

# OXFORD REGIUS PROFESSORS OF GREEK

Christopher Pelling

Christopher Pelling, Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Oxford between 2003 and 2015, explores the history of this post, and examines some of the many scholars who have held it, including four Wykehamists.



WINCHESTER  
COLLEGE

2017



Figure 1 Henry VIII; attributed to John Taylor

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**T**his was an informal talk given on 15 February 2017 at the invitation of the Headmaster of Winchester College. The informality has been kept in this printed version.

A few years ago I was at a talk where the chairman remained silent for a few seconds after the speaker had finished. Then he just said, 'That was the most self-indulgent talk I have ever heard'. Given that I was myself Regius Professor from 2003 to 2015, I fear that a talk with this title deserves the same comment, but that fact also means that the Headmaster's invitation was one I could not possibly bring myself to refuse.

In fact, there is a reason why Winchester might have more interest in this rather arcane topic than most, as it has provided more Regius Professors of Greek than any other school: four, including the very first. A fifth was also a local man, from Hyde Abbey School along the road. Merchant Taylors' has managed three, and so has Westminster; Eton, as far as I can tell, has not produced any. Perhaps Etonians have always been too busy being Prime Ministers.

More later on about some of the more colourful ones, especially the Wykehamists, but first a little on the chair itself. A 'Regius chair' is one founded by the crown, and at least in theory its holders are appointed by the crown. There are nine of these in Oxford, and the first five were appointed by Henry VIII, in Greek, Hebrew, Divinity, Medicine, and Civil Law (Figure 1; Henry's portrait hangs in Christ Church Hall, and Christ Church will feature quite a lot in this discussion). The sixth, in History, was added by George I: it was known as 'Modern History' until 2005, but by then the notion that, say, Alfred the Great could be regarded as 'modern' was beginning to seem a little strange. Chairs in Ecclesiastical History and Moral and Pastoral Theology were added by Victoria. The ninth, in Mathematics, was announced last year; no appointment has yet been made, but there will indeed now be a new Regial kid on the block.

The Greek chair dates from 1541; the Cambridge equivalent had been established a year before (Catherine Parr was a Cambridge woman). Each had an initial stipend of £40, and I have been told that the Cambridge professor is still ceremonially presented with a purse of £40 a year. That is not the only thing that the Cambridge professor gets that the Oxford one does not. The Cambridge chair has a coat of arms (Figure 2). Prominent features are the owl of Athena at the top, and what looks like a grasshopper, but is, I think, a cicada at the bottom. The owl signifies wisdom; the cicada perhaps indicates the sweet flow of words and culture inspired by the Muses. The grasshopper, we are told, was also a heraldic emblem favoured by Napoleon. I make no comment on that, and of course none of this rankles with me at all.

The Oxford chair was to be linked with the newly founded college of Christ Church, which was originally to be called Cardinal College, as the real founder was Cardinal Wolsey (Figure 3, also from Christ Church Hall): Henry took it over, shall we politely say, after Wolsey had fallen from grace and died. For all the magnificence of the buildings, one can see that they were never finished: the main quadrangle was to be surrounded by a cloister, and the bases for the pillars and the framework for the arches linking it to the buildings are all in place (Figure 4). That was not the only thing that Henry left undone, and this takes us back to that original stipend of £40.

That was not a negligible sum in 1541; a readership was founded at the same time, and that had a stipend of just £5. It is always hard to give modern equivalents, and one website helpfully says that, depending on how one does the sums, it would come out at somewhere between £20,000 and nearly £10 million. The best guess might be somewhere between £25,000 and £30,000 – a living wage, certainly, especially for an academic living in and fed by his college. Still, the centuries passed, and in the middle of the nineteenth century, the stipend was still £40. It would have sunk by then to something like a sixth of its original value; most college tutors were by then earning perhaps £200, most professors £600, and the theological Regius professors probably about £800. It is understandable that two nineteenth-century professors, Thomas Gaisford and



Figure 2  
Coat of arms of the  
Regius Professor of  
Greek, Cambridge  
University



Figure 3 Cardinal Wolsey; by Sampson Strong



Figure 4 Tom Quad, Christ Church



Figure 5 Benjamin Jowett; by Sir Leslie Ward

Benjamin Jowett, were also heads of colleges, respectively Christ Church and Balliol: such doubling up has always been very rare in Oxford, though it happens quite often in Cambridge. Understandably, the Greek professor felt rather miffed. The Prime Minister of the day wrote to ask Christ Church to raise the stipend; the Dean of Christ Church, the redoubtable Henry Liddell (father of Alice), wrote back robustly to suggest that in that case the crown might consider transferring the lands that were supposed to be supporting the chair. Henry, it seems, had never quite got around to doing so.

