Introduction:
New Approaches to the Hellenistic World

Peter Green

Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making.

MILTON, *AREOPAGITICA* (1664)

Historians are . . . carried along by the general cultural movements of their own times, such as Romanticism, Positivism, or Marxism. They are as much affected as anyone else by the evolution of ways of thinking about the behavior of men in society. . . . Original ways of looking at the past direct the search towards new kinds of evidence. Eventually these seams become exhausted and the venerated leaders are challenged by iconoclasts who become in time the patrons of new orthodoxies.

NORMAN HAMPSON, *THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION: THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND ITS LEGACY, 1789–1989* (1988)

Why are we looking at the same things we looked at fifty years ago and coming up with completely different conclusions?

A. E. SAMUEL, *SYMPOSIUM ON HELLENISTIC HISTORY AND CULTURE* (1988), IN DISCUSSION.

Despite all the benefits of sophisticated modern communication systems, scholarship remains an essentially lonely business. The world is large, one's area of specialization limited; kindred spirits tend to be widely scattered. Bibliographies, periodicals, and, ultimately, books ensure that our ideas are disseminated; the exchange of offprints is a crucial element in the sharing of knowledge. But the time lag between an inchoate idea in the head and the formulation of that idea into a rational theory is considerable, while the period from the written concept to its final publication can be—*experto credite*—even longer. Thus during much of one's research one lives in a private—and for a great deal of the time not unwelcome—limbo, working alone, trying out one's ideas on, at most, a few close professional friends, and often not even doing that, at least until a fairly advanced stage in one's thinking. The picture may differ somewhat for scientists; but in that cluster of ancillary specialties which

composes our own area of research in the classics, not least for the Hellenistic period, I think this sense of isolation, especially in the early stages of any project, is endemic.

It also undoubtedly explains why academics who are neither job hunting themselves nor selling their own recent Ph.D.'s still flock enthusiastically, often through appalling winter weather, to meet old friends, exchange shoptalk, and even listen to papers, at APA/AIA meetings. The impulse to attend these grisly social reunions, year after year, needs to be an exceptionally strong one, perhaps because classics, as a discipline, does not provide so rich an assortment of those specialist literary conferences that proliferate under the aegis of institutions such as the MLA, and that have been memorably satirized by David Lodge in his novel *Small World.* When we decided to organize such a symposium at the University of Texas, Austin, our chief aim was, precisely, to facilitate the exchange of ideas on Hellenistic history and culture between a group of widely scattered experts based in the United States and in Britain. We also tried, for the sake of intellectual stimulus and profitable debate, to bring into confrontation scholars whose conflicting opinions might be expected to ensure not just good entertainment (though of course, as some participants were not slow to point out, this consideration had indeed occurred to us) but also, and more important, a thorough scrutiny of all new theories, old dogmas, and overcomforting *idées reçues.*

Professor David Halperin, rather flatteringly, has credited me with being a *provocateur,* a mischief maker—rather, one gathers, in the spirit of Sherlock Holmes, of whom it was said, in *A Study in Scarlet,* that he was quite capable of trying out the latest poison on his friends, not out of malice, but in the disinterested pursuit of scientific knowledge. If so, I can hardly claim to be oversuccessful at stirring up trouble, since what emerged from this symposium was not, in the first instance, a series of irreconcilable differences but a whole range of illuminating and unforeseen agreements. Debate, when it did occur, tended to be on topics already well aired in print, and, it could be argued, dependent more on personal temperament than on hard evidence—for example, the sociolegal status of the Macedonian monarchy: model of constitutionalism or ad hoc power-base for warlords? or the "biographical fallacy" in literary criticism; or that perennially baffling puzzle, Antiochus Epiphanes' motives for his root-and-branch attack on Jewish religion. No surprises there. It was, rather, the revealing insights, the fertilizing phrases, the unexpectedly converging or parallel lines of research from different subdisciplines, the sense that in this great variegated Hellenistic mosaic a new pattern was emerging, of which we had all become part without knowing it (rather like Molière's M. Jourdain talking prose unawares),

that gave our meeting its special, indeed unique, sense of urgency and excitement.

