented and he was a very bitter man.

My visit to Prague was for the 16th Eirene conference in 1982, at the invitation of Pavel Oliva. The previous year I had invited him to come to Oxford to give a set of lectures on ancient Sparta as the visiting 'Nellie Wallace Lecturer'. We took great care with the invitation, since we knew that Oliva was in trouble with the authorities: before issuing the formal invitation we had sent a private letter via a friend in the Netherlands to ask him whether he would like to be invited: he replied in the affirmative. And to our surprise he was allowed to visit together with his wife Vera Olivova. This was perhaps the first sign of that *perestroika* of 1986, when Gorbachev admitted he had been inspired by the 'Socialism with a human face' of Dubcek of Czechoslovakia. Something was moving in the Soviet bloc.

The reason for Oliva's difficulties was that, despite being a senior member of the Czech Academy and well known in the West, he had been involved in the Prague Spring of 1968, and his wife had signed the famous Charter; unfortunately shortly afterwards in 1972 her book on Tomas Masaryk had (without her knowledge) been translated into English under the inflammatory title *The Doomed Democracy*. Before the secret police could arrest her, medical friends certified her insane, and she spent the next five years in a mental hospital, where as long as she was a patient she could not be dismissed from her university post; finally she was declared 'cured' and returned to the University, but was not allowed to write on modern history: instead she became an expert on ancient sport (in her youth she had been an international athlete). The problems of the Olivas were further compounded by the fact that both their children had recently fled to the West.

Nevertheless they came to Oxford and were made members of Balliol College Senior Common Room. I recall a moment during a guest night in Balliol, where the college silver is laid out and good food and vintage wine are served. As we sat talking in the common room after dinner, suddenly

with her characteristic honesty and directness Vera said, 'How strange it is that here we are sitting in all this luxury, and thirty-five years ago Pavel was a starving boy walking barefoot across Europe with the SS guards from one concentration camp to another.' 'Yes,' added Pavel, with a melancholy smile of regret, 'and now perhaps you understand why I joined the Communist Party. I wanted a better world.' In that moment, which I have never forgotten, I first fully understood the reality of the history which we had all experienced and the futility of the Cold War; that was reinforced later the next year, when I was one of the few Western scholars to attend the *Eirene* conference, and met so many colleagues from Eastern Europe; then too I visited the exhibition of art by my exact contemporaries, the Jewish children of the concentration camps who had not survived the war, and reflected on the suffering which everyone in our generation had known, directly or indirectly.

That visit to Prague was memorable in so many other ways. Oliva took me round the university; every so often we would meet an elderly man with a brush wearing worker's overalls, and Pavel would formally introduce me to the Professor of Medieval History or Philosophy: they were all victims of the purge after 1968, but their colleagues still treated them as if they were in post. I began to respect the wit and ingenuity whereby the Czechs were circumventing the Communist system, worthy indeed of the Good Soldier Schweik.

The level of dissidence among Eastern classical scholars at the conference was obvious. The Russians had been ordered to give their communications in Russian; the majority insisted on speaking French. The conference was very friendly and everyone was keen to speak to the few Western scholars who had come; only when a member of the East German delegation entered the room, would they all suddenly fall silent.

We went on an expedition to Konopiště, the hunting lodge of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. It was the most effective piece of propaganda against the former ruling classes of Europe that I have ever seen: every inch of the walls was decorated with stuffed birds and animals, all meticulously listed in books recording their massacre by the crowned heads of Europe in great shooting expeditions across India, Africa, the Far East and Europe. I began to understand that the First World War had been simply an extension of this royal pre-war shooting party, in which they were using machine guns to exterminate the peasants and the working classes for their pleasure.

We took our lunch at Konopiště, and I sat with Professor Irena Svencickaya (1929–2006) and her husband. The meat was surprisingly good: 'Do you have meat like this in Moscow?' I asked; 'In Moscow we have no meat,' she replied, and pointed across the room to a handsome

young man with a broken arm in plaster (much younger than any of the rest of the Russian contingent — where had he got that broken arm? I thought). 'That is the KGB man,' she said in a conversational tone. My English Philosophy colleague said brightly 'Oh, I thought he was a poet.' I lost all faith in philosophy.

Later I told this story to a young Rumanian scholar, Manuela Tecusan; the Rumanians were housed apart from all the other delegates in a hostel far from the centre of Prague. 'We have a KGB man,' she said mournfully, 'But we do not know who he is.'