The affair rumbled on for some time. The professor in question, Benjamin Jowett (Figure 5), was a controversial

figure. Many feathers had been ruffled by his writings on the Epistles of St Paul, and still more by his book *On the Interpretation of Scripture* (1860). This had argued that it was important to view the holy writings in the cultural context of their own time, and that it was important for each generation to interpret them anew. That may not seem too outlandish today, but it was very radical for its day: there was even a move to bring Jowett before the Vice-Chancellor's court for heresy. Christ Church was not at all keen on rewarding someone like that. The question of the stipend was referred to the university, and there was a proposal to raise it to £500. This was to be decided by a vote of Convocation – not the assembled dons working within Oxford itself, but all MAs of the university. The day came for the vote, the carriages rattled into town carrying vicar after vicar; one can guess which way they were likely to vote. The stipend remained at £40, and Jowett was dependent on his Balliol fellowship, then later the Mastership, for his livelihood. That was not as great a hardship as it may

seem, as Heads of House might earn as much as £1,500; and Jowett became Vice-Chancellor too, chairing the very court that might a few years earlier have been condemning him.

To put your minds at rest – the stipend has now been increased.

What of the role of the crown in making the appointment? That survives, in an attenuated form, though perhaps not as attenuated (or at least not as recently attenuated) as one might expect. The monarch himself or herself was doubtless involved at the beginning, and Elizabeth I in particular would have concerned herself with the choice, just as she did with the Wardenship of Winchester College (regarded at the time, incidentally, as itself one of the colleges of Oxford University). At the beginning of the eighteenth century it is said that Queen Anne was so impressed with a certain Edward Thwaytes that she appointed him out of hand, though his real expertise was in Anglo-Saxon: what had impressed her, though, was his stoicism under the knife when his leg was being amputated at the knee. (I am not vouching for this story as strictly true.) In the early nineteenth century it was the Prime Minister who wrote to offer the chair to Dean Gaisford, as we shall later see; it is possible that he was simply doing the Prince Regent's bidding, but it is more likely that by then the responsibility had passed to Downing Street. That remained the case until well into the twentieth century. When Gilbert Murray was about to retire in 1936, he noted with some concern that nothing had been done about appointing a successor, and wrote to the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, about it. Baldwin admittedly had rather a lot on his plate in that momentous year, and simply wrote back to ask for Murray's advice. Murray duly gave it; a brilliant appointment was made, but a very controversial one within Oxford itself. More on this later too.

My own appointment was the first where there were actual interviews for the chair, with the Appointments Secretary as one of the panel; up till then the normal practice had been for 'soundings' to be taken, and for a letter then to be sent out of the blue to a favoured candidate. But even in my time the process was not described in terms as ordinary as 'application' or 'interview' or even 'appointing committee': I was invited 'to discuss my interest in the vacancy' with 'the advisory board'. The involvement of the Prime Minister himself or herself has varied according to the PM of the day. Tony Blair was rather busy in 2003 invading Iraq, but I do have my letter of appointment signed by him, and also a rather impressive set of 'Letters Patent'. Earlier, Harold Macmillan was said to be more interested in such crown appointments than anything else in his red boxes; Margaret Thatcher



apparently interviewed the candidates for the chair of History. That really must have been terrifying. She also insisted that the chair should be filled immediately, even though the Oxford faculty wanted to freeze it for a year for financial reasons. There is no indication that the government offered to make good the shortfall, and so in a way the affair of 1541 and the untransferred lands was re-enacted. Admittedly, by then the government was providing the university with quite a lot of other funds, and might have felt that it was doing its bit.

