



*The British Museum*

**EDMOND SOLLBERGER**

# Edmond Sollberger

## 1920–1989

EDMOND SOLLBERGER<sup>1</sup> was born on 12 October 1920, in Istanbul, where his father was an accountant. He was Swiss by birth, his family origin being in Wynigen in the Canton of Berne, French speaking, and Roman Catholic by upbringing. He received his early education in Istanbul, in the *Collège religieux français*, a rather monastic establishment run by friars, concerning which he had some very mixed memories, and strange stories. His early years in Istanbul set him on a career in which his command of languages played an important part, a working knowledge of Turkish and modern Greek being a useful legacy of this time, to which he was able later to add a practical knowledge of Arabic.

He completed his schooling in Istanbul in 1939, and received his further education at the University of Geneva, first in the faculty of *Sciences économiques et sociales* from 1940 to 1941, but mainly in the faculty of *Lettres* from 1941 to 1945, where he studied general linguistics together with English and Spanish. During this period he had the curious experience in vacation time of passing by train between Geneva and Istanbul through Nazi occupied territory.

At Geneva he benefited from training in general linguistics under Henri Frei in the department established by Ferdinand de Saussure. De Saussure had died in 1913, and his first two successors in the Chair, his former pupils Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, who together had edited and published notes of his lectures as the influential *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916), were themselves succeeded by their pupil Frei. Sollberger was thus trained in a sound tradition, which in addition to historical philology, included a pioneering understanding of structural linguistics (the study of ‘a language as a coherent structure and a

<sup>1</sup> Obituary notices have been published by Paul Garelli in *Revue d'assyriologie*, 84 (1990), 97–9 and Christopher Walker in *Archiv für Orientforschung*, 35 (1988), 258–60 [the date of the latter is correct, the journal being out of pace with actual years].

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homogeneous system').<sup>2</sup> As long ago as 1878, de Saussure had published his *Mémoire sur le système primitif des voyelles dans les langues indo-européennes* (dated 1879), but the existence of the sounds postulated by him in Proto-Indo-European had only been confirmed as recently as 1927 by the recognition by J. Kurylowicz of the character of the *h* in the recently deciphered cuneiform 'Hittite',<sup>3</sup> so reference to this would probably have been part of the course. The excellence of the training in this sector is demonstrated by the career of another pupil of de Saussure, Antoine Meillet, whose work in the field of Indo-European comparative linguistics is still valued. Sollberger spoke of an exercise in which the students were required to translate a given passage into Proto-Indo-European. The main benefit of his linguistic training at Geneva was however the clear view of language in general which prepared him to study an individual specimen without being bound by the traditional frame of classical grammar.

Being thus prepared, he chose Sumerian as the subject of his doctoral dissertation, apart from Egyptian the oldest recorded language and one with no known cognates ancient or modern. He had already done preliminary reading at Geneva in the general field of Assyriology, and had found that books which he wished to consult were often out to someone else. It was only later, when he met Dr Paul Garelli, that he found that they had been contemporaries at the University of Geneva, studying in different faculties, unknown to each other, and had each had the same experience of finding library books missing from the shelf. They found also indeed that they were both 'Stambouliotes', having passed their early years in expatriate families based in Istanbul, factors leading to a particularly close friendship.

Apart from early essays at systematising Sumerian grammar, some of them very brief, by P. Haupt, S. Langdon, F. Delitzsch, and B. Meissner, the most substantial attempts at the time when Sollberger took up the study were those of Arno Poebel, *Grundzüge der sumerischen Grammatik* in 1923,<sup>4</sup> Cyril J. Gadd, 'The Sumerian Language' in his *A Sumerian Reading Book* in 1924,<sup>5</sup> and Anton Deimel, *Šumerische Grammatik der archaistischen Texte mit Übungsstücken zum Selbstunterricht* also in 1924,<sup>6</sup> with a revised and augmented edition in 1939. The Sumerian language was written (though not spoken) during some two millennia, and both Poebel and Gadd drew material from various periods, some from the third, much from the second, and also

<sup>2</sup> Quoting the definition of S. Potter, *Language in the Modern World* (rev. edn., London, 1975), p. 195.

<sup>3</sup> 'ə indoeuropéen et h hittite', *Symbolae grammaticae in honorem J. Roswadowski* (Krakow, 1927), I, pp. 95–104.

<sup>4</sup> (Rostock).