We kept in touch with Pavel and Vera, and I contributed to his Festschrift in 1999;[7] I was delighted to meet him again on a second visit to Prague in 2014. His wife was already ill, and died in 2015.

Manuela Tecusan was a Rumanian rebel, who had been inspired by her uncle Petru Creţia (1927–97), professor of Greek, poet and literary critic, the great expert on Eminescu, in ideals of classical education that went back to the Thirties. She was fluent in French and English, and was determined to escape from Communism. She was helping her uncle prepare the first translation of Plato into Rumanian; at great personal risk she contributed an article on Plato's sympotic writings to my book *Sympotica* (1990), and I would send her classical texts and lexica to Rumania: sometimes these would be returned as subversive literature, but they usually got through on the second attempt.

Finally Manuela escaped to England. Because she had not been a party member she had been prevented from studying for a doctorate; so I persuaded the students at Balliol to appoint her as a refugee scholar, paid for by their personal contributions; and she studied for a doctorate with me, which eventually won the Conington Prize as the best classical thesis of the year.[8] She now lives in Cambridge.

Through Manuela my wife and I became friends with Petru Creţia, who visited us in Oxford in 1989. On 20th December Petru was due to return to Bucharest. He decided to compose an open 'birthday letter' of denunciation of Ceausescu, and we helped him translate it into English: he declared his intention of leaving it to be broadcast on the BBC Rumanian service as he returned. I knew that he was signing his own death warrant, but could not dissuade him. The day of his departure it was raining torrentially; and I wandered for hours through the streets of Oxford, distraught and wondering what I could do to save him. Finally I decided that the only chance was to publish his text in English in the *Times* newspaper, in the hope that the resulting publicity in the West

[7] *Eirene* 35 (1999), *Studia Graeca et Latina in honorem Pavel Oliva*.

[8] *Symposion and Philosophy* (Diss. Oxford 1993), alas still unpublished.

might protect him from summary execution. Through friends on the newspaper the essay was published next day, on the 21st December, the same day on which Ceausescu fell from power. Later I discovered that Petru had not gone home on arrival, but had hidden for several days underneath the railway arches until it was safe to emerge. Petru subsequently became the editor of a literary journal and a leading politician in the chaotic new party system. He visited us once again, but died in 1997.

With the arrival of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, personal relations between Eastern and Western scholars became easier. But Western governments did not respond; they were still imprisoned (as they are today) in a Cold War mentality, and simply tried to capitalise on the economic and political difficulties in the Soviet bloc. So I established a research programme which would offer bursaries for young scholars throughout Europe, but especially from the East. This was called *Bibliotheca Academica Translationum*, and aimed to create a bibliographical database of all translations of works of classical scholarship between all European languages. The idea was to offer travel awards to young scholars across Europe, so that they could work on the project in their own and foreign libraries. It was moderately successful and still continues, funded first by Oxford University and the British Arts and Humanities Research Council, then by the European Union, GoogleBooks and the Onassis Foundation, and based first in Oxford, then in Paris and now in Athens. We established links with young scholars in France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Greece, Russia, Hungary and the USA.

One of my earliest contacts was with a remarkable man, Gregory Bongard-Levin of the Russian Academy of Sciences, who did more than any other individual to protect and promote Classical Studies in the difficult days of the collapse of the Russian economy. He was a wise and good friend who is sadly missed. He had devised a similar scheme which created funds for young Russian scholars, by using his contacts to obtain for them short study trips to Western libraries: these travel bursaries, small enough by Western standards, provided Western currency sufficient to enable them to live for three or four years in Russia. So the leaders of the next generation were preserved for Russian scholarship. Sergei Karpyuk, editor of *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, was one of Bongard-Levin's beneficiaries, who has become a close friend, and has stayed with us twice on his visits to Britain. It was through this connection that I first travelled to Moscow and to the excavations at Anapa (Gorgippia) on the Black Sea, where I met Professor Gennadiy Andreevich Koshelenko

(1935–2015), the teacher of another beneficiary of such East-West contacts who later came on a Soros Scholarship to Oxford, my former pupil, the Georgian scholar Gocha Tsetskhladze.

The BAT contacts also provided me with another friend in Hungary, Attila Ferenczi of Budapest, with whom we now have reciprocal ties of hospitality.