Two last questions before we turn to the professors themselves: why 1541, and why Greek and not Latin? It was what was being done all over Europe, part of a genuine Humanist renaissance of ideas. France, for instance, had appointed two *lecteurs royaux* in Greek and two in Hebrew in 1531 – again not putting Latin in the first shop window; admittedly, Latin there only had to wait three more years, whereas the Latin chairs in both Oxford and Cambridge were not endowed until the nineteenth century (1854 and 1869 respectively). It is tempting to think that Latin had to wait because it was less threatened, being a good deal more of a genuine European *lingua franca* than Greek. Boys at Winchester in the early sixteenth century could be beaten if they were found speaking English rather than Latin, whereas Greek was much rarer. It tells a tale that the sixteenth-century statutes of both St Paul's and Merchant Taylors' stipulate that a headmaster should have Greek as well as Latin 'if such may be gotten': it does not sound as if it could be taken for granted. There may be something in this, but the more salient explanation is likely to be the link with Christian texts, both the New Testament and the early fathers. Nearly all the early Regius professors duly worked on patristic texts, and several who had held the chair formed part of the team producing the King James Bible in 1611. The same was true of Hebrew, another of Henry's Regial foundations: that was taken as biblical Hebrew, though more recent holders have spread their interests more widely. In fact, all five of those initial Regius chairs can be seen as more closely connected with one another than one might think. Ecclesiastical law was one of the three areas designated for the Professor of Civil Law, while medicine was still very much a matter of going back to the Greek texts, especially the Hippocratic Corpus and Galen. Several of the early professors of Greek were in fact more respected for their contribution to medicine than to Greek, though it is less clear that anything they wrote could have made anyone well.

So the early professors were clerics, and it was a young person's post, limited originally to three years at a time. They then went off to country parishes.

That was true of the first professor, the Wykehamist John Harpsfield; he also set the tone in a further way, being the first to be sent to gaol. He was a strong Catholic, which makes his appointment by Henry more remarkable, and he came into his own under Mary, when he was extremely vigorous in the persecution of Protestants. A print survives of his cross-examination of Thomas Cranmer in St Mary's Church, Oxford (Figure 6). It was his faith that led to his imprisonment in Fleet Prison, for on Elizabeth's accession he refused to swear the Oath of Supremacy; he was not released until 1574.



Figure 6 Thomas Cranmer answers the charges put to him by John Harpsfield

The tos and fros of religion under Mary and Elizabeth had their impact on the chair as well, as the next two professors were both thrown out and both in turn reinstated, so that those two – George Etheridge and Giles Lawrence – had four tenures between them. The professors were required to lecture five times a week from 8 to 9 a.m. on Homer, Demosthenes, Isocrates, Euripides, 'or another': five lectures was clearly soon felt to be over-arduous, and the schedule was reduced to four in 1564/5. Some light on what 'lecturing' meant becomes clearer when we come to the first figure of real

substance, and this is the next Wykehamist, the fourth professor, John Harmar (Figure 7). A lot more is known about him because of that Winchester connection, for he became Schoolmaster in 1588, and Warden from 1596. He has been the subject of a very good book by Geoffrey Day, formerly archivist here, and I have learned a lot from that. For his first two years as Schoolmaster he doubled as Regius Professor, which suggests that he was not taking his Oxford duties too seriously: it was the best part of a day's ride to get from one city to the other, and he would have been teaching in Winchester every day. If so, he was not the only one: we are told that his Oxford successor but one 'did not pursue the responsibilities of the post' for a full ten years, in his case because he was working on the King James Bible.



Figure 7  
John Harmar; English School, 1622

Hanmar certainly took Winchester seriously, and his library is still a thing of great beauty and impressiveness (Figures 8 – 9). This is what also allows us to glimpse what his teaching was like, as a volume survives of his 'dictations' (Figure 10). These would presumably be read out to the class as fair copies