At the same time this phenomenon does, on reflection, give cause for a certain amount of historiographical concern: serendipitous concinnity is all very encouraging, but one begins to wonder whether our old friend the zeitgeist may not have been exerting its unseen prior influence on most of us behind the scenes. Why *are* we looking at largely the same evidence and coming up with different conclusions? Why, more or less independently, are we stressing areas (such as the frontier problem) in which our predecessors took comparatively scanty interest? We have, of course, learned to look out for *their* explicable prejudices and ad hominem motivations—but what about our own? We know, for example, that Rostovtzeff's position regarding the Russian Revolution almost certainly dictated his interpretation of the Greek economic system, emphasizing private property and a laissez-faire market. Yet is is only beginning to occur to us that his centralized, dirigist, authoritarian model of Ptolemaic administration, so ably criticized by Professor A. E. Samuel in his presentation, in fact owes a great deal to Marxist, no less than to Keynesian, theory. Ideas currently in the air tend, like viruses, to be infectious as well as invisible. It may, equally, be no accident that the current challenge to this (papyrologically based) thesis of a Ptolemaic planned economy has surfaced at a time when the patent and acknowledged bankruptcy of the Marxist system is transforming the history of Eastern Europe.

In his stimulating monograph *The Shifting Sands of History: Interpretations of Ptolemaic Egypt*, Professor Samuel reminds us that "it is desirable to consider the effects of modern experience on the treatment of that period," and he notes various major trends and events during the past century and a half that have contributed to shaping the ancient historian's preconceptions about his craft.[1] The liberalism engendered by the American, French, and Greek revolutions too soon found itself competing with a new and flourishing colonial imperialism, as the triumphant nation-states shouldered the White Man's Burden or were seduced by the dream of Manifest Destiny. Residual guilt over the nastier aspects of military conquest complicated the issue by forcing these new expansionists to advance behind the morally uplifting banner of cultural proselytization. To do this they unashamedly, and often in all likelihood unconsciously, borrowed the language and imagery of Christian missionaries bringing light to the benighted heathen, aided in this (at least as regards Alexander) by section 6 of Plutarch's early essay *De Alexandri Magni Fortuna aut Virtute* (*Mor.* 329A–D). Though Alexander was by far the most

[1] A. E. Samuel, *The Shifting Sands of History: Interpretations of Ptolemaic Egypt*, Publications of the Association of Ancient Historians, no. 2 (Lanham and London, 1989), ix.

notable beneficiary of this exercise in historical sanitization, he by no means stood alone.

What is our position today? Two world wars, plus such horrors as the Holocaust, Hiroshima, the Gulag Archipelago, and the murderous depredations of various committed extremists—the Khmer Rouge, the IRA, assorted Middle East bombers and hijackers—have left most Western historians with an ingrained distrust, not only of totalitarianism (whether of the Left or the Right) but of all ideological politics whatsoever; not only of the *Führerprinzip* but of the validity, let alone the attainability, of principles as such. The chief casualty, ideologically speaking, has been hope: idealism—and, a fortiori, *Idealismus*—is today not even a dirty word, but a bad joke. We live in a world of pragmatic calculation, where the dominant concern is self-interest. For many of us *ataraxia* seems a logical goal, and *lathe biosas* a desirable motto. We are obsessed by economics, Great Power competition, and the ingenious devices of applied science. It is hard for us to think of soldiers as heroes. Egalitarianism and multiculturalism have rendered *elitist* a pejorative term—while at the same time competing uneasily with a more-than-Alexandrian academicism and such knee-jerk nationalist phenomena as an obsession about flag burning.

Feminism, similarly, is undermining traditional male assumptions in a society that also contrives to be more preoccupied with sex than any civilization since that of Julio-Claudian Rome. We sneer at experts and bureaucrats while remaining helplessly dependent on them. We complain about the loss of cultural values while energetically deconstructing all the criteria on which such values ultimately rest. Our talent for paradox, in short, eclipses that of the Socratic tradition, on which Professor Long has thrown so much new light. As for religion, we manage a balancing act in this field too: largely skeptical, as academics, about the efficacy of Christianity, we nevertheless do not underrate, as historians, the continuing force in human affairs of passionate faith (after the Rushdie affair, who could?), and thus we are perhaps in a better position to understand just what the "deification" of human leaders implied. At least we have got beyond the point of treating it solely as political flim-flam, or even as cynically provided opium for the masses. (In this connection I note with surprise, in retrospect, that during discussion Euhemerus—to dynastic cults what de Gobineau was to Aryanism—only got mentioned once, by Professor Burstein, while none of us thought of bringing up the notorious ithyphallic hymn with which Athens greeted Demetrius Poliorcetes in 290.) On the one hand, intellectual loss of religious faith; on the other, snake handling, Holy Rollering, and astrology, with Islamic fundamentalists burning books and issuing death sentences in the background. The paradox continues.