<sup>5</sup> (Oxford), pp. 14–42.

<sup>6</sup> *Orientalia* (Rome), os, 9–13.

some from student texts of the first millennium BC. Deimel on the other hand, as his title indicated, took his evidence largely from texts of the third millennium BC, when Sumerian was still a spoken language. In the foreword to his 1924 *Grammatik* he observes that he is not attempting a historical grammar, but that he will base his conclusions on the oldest accessible material, that of the time of Urukagina, ruler of Lagash, with his contemporaries and immediate predecessors. In archaeological terms this was the latter part of the Early Dynastic period, the time before the conquest of southern Mesopotamia by Sargon, the Semitic speaking ruler of Akkad, in about 2370 BC. Deimel had seen therefore that it made sense to concentrate on a body of material belonging to a limited time and area,<sup>7</sup> and before it was greatly influenced by Akkadian, though in practice he included reading examples (*Übungen*) from later in the third millennium. Deimel was a pupil of J. N. Strassmaier (1846–1919), who had spent years copying texts, mostly of the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenian periods, in the British Museum, and must have observed the value of detailed study of a coherent group of evidence. He considered that it was not sensible to spend time on works of synthesis until large numbers of texts had been published,<sup>8</sup> and Deimel (1865–1954) in choosing to work on a particular group of texts for his grammar was possibly influenced by this view. In this respect Deimel's method was closer in thinking to the strictly defined approach of the Geneva school, and this may have played a part in Sollberger's decision to go to him at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome for his first steps in what he called the *voie périlleuse* of Sumerology, and under Deimel he passed *inoubliales semaines* in 1947. He chose much the same material as Deimel to work on, limiting it to the royal inscriptions of Lagash from the period before Sargon, and confining himself strictly to this corpus. With impeccable application he copied afresh all of the known texts, over 300 in number, visiting most of the Museums involved, including the British Museum in the summer of 1947, and the Imperial Ottoman Museum in Istanbul in 1951, where he was able to stay with his parents. His resulting *Corpus des inscriptions 'royales' présargoniques de Lagaš*, not published until 1956, entirely written out in his own clear hand, including the title page, remains a work of permanent value. This material formed the basis first for his paper 'Études de linguistique sumérienne' which appeared in 1950 appropriately in the *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*,<sup>9</sup> and included an attempt to define the phonemes of Sumerian, but definitively in 1952 in his *Le Système verbal dans les inscriptions*

<sup>7</sup> This point was recognised by Poebel himself not long after (*The Sumerian Prefix Forms e- and i- in the Time of the Earlier Princes of Lagaš* [Assyriological Studies, 2] (Chicago, 1931), pp. 1–2).

<sup>8</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Rise and Progress of Assyriology* (London, 1924), p. 228.

<sup>9</sup> 9 (1950), 51–88.

'royales' présargoniques de Lagaš: contribution à la grammaire sumérienne.<sup>10</sup> Both the *Système verbal*, involving complicated diacritics, and the *Corpus* are in their different ways fine examples of book production, something in which he took pride, and in his contacts with the press he established a firm friendship with the proprietress, Madame E. Droz. Sollberger acknowledged a great debt to Frei, to him *le Maître*, citing several of his publications in the Bibliography of the *Système verbal*, and in 1971 contributing a paper to his Festschrift.<sup>11</sup> In 1961 he rounded off these studies, so to speak, with his paper 'Le syllabaire présargonique de Lagaš',<sup>12</sup> in which he carefully analysed the phonetic values of the signs on the basis of their usage in the texts in his *Corpus* and other contemporary texts.

In 1949 he had been appointed *Assistant d'archéologie* in the Musée d'art et d'histoire at Geneva and completed his thesis while serving in that post. Also in 1949 he married Ariane Zender from Geneva, thereby going against Deimel's advice that if he wished to pursue an academic career the best thing would be for him either to become a Roman Catholic priest or to marry an heiress. In the event he chose better than Deimel had advised, and throughout his married life he had wonderful support from Ariane, who, according to the dedication in his *Système verbal*, had seen his studies as *non une rivale mais une alliée*, and who together with him offered generous hospitality to friends and visiting colleagues at Putney and then Richmond.