In September 1996 I was invited to tour the sites of the Crimea by my former pupil Raymond Asquith, British attaché at the Ukrainian embassy (and himself a major protagonist in the Cold War, whose ancestor had taken part in the 'charge of the Light Brigade' during the Crimean War, and returned with a captured Russian musket, which is still in the family). Together we visited the classical sites of the Crimea at a time when the archaeological service was deprived of virtually all funds: I was amazed at the dedication of archaeologists who were working without regular pay to preserve one of the greatest collections of classical sites in the world: in particular I think of one young girl who was spending the winter in a pair of metal shipping containers at the site of Kalos Limen, supplied only with food from a friend at the local collective farm, in an attempt to prevent the peasantry from stealing the foundation stones to use as hard core in the entrances to their fields: she said it was better than being an out-of-work secretary. We also met the staff of the museum and site at Chersonesos, surviving in their historic monastery only because of a dispute between the Ukrainian and Russian Orthodox Churches. A second visit with Raymond in 2013 occurred just before the Russian annexation of the Crimea, which has once again put in jeopardy the future of this World Heritage Site.[9]

In 1995, in preparation for the attempt to wrest the Olympic Games from the stranglehold of the West, contacts with China began to open up. One of the first visitors to Oxford was the doyen of Chinese Western ancient historians, Professor Wang Dunshu (born 1934), who has established at Nankai University (where my great-uncle started a missionary University around 1910) a graduate school of Western classical historiography which is now the largest in the world. Initially it was intended to produce experts in every ancient Western language from Sumerian to Egyptian, Greek and Latin; now it seems to specialise especially in Silk Route studies. I assume this enterprise is part of a programme of world

[9] For the earlier story of archaeology at this historic site, see the excellent anonymous account on the web, entitled *Chersonesos Taurica and all that is related about Chersonesos competent but not officially* (http://www.chersonesos.org/?p=museum_hist&l=eng, last accessed 19.12.19).

domination: since the first principle in understanding Chinese civilization is the study of the teachings of Confucius, it was assumed that successful diplomacy with the West must begin from training diplomats in the origins of Western civilizations, despite the fact that these have long been forgotten in our cultures.

We invited Wang Dunshu to dinner to meet some Oxford colleagues. Halfway through the meal he said 'this wine is not strong enough, have you anything stronger?'[10] After some thought I produced a bottle of vintage grappa, of which he proceeded to drink about half. When the meal was over we began to discuss the differences between Western and Chinese political systems. Wang Dunshu emphasised the importance of calligraphy, poetry and dancing in the training of the traditional Chinese elite (he himself was a survival from the mandarin class, whose uncle had passed out top in the Imperial Chinese Civil Service examinations in these three skills, and had immediately been appointed in his twenties as ambassador to the whole of South America). He told us that the current rulers of China were still experts in ballroom dancing, which they had learned as impoverished refugees in the dance-halls of Paris in the Twenties: Chou En Lai was especially famed for his skill at the foxtrot and the quickstep — all that is except Chairman Mao, who had no sense of rhythm (although of course he married a dancer). This seemed a damning criticism of the Great Leader. Wang Dunshu ended with a display of the forgotten art of performing ancient Chinese drinking songs accompanied by dancing that reminded me of the chorus of old men in Plato's *Laws*.

As a consequence of this friendship I was invited to partake in the First International Congress of Ancient World Historians at Nankai University (Tianjin), and subsequently visited by primitive coach and train the ancient capitals from Xian onwards, and crossed the Gobi Desert to the Buddhist caves of Dunhuang and the cities of Turfan, Urumchi and Kashgar along the Silk Road. We returned on a decrepid plane borrowed from Uzbeki Airlines, which had the unfortunate reputation of a mere sixty per cent of successful flights. Twenty years later I was invited to another conference at Nankai, and participated in another Silk Road trip, this time in brand new aeroplanes and through brand new airports, as if several centuries had intervened.

One comment from our first proceedings stays in my mind. Professor Lin Zhi-chun in his nineties asked why Western scholars had been invited to the conference: after all, he said, the West kept forgetting its past, and was always needing to have Renaissances, whereas China had been a

[10] Subsequently I learned that in Chinese the same word is used to denote all forms of alcohol.

continuous civilization for five thousand years. This reminded me of the rebuke of the Egyptian priests to Herodotus: 'you Greeks are but children compared to us Egyptians.'