Figure 8 John Harmar's Library, Winchester College



Figure 9 John Harmar's Library, Winchester College

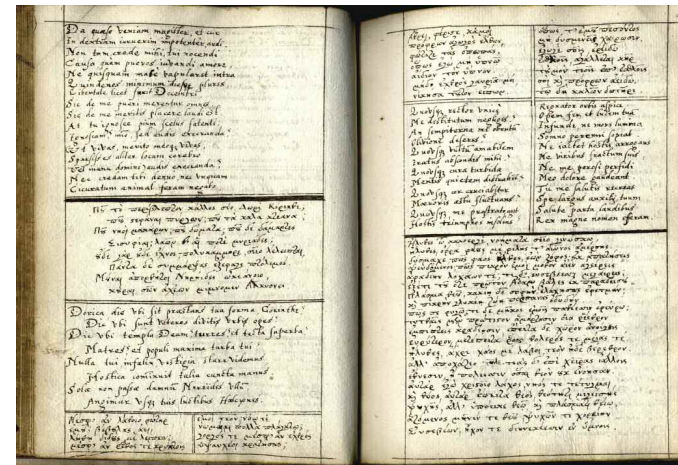


Figure 10 John Harmar's book of dictations, c. 1595



for imitation, and are a mix of excerpts from genuine texts, some translations of his own and of others from, for example, Greek into Latin, and some of his own compositions. Some are full of in-jokes and puns on pupils' names, such as a riff on 'who is the tiniest boy in the school' (not something one could get away with now!). The boys would then be set their individual compositions, to be handed in on fixed days of the week: Latin prose on Tuesdays, Latin verse on Wednesdays, more Latin prose on Saturdays, and so on. I gather that teaching at Eton still had a similar timetable in the 1960s. University teaching may not have been very different, though the concentration on specified authors implies that the professor would also take the students through those texts. After all, university students need not have been very much older; we know of many students who went up at the age of about fifteen.

I shall pass quickly over his successor, Sir Henry Cuffe, who had the distinction of being executed for treason. He was involved with the Earl of Essex in his rebellion against the aged Elizabeth; Cuffe himself seems to have deserved what he got, as he appears to have been particularly vigorous in urging Essex to look for all sorts of support once he had fallen out of favour. I was very proud of having an executed predecessor until I discovered that the very first Regius Professor of Civil Law had got there first, being hanged, drawn, and quartered at the very beginning of Elizabeth's reign. It was evidently a high-risk profession.

The next Wykehamist was John Harrys or Harris (Figure 11), professor from 1619 to 1622. His role as professor is little documented, although quite a bit is known about his time as Warden of Winchester, which lasted up until the Civil War. A particular hazard of the time was posed by a sequence of visitations to the school, a sort of seventeenth-century equivalent of Ofsted inspections but decidedly more threatening. John Harmar, indeed, had been taken to task in 1608 by one Archbishop Bancroft for 'living and dining too well'. In 1635–6 Harrys was faced by Archbishop Laud, who singled out a certain 'George Jonson, one of your Fellows', as one who was 'to be more diligent to perform his duty therein than formerly he hath done'. What is more, 'if there be not more attendance and teaching, less charges and whipping than is reported, the school will never thrive, nor the College recover its power againe'. Still more threatening was a further visitation during the Civil War, with three regicides who were unlikely to look with favour on a college with such close associations with the crown. But Harrys clearly put up a good defence, and he, and the school, emerged unscathed.

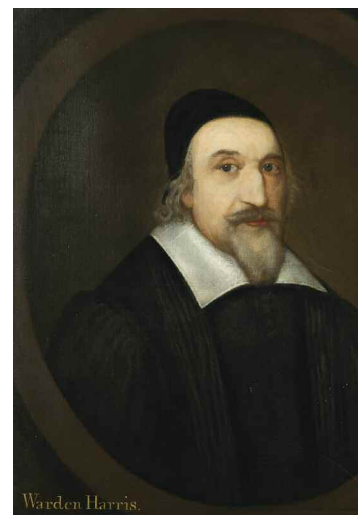


Figure 11 John Harrys or Harris; English School, follower of Cornelius Johnson

the Old Testament book of Jeremiah into Greek hexameters composed by an old Winchester pupil. Harmar's own inscription is also in hexameters, and he clearly had tremendous fun writing it, scouring the Greek lexicon for a wonderful collection of noise-words, some of them extremely rare. It translates as follows:

*For John Ailmer, translator of Jeremiah's laments into Greek hexameters*

The prophet Jeremiah sat there grieving in his heart as he pondered terrible deeds and viewed the ill-fated troubles of the people of his Israel. Weighed down by miseries, he bent his head this way and that, indignant at the evil ways that had by now grown old among mortals. Dragging up pity from his wearied heart with a

A few tenures later came the fourth and (so far!) final Wykehamist, John Harmar junior, nephew of the first. He would seem to have been a rather credulous gentleman; at least, a story was told of his being taken in by an undergraduate who posed as a visiting Greek Orthodox priest and invited him to a sermon. He might have suspected something, one would think, as the sermon took place in the bar of The Mitre Hotel. I have felt close to this John Harmar during the last day or so, as I have been looking at a very fine Greek poem that he inscribed on a volume still in the College's possession (Figure 12).