While he was working on his thesis, the two volumes of Adam Falkenstein's *Grammatik der Sprache Gudeas von Lagaš* appeared in 1949 and 1950. In this Falkenstein also limited himself to a well defined group of texts, about a century and a half later than the latest of those dealt with by Sollberger, who was able to visit him in Heidelberg in 1952, and to discuss his manuscript, at that time almost ready for the press. Falkenstein had served as one of the referees of his thesis, and subsequently devoted a lengthy review to it,<sup>13</sup> thereby recognising its importance.

It was part of the procedure that a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Letters at Geneva should publish his dissertation, and in doing this, Sollberger was bound to come up against the traditional European approach to the study of language. The great advances of the nineteenth century in language study, mainly in Europe, had centred very much on the Indo-European group. The native languages of most European scholars belonged to this group, most of them had studied Latin and usually Greek not only at school but also at university level, and those who took up Semitic languages found that with

<sup>10</sup> Librairie E. Droz, Genève.

<sup>11</sup> Genre et nombre en Sumérien', *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*, 26 (1969) [= *Mélanges H. Frei* (1971)], 151–60.

<sup>12</sup> *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 54 (1961), 1–50.

<sup>13</sup> *Archiv für Orientforschung*, 18 (1957–8), 89–96.

some modifications similar grammatical categories could be applied to them. The great Hebraist Wilhelm Gesenius who set the main lines of the future study of the Semitic languages had training in classics, and it is possible to see Carl Brockelmann's *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen* (Berlin, 1908–13) as part of the process of publishing grammars and handbooks by the so-called Neo-grammarians school, most of whom worked in the Indo-European field.<sup>14</sup> Equally, L. H. Gray, primarily an Iranologist, could later produce a serviceable *Introduction to Semitic Comparative Linguistics* (Columbia University Press; New York, 1934).

It is clear that the Department of de Saussure and his successors at Geneva took full account of this tradition, but when methods had to be developed for studying strange languages, often known only orally, such as those of the Indian tribes of the United States,<sup>15</sup> it became clear that traditional categories were not enough. Different languages had distinct structures, so the linguist's approach would be to analyse Sumerian in terms of its own structures, with appropriate new terminology, rather than treating it as a rather peculiar form of an Indo-European language such as Latin.

This meant that many scholars did not accept his approach, bearing out perhaps what Igor M. Diakonoff referred to as 'a joke well known among Assyriologists that there are as many Sumerian languages as there are Sumerologists'.<sup>16</sup> In his Preface Sollberger states the intention of his volume to be to study Sumerian in the light of the principles of general linguistics, and to furnish a description of Sumerian which would be of use in the field of general linguistics. He does not claim that it will be of use to Sumerologists, though the writer remembers a beginning student in the 1950s telling him that he had found it more helpful for learning Sumerian than the existing standard works. In subsequent years there has been a recognition that each language should be studied in its own terms, though to what extent Sollberger's work contributed to this is not clear. In 1965, Thorkild Jacobsen, who gave a quite different analysis of the Sumerian verb, also accepted that the analysis should be 'one not imposed upon the language from outside but inherent in its own structure'.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. W. P. Lehman, *Historical Linguistics* (3rd edn., London and New York, 1992), p. 33.

<sup>15</sup> Sollberger cited for instance F. Boas, *Handbook of American Indian Languages*, I (Washington, 1911) in his bibliography (*Système verbal*, p. 11).

<sup>16</sup> In S. J. Lieberman (ed.), *Sumerological Studies in Honor of Thorkild Jacobsen on his Seventieth Birthday* [Assyriological Studies 20] (Chicago, 1976), p. 99; cited in part in M. L. Thomsen, *The Sumerian Language* [Mesopotamia 10] (Copenhagen, 1984), p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> 'About the Sumerian Verb' in H. G. Güterbock and Thorkild Jacobsen (eds), *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday* [Assyriological Studies, 16] (Chicago, 1965), pp. 71–102 at 71, n. 2 = Jacobsen, *Towards the Image of Tammuz and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), p. 431, n. 2. In this Jacobsen modestly acknowledged that his suggestions could be 'no more than subjective guesswork' but at the same time he believed that the guesses were educated and systematic (*Studies*, p. 71, n. 1 = *Image*, p. 430, n. 1).

It is perhaps significant that until Sollberger took up his post at the British Museum there was no copy of the *Système verbal* in the Library of the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities.

