

## Tribute

### *William Anthony Camps* (1910–1997)

Mr W.A. Camps, Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge, from 1970 to 1981, died in January 1997. He was the longest serving President of the Virgil Society, for thirteen years from 1976 to 1989, during much of which period the Society was reduced to virtual inactivity, its income insufficient to pay for regular publication of *Proceedings*, its energy insufficient to bring about the election of new officers. Only a (reduced) number of meetings continued to be held each year (see *Pentekontaetia*, pp. 49–52). Tony Camps was not one to attend meetings in London, but he was concerned about the Society, and felt a Presidential responsibility. On one occasion he privately sent me a cheque for the full amount of the previous year's deficit in the accounts, the largest single donation during my time as Treasurer.

He had been my Supervisor and Director of Studies in Pembroke, so that I had had ample opportunity to know him since undergraduate days. He was an unusual man. Behind a hesitant manner and an almost Socratic irony ('Of course I know nothing at all about this, but don't you think that ...?'), he was a firm and even dominating personality. Having been appointed to a Fellowship in Pembroke in the Thirties, and a University Lectureship just before the war, he spent the rest of his career there, apart from secondment to the Ministry of Economic Warfare during the war years, and two or three short-term visiting appointments at Canadian and American universities in the latter part of his life. To students he was a kind and accurate supervisor, who taught mostly for the First Part of the Tripos, traditional linguistic exercises in prose and verse composition and unseen translation.

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For many years he restricted his activities to the College, particularly as Senior Tutor for fifteen years after the war (1947–62). Then, quite late in life, he started to publish in Classics. In 1961, when he was just over 50, he produced a small edition with commentary on Book 1 of Propertius and followed with the other three books, completing the set in 1967. This immediately became an essential part of modern study of that author. Later he published two hand-books, emanating from his teaching over many years, *An Introduction to Virgil's Aeneid* (Oxford 1969, repr. 1979) and *An Introduction to Homer* (Oxford 1980). The latter did not make much impression in the flood of publications about Homer, but the former has been found useful by many students, for whom it was explicitly written. Tony's characteristic qualities (clear thinking and sound judgement) are exemplified in a group of appendices to the book, which include a translation of Donatus's *Life* of the poet, discussion of the two passages which Tucca and Varius are alleged to have removed from the text of the poem (1.1a-d, 2. 567–88), evidence for its unrevised state, echoes of contemporary history. These appendices introduce the reader to serious factual issues related to the *Aeneid*, going beyond literary assessment. They reflect the man himself and his mind.

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