The volume itself is a translation of

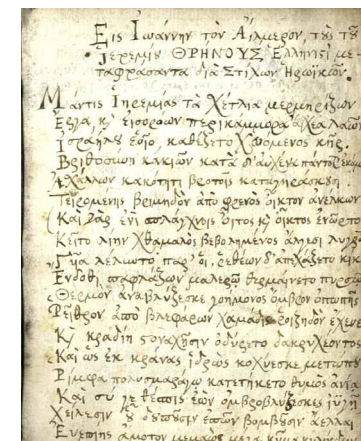


Figure 12 Flyleaf of John Ailmer, *Musae sacrae: seu Jonas, Jeremiae Threni, & Daniel Graeco redditi carmine* (1652)

lion-like roar (βριμηδόν), for fate and pity together were rising inside his vital organs), he lay on the ground, struck by terrible grief. His limbs had lost their strength, the vigour oozed from them, he grew hot inside as he boiled with a violent fever: he bubbled forth (ἀναβλύζεσκε) a warm shower of what he had seen. A flood poured forth from his eyes with a rushing noise (ροιζηδόν) and he let out a tearful wail in his heartfelt grief. Sweat gurgled (κοχύεσκε) forth in a copious stream from his forehead, as if from a well; swiftly his spirit wasted away in bellowing (πολυσιμαράγω) anguish. You too, in witnessing it, bubbled up with a shower of howls (ὄμβροβλύζεσκες [I think he made that one up]); the storms of words thunder (βομβοῦσιν) from the lips in your sore distress, eagerly rolling forward a great incessant surge of eloquence. You poured forth lines of verse, mixed with tears, like a rushing spring – it was not just a light moistening of the throat with drops from the Muses. You yourself drew a sacred stream from the spring of Hades, and in agonising thirst you sent Homer to thunder forth (ἀναροιβδησας), even before the down of a beard cast a shadow on your cheeks; and (Ailmer) you sprinkled the honey of your verses on the bitter substance, adding the charm of softening music to these laments and wailings, and stilled the cry of lamentation with the music of Kinyra (i.e. the lyre). You were once a scion of my Winchester, now you are a fine bastion of fair New College Oxford, a child of Homer like unto the honoured Father: and you are a wise child, as you recognised your own lineage.

*Jo: Harmarus, Professor of Greek at Oxford*

Marvellous stuff.

That Greek is really very good. Still, if we are honest, the scholarly accomplishments of any of the professors until the nineteenth century should not be overstated, and I will pass over them quickly. (It is sad to miss out Thomas Terry, remembered for having a student who died a terrible death in the privy: he overbalanced when sitting on a backless lavatory and toppled into the cesspit below. Not a good way to go.) The elder Harmar had the distinction of writing the first Greek book to be published by Oxford University Press; the younger Harmar wrote a tract on syphilis (so the medical link once again); but that is about it, at least for the Wykehamists. The first twenty-three professors are allowed a grand total of seven lines in over 1,000 pages in Sir John Sandys' *History of Classical Scholarship*, and two of those seven are spent distinguishing one of them from a contemporary with the same name.

It is no coincidence that it was around 1800 that scholarly distinction at last came to the chair, as that was a time when the university was beginning to take academic life more seriously. Edward Gibbon's description of his

unhappy fourteen months at Magdalen, with its fellows 'steeped in port and prejudice', was a very eighteenth-century picture. The dawn of the nineteenth century saw the introduction of more rigorous examinations, increasingly written ones as well as oral, and eventually at a university as well as college level; degrees were taken more seriously, and so was the teaching for them. There is correspondingly more to be said about each of the holders of the chair from this point on, but time allows only the briefest of vignettes for each.



Figure 13 Thomas Gaisford; by Henry William Pickersgill

**Thomas Gaisford** (1811–55; Figure 13), the local boy from Hyde Abbey School. Gaisford was a very serious and precise scholar (an editor of the texts of Greek metricians and lexicographers, for instance), and a magnet for many anecdotes. He is said – possibly apocryphally – to have ended a Christmas Day sermon by 'commending the study of Greek literature, which not only elevates above the vulgar herd but leads not infrequently to positions of considerable emolument': he will have meant bishoprics, as the so-called 'Greek play bishops' – ones whose main distinction was editing Greek tragedies – became quite a talking point of the nineteenth-century church. Social skills were not his forte. When he received the offer of the chair, his draft reply to the Prime Minister was simply: 'I have read your letter and accede to its contents'. One of his letters preserved in Christ Church reads: 'Sir: letters of this sort are a matter of extreme annoyance to your obedient servant, Thomas Gaisford'.