At a dinner organised in 1963 by Samuel Noah Kramer to honour Cyril J. Gadd on the occasion of the publication of their joint work *Ur Excavations Texts*, VI, *Literary and Religious Texts*, 1,<sup>18</sup> both Kramer and Sollberger spoke. Kramer's speech was mostly about Gadd, but in the course of it he referred to Sollberger, by then a good friend, as someone who had come on the scene in a rather unusual way. No one in the Assyriological field had heard of him until in the years following the war he began consulting a number of foreign scholars, Kramer among them, mostly by letter, on points concerning the Sumerian language. When the results of his studies began to appear, particularly the *Système verbal*, Kramer said that he was initially rather suspicious, but that when he came to examine the details carefully he had to admit that he could find nothing incorrect. This was in fact a significant admission from a man who, as a pupil of Arno Poebel, had learned Sumerian in a different way. Poebel, himself a former theological student who had entered the field of cuneiform studies under Hermann Hilprecht, used traditional terminology, though he recognised that Sumerian was a language totally different from those usually studied, and was trying to find new ways of dealing with it.<sup>19</sup> Kramer had actually thought that Sollberger had been unwise to publish his volume,<sup>20</sup> but nevertheless he elsewhere described him as 'one of the leading young Sumerologists'.<sup>21</sup> In the context of differing opinions among Sumerologists, Kramer referred to Jacobsen as a friendly 'adversary'.

Though Sollberger had not started as a specialist in ancient times, his knowledge of Sumerian now placed him in that category, and in 1952, the year in which the *Système verbal* was published, and for which he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters at the University, he was promoted to *Conservateur d'archéologie* in the Geneva Museum, in 1958 to *Conservateur principal*, and in the following year *Directeur ad interim* while Pierre Bouffard, the Director, was serving as *Conseiller administratif* of the City of Geneva. Also from 1956 he served as *Privat-Docent* for Sumerian and Akkadian in the Faculty of Letters of the University of Geneva. The five years during which he held this parallel teaching post were too short for foreign

<sup>18</sup> Gadd had copied the tablets before the war, and he invited Kramer to collaborate with him in writing the introduction, see S. N. Kramer, *In the World of Sumer. An Autobiography* (Detroit, 1986), pp. 214–15.

<sup>19</sup> I owe this view of Poebel's work to Dr Claus Wilcke.

<sup>20</sup> An opinion expressed to Dr J. E. Curtis.

<sup>21</sup> *In the World of Sumer*, p. 216. It is worth noting that the *Système verbal* was reprinted in Germany in 1972.

students to come to him, but his single pupil Françoise Bruschweiler succeeded him in this university post and has made valuable contributions.

The year 1960 was a time of important decisions for him. Though he had received rapid promotion in the Geneva Museum, and was likely to be appointed Director in due course, he became increasingly frustrated by the limited extent of the material for him to work on in the collections, and his comparative isolation from the main stream of Assyriology. He was one of the leading international experts on Sumerian and had also by this time mastered the better known Akkadian, and had by 1951 catalogued all the cuneiform texts in the Museum,<sup>22</sup> many of them collected, and some already published, by Alfred Boissier. He had also, as a faithful curator, published the guide *Antiquités orientales (Salles 14–15)* [Guides illustrés 6] (Geneva, 1958), as well as a series of Museum oriented articles, including notes on recent acquisitions of his department, most of them from the time when he was the head.<sup>23</sup> He was later on able to surprise his colleagues with unexpected knowledge arising from his work on these collections, such as his ability to read Palmyrene. He had moreover more or less exhausted the cuneiform material of particular interest in Swiss collections with the publication of ‘Inscriptions votives babyloniennes conservées dans les collections suisses’.<sup>24</sup> During this time he published a substantial article ‘Sur la chronologie des rois d’Ur et quelques problèmes connexes’,<sup>25</sup> proposing a closely argued chronology for the latter part of the third millennium, including particularly the Third Dynasty of Ur, to well into the second millennium BC, including the parallel line of rulers (ensis) of Lagash, sometimes known as the ‘Second Dynasty of Lagash’, one of whom was the great Gudea, not included in any king list, but important because of the large number of inscriptions from their time. He did not assign absolute dates in his resulting ‘Synopsis chronologique’, but provided data which readers could apply according to their adherence to the possible alternative high, middle, low, or very low chronologies variously proposed for the late third and early