The relevance of all this to Hellenistic historiography should be readily apparent. We are what we eat, and that includes the apple from the Tree of Knowledge. Scholars know this, and remind us of it at intervals. The Swiss historian Eduard Füter was well aware, as early as 1911, that the changes in European society after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 profoundly affected the assumptions of all later Western historians, whatever their chosen field of study.[2] Croce's assumption that all history is contemporary history[3] should be viewed in the same light. But the reminders sometimes are forgotten in the excitement of pursuing new lines of thought; and thus the searching question posed by Professor Samuel (apropos the visual arts, but it has universal application), and placed at the head of this introduction as an epigraph, is one that merits careful and detailed consideration. During the symposium itself it was, understandably, sidelined in favor of new aperçus on specific aspects of Hellenistic society; but now, I think, the time has come to take stock of the revisionist findings that we shared and to evaluate them, in perspective, as the product of our own day and age.

At the same time, of course, we have to bear in mind certain important caveats. While the zeitgeist can never be ignored as an influence—least of all when we flatter ourselves we have made due allowance for it—neither is it all-dominant. To a degree that might surprise behaviorists (but not, of course, Dr. Johnson), the intellect and the will do remain free agents. What is more, as Professor Pollitt hinted in discussion, a fashion or trend, no less than new evidence, may start useful inquiry by pointing us in directions we might otherwise never have turned to; and in any case—I hope this is not whistling in the wind—commonsense precautions should save us from the worst excesses of academic behaviorism.

Let us start with the big question: Why, during the past decade or two, has the Hellenistic Age come to enjoy such extraordinary vogue as an area of study? And why—even more interestingly—have its achievements been upgraded to a point where the old buzzword "decadence" is now dismissed as a regrettable solecism, on a par with patronizing anthropological references to "the savage mind"? The remarkable, and rapid, rehabilitation of Hellenistic philosophy, so strikingly demonstrated by Professor Long and other scholars, is the most obvious instance of this trend, but by no means the only one. Alexandrian literature is attracting more and more attention in its own right, and not merely as a precursor of, and model for, the writers (less neoteric than is often

[2] E. Füter, *Geschichte der neueren Historiographie* (Munich and Berlin, 1911); cf. Peter Green, *Essays in Antiquity* (London, 1960), 52ff.

[3] Best analyzed by R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford, 1946), 201–4.

claimed) of late Republican and Augustan Rome. Professor Bulloch's description of Callimachus as "the most outstanding intellect of this generation, the greatest poet that the Hellenistic age produced . . . a great poet in his own right"[4] would have raised academic eyebrows not so long ago. Alexandrian science, most notably in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, and medicine, is rapidly becoming a growth industry, as the work of scholars such as White, Scarborough, Lloyd, Von Staden, and Neugebauer eloquently attests. Hellenistic art—I am thinking in particular of Professor Pollitt's magnificent new survey[5]—has undergone a similar upward revaluation. Most recently of all—and perhaps this is the most immediately notable feature of this symposium—a great deal of interest has shifted from the supposed centers of power to the periphery, creating the basis for a series of "frontier studies" that will (it seems safe to say) profoundly modify our assessment of the political, economic, and cultural history of the Hellenistic Age. To take the most dramatic example raised: simply by treating the Tiber as a frontier, by reexamining the relations between Rome and the Greek East in such terms, scholars are, at a deep and radical level, transforming our underlying preconceptions—little changed hitherto, in essence, since Droysen's day—of *Hellenismus*.