**Benjamin Jowett** (1855–93: Figures 14–15). I have already mentioned Jowett’s unconventional theological work and the discord that resulted. He again attracted anecdotes. A ‘Balliol verse’ ran: ‘First come I, my name is Jowett. There’s no knowledge but I know it. I am master of this College. What I don’t know isn’t knowledge.’ There was a tendresse between him and Florence Nightingale: people speculated that she had turned him down, and his life was not the same again.



Figure 14 Benjamin Jowett; after Désiré-François Laugée, after 1871



Figure 15 Benjamin Jowett relaxes from his labours

Margot Asquith later asked him what Florence had been like. ‘Violent,’ he said, ‘very violent’. He raised Balliol to formidable intellectual standing, and was the centre of intense discussion at the time on what the university was for. The other leading player in this argument was Mark Pattison, Rector of Exeter College, who held that Oxford should follow the German model of a scholarly research institution; that was a pattern that several American universities were choosing to follow. Jowett was insistent that it should remain predominantly an institution for undergraduate teaching, with a responsibility to educate those who were going to fill public positions of importance. Jowett, I think it is fair to say, won, at least for the next fifty years or so.



Figure 16 Ingram Bywater; by John Singer Sargent

**Ingram Bywater** (1893–1908: Figure 16), the first holder of the post not to be an ordained cleric; he is much less talked about than his two predecessors or his next few successors. His text of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* is still, however, the standard one, and that is no mean achievement: nearly all the other texts of important works produced at the time are now regarded as obsolete. He had little time for his successor, whom he described as an ‘insolent puppy’.

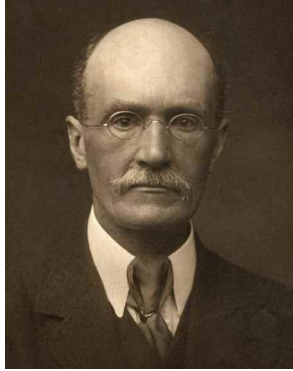


Figure 17 Gilbert Murray; by George Charles Beresford, vintage print, 1916

**Gilbert Murray** (1908–36: Figures 17–18) had equally little regard for Bywater. There are many beautiful things in Greek literature, he remarked: I dare say Bywater knows that, but I cannot see him ever persuading anyone else of it. Most would say, I think, that Murray has been the most distinguished holder of the chair: maybe not the greatest scholar, though that is arguable, but surely the greatest person. He was a man of letters as much as a scholar, and a man of the theatre too: his verse translations of Greek tragedy were widely performed and made the plays accessible to a much broader audience. He himself figures, under a very

light disguise, as a character in George Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*. He was a public figure in other ways too, a prominent liberal (and not loved for that in Christ Church: he would dine on Friday nights, when he could invite undergraduates of other colleges and have someone to talk to), and then one who played a leading role after the First World War in the League of Nations. In old age this lifelong teetotaler was told to drink half a bottle of sherry every evening for his health. I've been looking for a doctor like that all my life.