<sup>22</sup> ‘The Cuneiform Collection in Geneva’, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, 5 (1951), 18–20, amounting to about 850 items. Before his appointment to the staff he had already published some pre-Sargonic texts in ‘Documents cunéiformes au Musée d’Art et d’Histoire’, *Genava* 26 (1948), 48–72; and subsequently another tablet (jointly with I. J. Gelb), ‘The First Legal Document from the Later Old Assyrian Period’, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 16 (1957), 163–75.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Récents accroissements des collections de l’Asie occidentale’, *Les Musées de Genève*, 8, 2 (1951); ‘Trois terres cuites mésopotamiennes’, *Ibid.* 9. 5 (1952); ‘Nouvelles acquisitions. L’offrande du chevreau’, *Ibid.* 11. 3 (1954); ‘Statuettes de Syrie et du Liban’, *Ibid.* 13. 4 (1956); ‘Un bas-relief phénicien’, *Ibid.* ns, 1. 1. (1960; and in the section ‘Genève’ under ‘Altorientalische Altertümer in Museen und Privatsammlungen’, *Archiv für Orientforschung*, 17 (1954–6), 187–9, 409–10.

<sup>24</sup> *Genava*, ns, 2 (1954), 237–44.

<sup>25</sup> *Archiv für Orientforschung*, 17 (1954–6), 10–48.

second millennia BC. He favoured the high chronology throughout his career, but was flexible in his application of it, later on accepting the policy of the British Museum and the *Cambridge Ancient History* in using the middle chronology. His paper remains an important contribution to a continuing debate, and has not been superseded.<sup>26</sup>

At the end of 1954 he had received a twelve months leave of absence and a grant from the *Fonds national suisse de la Recherche scientifique* so that he and Ariane could make a study visit to the United States. While there he was based at Yale, but was also able to examine tablets in the Metropolitan Museum, the Harvard Semitic Museum, The University Museum in Philadelphia, the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Princeton Theological Seminary, Hartford Theological Seminary, and other collections. This visit gave him the opportunity to meet and discuss these texts with Benno Landsberger, Samuel N. Kramer, Thorkild Jacobsen, Ignace J. Gelb, Vaughan E. Crawford, Ferris J. Stephens, as well as with Albrecht Goetze, William M. Laffan Professor of Assyriology and Babylonian Literature at Yale, his academic host.<sup>27</sup>

In late 1956 and early 1957 he was granted leave to participate as *Mitarbeitendes Gast* in the German excavations under Heinrich Lenzen at Warka, ancient Uruk, renewing his contact with Falkenstein who was the official epigraphist of the expedition,<sup>28</sup> and taking the opportunity also to study texts in the Iraq Museum.<sup>29</sup> He became well known to those specialists who had not met him before when he organised the ninth *Rencontre assyriologique internationale* at the Musée d'art et d'histoire in Geneva in June 1960, choosing the topic very appropriate to his expertise, *Aspects du contact suméro-akkadien*, and editing the proceedings as a valuable contribution to a much debated subject.<sup>30</sup>

In the same year, 1960, he received an invitation from Richard D. Barnett to come to London and join the staff of the British Museum. When he was making the decision about this, he was actually in hospital following a serious operation, and was also considering an invitation to take up a chair at the

<sup>26</sup> Concerning one of the crucial points D. O. Edzard has most recently commented that 'The chronological relation of the "Second Dynasty of Lagaš" to the Third Dynasty of Ur has not yet been settled' (*Gudea and his Dynasty* [The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Early Periods, 3. 1] (Toronto, 1997), p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> 'Selected Texts from American Collections', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, 10 (1956), 11–31; and see *The Business and Administrative Correspondence under the Kings of Ur* (1966), p. x and tablet index on pp. 9–11.

<sup>28</sup> H. Lenzen, *et al.*, *XV. vorläufige Bericht über die von dem Deutschen Archäologischen Institut und der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft aus Mitteln der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft* (Berlin, 1959), p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> His article 'On Two Early Lagaš Inscriptions in the Iraq Museum', *Sumer*, 13 (1957), 61–4 was a product of this visit.

<sup>30</sup> In *Genava*, 8 (1960), 241–314.

University of Geneva. He was a determined anglophile, however, and the lure of the largest collection of cuneiform texts in the world tipped the balance in favour of the British Museum, and he later described how he wrote his letter of acceptance from his hospital bed, the effort causing perspiration to pour off him. A year later he was invited by Albrecht Goetze to take up the post of Curator of the Babylonian Collection at Yale, due to become vacant in 1962 through the retirement of Ferris J. Stephens, but by then he was well established in London, and the position was filled by William W. Hallo.