This generally bullish academic market has been brought about (as Professor Samuel hinted during discussion) by a variety of disparate factors, not all the product of the zeitgeist. The great mass of systematic groundwork carried out early in this century by pioneering giants such as Wilcken, Berve, Grenfell and Hunt, Rostovtzeff, and Dittenberger—all, significantly, in the first place papyrologists or epigraphists—depended upon an immense influx of raw material to be edited, published, and collected, and it was in consequence particularist to a degree. Its great virtue was to make generally available a large quantity of more or less fragmentary texts, both literary and nonliterary (with the occasional substantial bonanza such as the Aristotelian *Athenaion Politeia* and, more recently, Menander's *Dyskolos*). Its faults were, first, a tendency either to generalize rashly from the merely local and parochial,[6] or else, per contra, among more cautious scholars, not to see the wood for the papyrus trees; and second, the unthinking retrojection of modern assumptions—often economic[7]—into ancient sociocultural patterns where they were inapplicable.

[4] A. W. Bulloch, *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, vol. 1, *Greek Literature* (Cambridge, 1985), 549, 570.

[5] J. J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge, 1986).

[6] Cf. Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium: The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age* (Berkeley and London, 1990), xx–xxi.

[7] Cf. Samuel, *Shifting Sands*, 51ff.

The foundations, then, were being laid early, with a textual emphasis that, while avoiding the worst excesses of anachronistic bias, also failed to provide an overall view. General interest followed much more slowly. The three tumultuous centuries between Alexander's death and Octavian's victory at Actium were ignored as far as possible and denigrated, in general terms, as a sad falling-off from the classical apogee. Greek achievement was still to a remarkable extent identified with the Greek *polis*, so that Philip of Macedon's victory over a handful of leading Greek states at Chaeronea in 338 came to be seen as a watershed in Greek history, after which nothing, in a sense, mattered: Hellenistic culture was bourgeois, decadent, and materialist; Periclean idealism was dead; the *idiotai* and *apragmones* had triumphed; *ataraxia* was the goal. When this society fell victim, finally, to the Roman military machine, with its crass and philistine efficiency, the feeling was that these degenerate Greeklings had got no more than they deserved (as more than one member of the symposium observed, the anti-Roman prejudice among modern Hellenists is notable).[8] Byzantium, and a fortiori, modern Greece, despite its amazing twentieth-century literary renaissance, fared even worse: I vividly recall the comment of one eminent scholar, who declared (apparently in all seriousness) that he could have nothing to do with a society capable of making ἀπό govern the accusative case. It was this powerful climate of opinion that also felt the need to distort Alexander's pursuit of κλέος into altruistic missionary work on behalf of Greek (meaning fifth-century Athenian) culture.

The impact of World War II proved, ultimately, inimical, if not fatal, to this kind of thinking. What popular journalists labeled the Century of the Common Man (against which Evelyn Waugh fought so notable a rearguard action in *Brideshead Revisited*) had no time at all for upper-class elitists who were soft on Platonic homoeroticism and the kind of *de haut en bas* social planning (seen, now, as fascism or worse) so prominent in the *Republic* and the *Laws*. Victims of real totalitarianism were equally unenthusiastic: Sir Karl Popper produced another catchy label, that of the Closed Society. The attitude with regard to sex was ambivalent: Platonic (or Solonian) pederasty might carry objectionable elitist overtones, but the new permissive generation of classical scholars (bliss was it in that pre-AIDS dawn to be alive) lost no time in abolishing all forms of literary censorship (Aristophanes—whom Thomas Arnold had declared that no man could safely read till he was over forty—totally unexpurgated; Martial no longer in Italian; four-letter words running riot). This, in itself an excellent advance, reinforced that glaring misconception so popular

[8] Those familiar with the late Professor T. B. L. Webster will recall his elegant off-the-cuff diatribes on this topic.

among nonspecialists, the notion of Greek society as a kind of sexual free-for-all. But it also, more importantly for our present discussion, opened up a significant aspect of the Hellenistic zeitgeist with which many people felt they could identify: the romantic, psychologically sophisticated attitude to erotic passion, best exemplified by Medea's violent obsession with Jason as delineated so skillfully by Apollonius Rhodius in book 3 of his *Argonautica*.[9]

Further, the very existence of canons of good taste—something intimately bound up, as its critics were not slow to point out, with the elitist attitude—was, inevitably, challenged; and with the rejection of such criteria (or, at least, of the current ones) the barriers that had held scholars back from an honest appraisal of Hellenistic art and literature were at one stroke removed. An interesting, and still only partially explored, consequence of this release was that Chaeronea came to be seen less and less as a violent dividing line between the old world and the new. Features identified with the Hellenistic world, and supposedly the result of direct political oppression or the destruction of democracy, were found flourishing long before Philip's victory, in the early fourth and even the late fifth century. Aristophanes' last play, the *Plutus* (388), has more in common with the bourgeois social comedy of Menander than with a politically engaged satire such as the *Acharnians* (425). No accident, I feel, that both Professor Robertson and Professor Pollitt found themselves stressing the *continuity* of Greek art through this difficult transitional period rather than the disruptions putatively occasioned by external events; or that Professor Long should have backtracked to Socrates as the role model for systematic Hellenistic thinkers experimenting in the exercise of philosophical power.