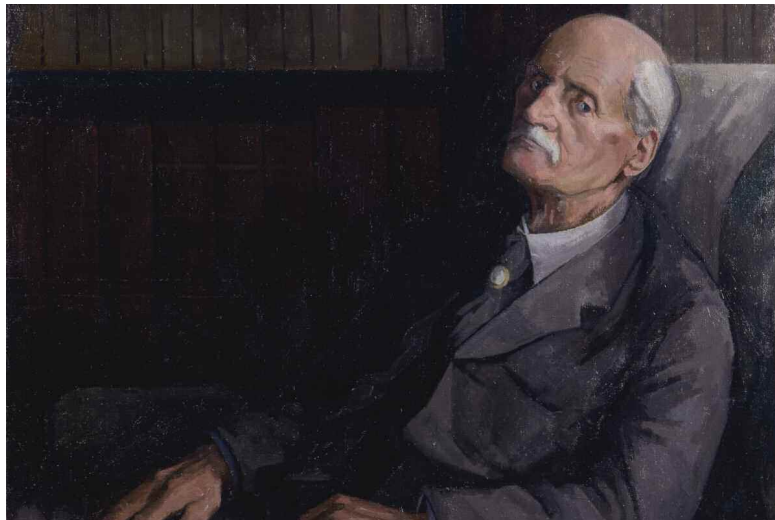


Figure 18 Gilbert Murray, aged 88; by Lawrence Toynbee, 1950

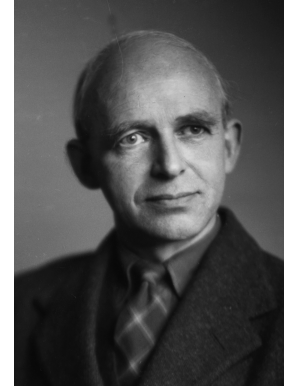


Figure 19 E. R. Dodds; by Walter Stoneman, February 1945

**E. R. Dodds** (1936–60: Figure 19) was the unexpected name that Murray put forward to Stanley Baldwin. Dodds was a lecturer at Birmingham University at the time, best known for his expertise on Neoplatonism (or 'Neoplatonic poppycock', as an unsympathetic Oxford don put it). The succession was expected to go to one of two local Oxford heavyweights, but Murray did not have much regard for either. Dodds was duly made to feel unwelcome both in the university and in the college; he remarked later that he would have been much happier had he been appointed to another post that came up in the same year, that of Head

Gardener at St John's. 'What did you do in the war, Doddsy?' was the unfriendly greeting of one of the disappointed Oxford candidates, Maurice Bowra, and this touched a strong reason for his initial unpopularity: Dodds was an Irishman and felt that the Great War was not his war, so was effectively a conscientious objector; Bowra had fought in the trenches. Dodds was an undergraduate during the war, and the Master of University College made it clear to him that he would not be welcome to return and finish his course. Feelings towards him warmed (he was in fact an extremely nice man, with an impish and rebellious streak: I met him a few times), and by the end of his tenure he was recognised as a very great scholar, arguably the best of the lot.

He too was a man of letters, a great friend of T. S. Eliot and a patron of Louis MacNeice. His immense feeling for poetry comes over in his writings, particularly his edition of Euripides' *Bacchae*.

**Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones** (1960–89: Figure 20), the first whom I knew well, partly because his daughter Antonia was my college pupil (that



Figure 20 Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones

was pretty daunting). I particularly admire this photo. I am not sure whether he or his cat is the more intimidating, but they share the same look. He was described to me by my own undergraduate tutor as ‘the most eccentric man in Oxford’, and that’s always quite a thing to claim. I got him arrested once: I was staying with him and his family in Massachusetts, and Antonia and I went for a walk through the snow-clad campus of Wellesley College. We were followed by the family cat (not the one in the photograph: that was the Oxford cat), but Antonia urged me not to worry: ‘the stupid creature will find its way back’. Of course it didn’t, and Hugh had to go and look for it in the dark. A shambling character walking around the campus at night must have seemed a bit suspicious, and ‘I am the Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford University’ tends not to cut much ice with an American cop.

**Peter Parsons** (1989–2003: Figure 21), a brilliant papyrologist and a very good friend. We are getting close to home, and I will be more sparing.

**Christopher Pelling** (2003–15: Figure 22). The photo was taken at a Plutarch conference: Heaven knows what I had just said. The worrying thing is that the other man (Philip Stadter) is a world-expert on Plutarch . . .

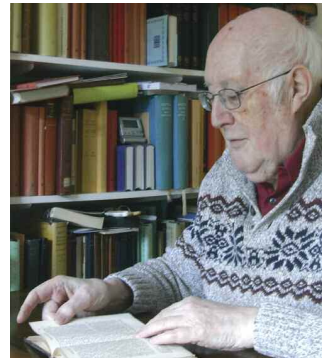


Figure 21 Peter Parsons



Figure 22 Christopher Pelling and an appalled Philip Stadter



Figure 23 Gregory Hutchinson

**Gregory Hutchinson** (2015– : Figure 23): an extremely learned and lovely man, who might equally have been elected to the Chair of Latin.

No women – yet: Cambridge is ahead of us there.