When Cyril Gadd (1893–1969),<sup>31</sup> the last Keeper of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities in the British Museum, retired in 1955 to take up the Chair of Ancient Semitic Languages and Civilizations in the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, his former department was divided into Egyptian Antiquities and Western Asiatic Antiquities under I. E. S. Edwards and R. D. Barnett respectively. In 1955 Richard Barnett<sup>32</sup> had only one academic colleague, Donald J. Wiseman, on the establishment of his department, joined by the writer in 1959. He succeeded in obtaining the appointment in May 1960 of a cuneiformist, Dr R. F. G. Sweet subsequently of Toronto, to fill the post vacated by Gadd in 1955, but for domestic reasons Dr Sweet had had to withdraw a month later. Barnett was therefore still looking for a replacement for Gadd, and, when in 1960 Gadd retired from the University and after some delay his Chair was divided into two, one for Assyriology and one for Semitic Languages, and in February 1961 Donald Wiseman was appointed to the former and Dr J. B. Segal to the latter, the posts to be taken up in October, Barnett found that he would be without a cuneiform specialist. He knew and liked Sollberger from the time of his first visit to copy texts for his *Corpus*, had seen him in action as he ran the *Rencontre assyriologique* in Geneva, and had recently had contact with him when he had been again in the British Museum working on texts, at which time the vacancy had actually been touched on. The invitation to come to London was issued with the agreement of the Director Sir Frank Francis, and was to entail Sollberger obtaining British Nationality, the necessary preliminary to ‘establishment’, in Civil Service terminology. He was appointed to the staff in September 1960, but partly for reasons of health, was not able to take up his post until March 1961. Barnett gave him to understand that he was likely to succeed him as Keeper of the Department, probably in 1969 when he hoped himself to succeed Seton Lloyd as Professor of Near Eastern Archaeology at the University of London. This was a reasonable expectation in the situation at the time, but in the event, Barnett was not appointed to the University Chair, so Sollberger had five more years to wait, and when the time came he had some uncomfortable

<sup>31</sup> Obituary, *PBA*, 56 (1972), 363–402.

<sup>32</sup> Obituary, *PBA*, 76 (1986), 321–45.

moments since his candidacy for the Keepership took place under the regime of Sir John Pope-Hennessy, who later in his retirement speech claimed as one of his achievements as Director of the Museum, that he had put an end to the idea that the most appropriate candidate for a Keepership would normally be an existing senior member of the department in question.

Edmond Sollberger and his wife Ariane with their two young daughters Nicole and Josette moved to London in 1961, living temporarily in Kensington but settling in a pleasant flat in Putney, and moving some years later to a house in Richmond, and subsequently to another, also in Richmond. In each home he and Ariane offered generous hospitality, and his study was a model of order and the location in which he prepared much of his careful and accurate published work.

In the Museum he had the rank of Temporary Assistant Keeper I, and outside he was coopted for subsequent election to the Council and Executive Committee of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, and also to the Council of Management of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, and in the same year, 1961, he became a Corresponding Member of the German Archaeological Institute.

One of his colleagues in the Museum was Dr Hugo H. Figulla, also a cuneiformist, who had been working in the department for some years, but was never, to his chagrin, more than an unestablished supernumerary member of the staff. He was moreover in his seventy-fifth year by 1960, and decided to retire at the age of seventy-eight in early 1964.<sup>33</sup>

In the Museum Sollberger took over the administration of the tablet collections from Donald Wiseman, overlapping with him for six months, and himself preparing two volumes in the series *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum* by editing copies made long before by Theophilus Goldridge Pinches,<sup>34</sup> of whom he wrote that his ‘immense services to Assyriology are not always fully realized’. Pinches had been a member of the Museum staff, but had sided with Hormuzd Rassam in a dispute with Wallis Budge and as a result had been obliged to leave the service of the Trustees. Many of his accurate copies of cuneiform texts in the Museum had lain unpublished for over half a century, and Sollberger was determined to do him belated justice. He later edited another group of Pinches copies of texts not in the British Museum in *The Pinches Manuscript* in the Italian series *Materiali per il vocabolario neosumerico*, V (Rome, 1978). This manuscript had been

<sup>33</sup> He continued to work for many years beyond the normal retirement age, because as a refugee from Nazi Germany he had been treated initially as an enemy alien in wartime Britain, and was only able to buy a house for his (second) wife and son late in life, and needed to pay off the mortgage.