The loosening and realignment of aesthetic standards has been a two-edged business. We all, I think, welcome the increased range of appreciation and flexibility of judgment that it brings with it; at the same time there is a price to pay, in the shape of alternative experimental systems, ranging from Marxism to deconstruction, designed to reintroduce a set of rules, a yardstick to decide what's good and what's bad (even, perhaps especially, for those who argue that "good" and "bad" have no real meaning). Post-Chomskyan grammar argues, in effect, that Humpty Dumpty was right, that words or idioms mean just what we want them to mean, that ἀπό—to return to an earlier point—can take any case it pleases and that to hold out for the genitive is mere sentimental antiquarianism. By

[9] It is instructive to compare the tone of modern commentators—e.g., Francis Vian, Budé ed., vol. 2 (Paris, 1980), 39ff., or R. L. Hunter, *Argonautica, Book III* (Cambridge, 1989), 27ff.—with that of an earlier scholar such as G. W. Mooney, *Argonautica* (London, 1912), 36–37.

the same token, any slang or patois, however debased, can now claim linguistic autonomy and can deflect all criticism by labeling it racist, elitist, or both. In this brave new world the charge of *corruptio optimi pessima* is a dangerous one to bring. To watch our new academic Alexandrians walking such a tightrope is the most intriguing paradox of all.

Still, advantages have accrued. The "base mechanic arts" of the Hellenistic world, long ignored (as Professor White so vividly demonstrates) by scholars with no less class-bound a sense of the banausic than their ancient counterparts, today form a flourishing field of advanced research: technology can no longer be dismissed, by ivory-tower humanists, as a business fit only for artisans. This kind of functional egalitarianism is ethnic as well as class based; hence, in recent years, the fashionable march toward multiculturalism, with its conscious downgrading of the Western, Greco-Roman tradition as such, and its assault on the ingrained concept of Hellenes versus barbarians (e.g., Isocratean panhellenism, and such subtly patronizing essays on the theme of the Noble Savage as the Pergamene sculptures of Gaulish warriors, dying with Homeric panache, but still safely defeated). This movement has produced, in addition to *parti pris* propaganda like Martin Bernal's *Black Athena—ex Africa semper aliquid noui*—the far more important, and stimulating, preoccupation with frontiers and frontier cultures offered here in the presentations by Professors Burstein and Holt. Now we have cleared our minds of the missionary cant about cultural proselytization, we can clearly see, first, that Ptolemaic or Seleucid outposts of empire were ghettos in an alien and resentful environment,[10] and second, that, in Professor Holt's words, "the aim of the Hellenistic states was less to annex these fringe areas than to exploit them with as little involvement and expense as possible" (p. 59). In other words, the removal of the need to justify imperial expansionism, by Alexander or his less romantic successors, has killed a myth and made it correspondingly easier to see what was actually going on; these Nubians and Bactrians now interest us in their own right, and not merely as the uncivilized targets for Greco-Macedonian conquistadors.

The benefits of such a change in outlook are varied and often unpredictable; once we stop taking Hellenic assumptions of superiority and justified aggression (e.g., in the matter of panhellenism) at face value, the evidence stares us in the face. It is not always welcome: S. K. Eddy's pioneering work *The King Is Dead: Studies in the Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism, 334–31 B.C.* (1961) got a notably cool reception. At a more mundane level, Alexander scholars have begun to accept the idea (some more reluctantly than others) that their hero simply took over the gov-

[10] Cf. Green, *Alexander to Actium*, ch. 19, 312ff.