Before I was elected I remember asking Peter Parsons, as politely as I could, ‘What is it that you actually *do* all day?’ It was a good question, to which the only answer is ‘Whatever comes up . . .’. One has less contact with undergraduates than might be expected, and less than one would like: Murray and Dodds both commented on how frustrating it was to lecture to rows of student faces when they could recognise only a handful. Both put on classes of translation into English verse in order to put that right; I, for a time, gave a class at an early stage to students who had started Greek at the university. Things do change, and there is now much more of a public role, even (not to be too grand about it) a national role as a sort of spokesman for Classics; Michael Gove, for instance, appointed me to lead an initiative to promote classical language teaching in state schools. Still, that is nothing compared with what Gilbert Murray achieved, and that was long before it was considered part of the job.

One thing that has certainly changed is the role with graduate students. Doctoral work hardly featured at all in Oxford Humanities until after the Second World War; now we give something like sixty places a year in Classical Languages and Literature alone, and there are a lot more in Ancient History and in Classical Archaeology. So a great deal of my own teaching was given to graduate supervision and seminars, and – much though I missed the undergraduates whom I got to know so well as a college tutor – that too was deeply rewarding and enjoyable. So various wheels have turned full circle. In a way, Pattison’s view of the university has mounted a come-back, though Jowett’s emphasis on undergraduate teaching is still important too: it’s by now something of a score-draw. I therefore spent most of my time talking to men and women some ten years older than those – all men, of course, then – that John Harpsfield would have taught. But I could never have written onomatopoeic Greek hexameters on a flyleaf half as well as the younger John Harmar.

*My thanks to Richard Foster for showing me Harmar’s library and several of its volumes, especially the hexameter version of Jeremiah.*



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- FIGURE 1 Henry VIII; attributed to John Taylor (c. 1585–1651), oil on canvas (LP 24).  
*By permission of the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford.*
- FIGURE 2 Coat of arms of the Regius Professor of Greek, Cambridge University.
- FIGURE 3 Cardinal Wolsey; by Sampson Strong (c. 1550–1611), panel (LP 11).  
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- FIGURE 4 Tom Quad, Christ Church.  
<http://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/pictures/thehouse/TomQuad.jpg>
- FIGURE 5 Benjamin Jowett (Men of the Day, No. 124); by Sir Leslie Ward, chromolithograph, published in *Vanity Fair*, 26 February 1876, NPG D43733  
© National Portrait Gallery, London.
- FIGURE 6 Thomas Cranmer answers the charges put to him by John Harpsfield; woodcut, John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (1563).  
<http://reformedanglicans.blogspot.co.uk/2015/04/23-april-1554-ad-oxford-uk-at-trial-dr.html>.
- FIGURE 7 John Harmar; English School, 1622.  
*By permission of Winchester College.*
- FIGURES 8–9 John Harmar's Library, Winchester College.
- FIGURE 10 John Harmar's book of dictations (c. 1595). Winchester College Fellows' Library.
- FIGURE 11 John Harrys or Harris; English School, follower of Cornelius Johnson (c. 1593–1661), oil on canvas.  
*By permission of Winchester College.*
- FIGURE 12 Flyleaf of John Ailmer, *Musae sacrae: seu Jonas, Jeremiae Threni, & Daniel Graeco redditi carmine* (Oxford, 1652), inscribed by John Harmar Jnr. Winchester College Fellows' Library.
- FIGURE 13 Thomas Gaisford; by Henry William Pickersgill, oil on canvas (LP 264).  
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- FIGURE 14 Benjamin Jowett; probably by The Autotype Company, after Désiré-François Laugée, after 1871, NPG D42703  
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- FIGURE 15 Benjamin Jowett relaxes from his labours.
- FIGURE 16 Ingram Bywater; by John Singer Sargent (1856–1925), oil on canvas, NO3012  
© Tate, London.
- FIGURE 17 Gilbert Murray; George Charles Beresford vintage print, 1916, NPG x12907  
© National Portrait Gallery, London.
- FIGURE 18 Gilbert Murray, aged 88; by Lawrence Toynebee, oil on canvas, 1950, NPG4037  
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- FIGURE 19 E. R. Dodds; by Walter Stoneman, negative, February 1945, NPG x20540  
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- FIGURE 20 Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones.  
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- FIGURE 21 Peter Parsons.  
*By permission of Peter Parsons.*
- FIGURE 22 Christopher Pelling and an appalled Philip Stadter.  
*Photograph by Fr. Frederick Brenk.*
- FIGURE 23 Gregory Hutchinson.  
*Photograph by Yvonne Hutchinson.*