These memories are of course tiny footnotes in the black history of a century of intellectual persecution; but when I look back in my eighties I feel that I have tried to uphold the traditions of the ancient Republic of Letters that were defended in 1914 by my great-grandfather, Sir James Murray, editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In his son's unpublished biography there appears the following passage:

> In 1914 he applauded the decision to join in the War, and, though he refused to sign the manifesto of Oxford Professors in the autumn of the year lest his doing so should be inimical to the interests of the Dictionary, he wrote to friends in South Africa in grateful recognition of what the Dominions were doing in aid of the mother country. [11]

And in 2015, in preparation for a talk on the centenary of his death, among the unsorted papers of Sir James Murray (Bodleian Library) in the box relating to 1914, under the rubric 'undated', I discovered the following letter:

> 82 Woodstock Road Oct 15th [of course 1914]
>
> Dear Sir James
>
> Thank you for your letter. I fully understand your position and think you are quite right not to sign. After all there will be peace some day & we must not imperil the Dictionary.
>
> Yours very sincerely
> Gilbert Murray

These somewhat opaque references relate to a famous series of episodes in September and October 1914, which began with a letter to *The Times* of 18th September, known as 'The Writers' Manifesto', organised by his namesake (no relation), the great Liberal professor of Greek, Gilbert Murray (later founder of the League of Nations Union). This was signed by most of the 'eminent writers' of the age: it denounced German atrocities and militarism and renounced all contact with German colleagues. In turn the Germans responded with a pamphlet addressed to the world

[11] Harold J. R. Murray, *Sir James Murray, editor of the OED*, typescript ms. p. 276 (copies in the OED archives and the Bodleian Library).

of culture, *An die Kulturwelt!*, signed by 93 of the most eminent scientists, artists, musicians and academics in Germany.[12] The British responded in *The Times* of 21st October with a 'Reply to German Professors. Reasoned Statement by British Scholars', signed by 118 eminent academics from all the Universities of Britain, including its protagonist Gilbert Murray. Similar actions were taken in France and Italy: honorary degrees and memberships of academies were rescinded and eternal enmity against 'the Huns' was declared. Wilamowitz, one of the protagonists of the German response, defiantly listed among his honours that of being a deposed member of the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*. As he recognised in his post-war memoirs, this was the definitive end to four hundred years of the international Republic of Letters: it poisoned relations between European intellectuals on both sides of the conflict until at least 1926, in which year Germans and Austrians were first readmitted to any international academic conference.[13] It was not in fact until the diaspora of Jewish intellectuals expelled by Hitler that the wounds were healed, or at least superseded in a new crisis.

In both the letters to *The Times* of September and October 1914 the name of James Murray is absent. It is not at all easy to discover the very few intellectuals on either side who joined him in refusing to sign such declarations renouncing their friendship with the enemy; but they include some of the greatest names of the twentieth century, such as the philosopher Bertrand Russell, the Irishmen George Bernard Shaw and W. B. Yeats, G. F. Nicolai (professor of Medicine) and his friend Albert Einstein (who together created a counter-organisation for peace), the mathematician David Hilbert, and the authors Stefan Zweig and Hermann Hesse in the German-speaking world, Romain Rolland in France, and the composers Puccini, Leoncavallo and Mascagni in Italy. [14]

[12] J. and W. von Ungern-Sternberg, *Der Aufruf 'An die Kulturwelt!'* Historische Mitteilungen der Ranke-Gesellschaft Beiheft 18, 1996; cf. R. E. Norton, 'Wilamowitz at War', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 15 (2008) 74–97; J. Horne and A. Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven 2001).

[13] German and Austrian scholars were only readmitted to meetings of the *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* (CVA) in 1930.

[14] It is a pleasure to recall that my ancestor's friendship and respect for the world of scholarship were reciprocated by some of his colleagues on the opposite side. He had been a Corresponding Member of the Vienna Royal Academy since 1905; in 1916 it published an obituary by Karl Luick, which ends with these warm words: 'Aus seine Rede klang Tatkraft und Ausdauer, aber auch Wohlwollen. Gleich Furnivall war er immer bereit, deutsche Mitforschung anzuerkennen. Wie viele ihrer Träger haben in seinem "Scriptorium" und seinem gastfreundlichen Hause in Oxford angeregte Stunden verbracht!' (K. Luick, 'Sir James A. H. Murray. Gestorben am 26. Juli 1915', *Almanach der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1916, 426–430).

I have kept the faith of my great-grandfather. But will the Republic of Letters survive the triumph of ruthless capitalism and nationalism that is the curse of the twenty-first century? Only the next generation can answer that question. We have kept faith, but will you?

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These memories were shared with colleagues and students of the ELTE University Budapest in June 2019, in the presence of Professor Zsigmond Ritoók, who had himself been involved in the events of 1956. This text was also presented to a meeting of the European Network for the Study of Ancient Greek History at Utrecht in October 2019, where it received a standing ovation. A version of this paper will also appear in a Festschrift for Gocha Tsetskhladze.