ernmental bureaucracy of any country he conquered, putting in an officer of his own at the top to skim off the profits, a habit continued by the Diadochoi. As Professor Delia persuasively demonstrates, this is true even of Egypt.[11] The pharaonic system (and indeed perhaps even some Persian satrapal survivals, an earlier overlay) continued throughout the Ptolemaic period, aided by a middle-level corps of Greek-speaking Egyptian interpreters, and giving point to the seldom quoted comment of Augustus, who may be presumed to have understood these matters, that he was amazed at Alexander's lack of interest in organizing the territories he had conquered.[12] No accident either, perhaps, that in a decade of strangling bureaucracy, governmental corruption, weak leadership, and financial waste, Professor Samuel should be questioning the effectiveness, even the very existence, of a Ptolemaic dirigist economy centrally controlled by the king. The alternative scenario he presents, that of an independent civil service going its own way while producing just enough in the way of flattery and fiscal returns to keep the government happy, puts me irresistibly in mind—*si parua licet componere magnis*—of the central thesis embodied in that politically acute British sitcom "Yes, Minister." The striking resemblance suggests to me that Professor Samuel may well have tapped a perennial vein in human nature, of the kind that appealed to Thucydides.

This brings me to what must be the most powerful factor, emotionally speaking, that has contributed to the contemporary renaissance in Hellenistic studies. This is something many of us have experienced; from a personal viewpoint I can do no better than repeat here what I wrote in the introduction to my own survey of the period:[13]

> As my work proceeded, it acquired an unexpected and in ways alarming dimension. I could not help being struck, again and again, by an overpowering sense of *déjà vu*, far more than for any other period of ancient history known to me: the "distant mirror" that Barbara Tuchman held up from the fourteenth century A.D. for our own troubled age is remote and pale compared to the ornate, indeed rococo, glass in which Alexandria, Antioch, and Pergamon reflect contemporary fads, failings, and aspirations, from the urban malaise to religious fundamentalism, from Veblenism to *haute cuisine*, from funded scholarship and mandarin literature to a flourishing dropout counter-culture, from political impotence in the indi-

[11] Professor Burstein, too, has been working along very similar lines in a paper entitled "Alexander in Egypt: Continuity or Change?" in *Achaemenid History: Proceedings of the Achaemenid History Workshop*, vol. 8, edited by Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Amélie Kuhrt (Leiden: forthcoming), an early draft of which he kindly communicated to me.

[12] Cited by Plutarch, *Mor.* 207D 8: *ἐθαύμαζεν εἰ μὴ μεῖζον Ἀλέξανδρος ἔργον ἡγεῖτο τοῦ κτήσασθαι τὴν ἡγεμονίαν τὸ διατάξαι τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν.*

[13] Green, *Alexander to Actium*, xxi.

> vidual to authoritarianism in government, from science perverted for military ends to illusionism for the masses, from spiritual solipsism on a private income to systematic extortion in pursuit of the plutocratic dream. Contemporary cosmological speculation seems to be taking us straight back to the Stoic world-view, while Tyche has been given a new lease of life by computer analysts, who prefer to describe it, with pseudo-Hellenistic panache, as "stochasticism."

Obviously, such parallels can be overworked, and apparent resemblances sometimes turn out, on investigation, to be meretricious. But at least they have the merit of stimulating new lines of research, even if we are tempted to wrestle with the problems of antiquity by the hope that they may, in the fullness of time, shed some light on our own.

That we will bring our own preconceptions, and those of our age, to the task, is, as Croce saw, inevitable. The breaking of old prohibitions will always produce new ideologies; we can no more resist the lure of pattern making than our predecessors could. History, and historians, like Heracleitus' river, never stand still. Each generation will, for whatever reason, reassess the past in its own terms. That is one (perhaps oversimplistic) answer to Professor Samuel's original question: revaluation of the Hellenistic era was overdue. Fifty years or less is the life of a good translation (something equally dependent on the zeitgeist);[14] no historical interpretation can hope to survive much longer, and Professor Samuel's choice of time span was entirely apt. What I have tried to suggest here is why—or part of the reason why—our various essays in revisionism took the harmonious line they did. What none of us could have foreseen individually—something that I hope emerges in the pages that follow—was the collective sense of excitement and discovery, the sparking of fresh ideas, generated by this sharing of individual explorations. It remains an occasion none of us will forget. Let us hope that in this case opinion will indeed prove to be Milton's "knowledge in the making."

[14] Cf. Peter Green, *Classical Bearings* (London and New York, 1989), chap. 16, 256ff.