<sup>34</sup> *Cuneiform Texts*, 44, *Miscellaneous Texts* (1963), and 45, *Old-Babylonian Business Documents* (1964).

passed to him in 1958 by Ernst Weidner, and in the following year he had drawn attention to one text in it of particular interest because it referred to the ruler of Byblos (*ku-ub-la*) in the late third millennium BC, the earliest reference then known.<sup>35</sup> He also himself copied tablets for volume 50 of the British Museum *Cuneiform Texts* series, *Pre-Sargonic and Sargonic Economic Texts* (1972). The series had been initiated in 1896 by Wallis Budge, and over the years many of the volumes had gone out of print, and he readily took up the policy of Richard Barnett of reprinting earlier volumes, completing this when he himself became Keeper with volumes 34 to 41, 42 (1959) having been the first post-war volume, prepared by H. H. Figulla.

He was also instrumental in arranging for Dr Paul Garelli to publish a volume, VI (1975), in the series *Cuneiform Texts from Cappadocian Tablets in the British Museum*,<sup>36</sup> Garelli having previously published a substantial number of Cappadocian texts in the Geneva Museum,<sup>37</sup> which he had worked on there in Sollberger's time as curator.

Having come to the British home of the excavations of Sir Leonard Woolley at Ur, and having contributed a characteristically systematic annotated list of the early inscriptions from that site to the Woolley Memorial Volume,<sup>38</sup> he prepared a volume of copies of texts with full Descriptive Catalogue in the series *Ur Excavations Texts*, VIII, *Royal Inscriptions*, II (1965), thereby providing a supplement to the volume, *Ur Excavations Texts*, I, *Royal Inscriptions*, published by Gadd and Leon Legrain in 1928.

Another product of his early years at the British Museum was his article 'Graeco-Babyloniaca', published in 1962.<sup>39</sup> In this he took up some further early copies by Pinches of a number of Sumerian and Akkadian tablets inscribed in cuneiform on the obverse with the same text transliterated into Greek characters on the reverse. Pinches had published some of these in 1902,<sup>40</sup> and others have taken up this material subsequently and made modifications,<sup>41</sup> but Sollberger performed a useful service in bringing it forward for attention.

Richard Barnett was very conscientious in seeking to provide introductory publications on the collections of his department, and against some mild resistance he persuaded Sollberger to write a popular booklet on *The Babylonian Legend of the Flood* (1962).<sup>42</sup> In this he amused himself by giving all the

<sup>35</sup> 'Byblos sous les rois d'Ur', *Archiv für Orientforschung*, 19 (1959–60), 120–2; the text being *Pinches Manuscript*, no. 111.

<sup>36</sup> This completed the publication of this class of texts in the British Museum, *CCT*, I–IV (1921–7) having been by Sydney Smith, and V (1956) by Smith and D. J. Wiseman.

<sup>37</sup> *Revue d'assyriologie*, 59 (1965), 19–48; 60 (1966), 93–121.

<sup>38</sup> 'Notes on the Early Inscriptions from Ur and el-'Obēd', *Iraq*, 22 (1960), 69–89.

<sup>39</sup> *Iraq*, 24 (1962), 63–72.

<sup>40</sup> *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, 24 (1902), 108–19.

<sup>41</sup> Most recently M. J. Geller, 'The Last Wedge', *ZA* 87 (1997), 43–95, at 68–85 (re-edition of the texts), and 68–85 (copies).

<sup>42</sup> 2nd edn., 1966; 3rd edn., 1971.

quotations from the text of the Gilgamesh Epic in the idiosyncratic translation into archaising English hexameters by Reginald Campbell Thompson, and by indicating the pronunciation of the four short vowels in Akkadian, *a*, *e*, *i*, and *u*, by explaining that they should sound like the *u* respectively in English ‘buck’, ‘bury’, ‘business’ and ‘bull’. He delighted in demonstrating that he knew more peculiar things about the English language than most native English speakers, as when he used the word ‘glabrous’ in an article in reference to an inscribed surface on a statue, assuming, rightly, that most of us would have to look it up.

Among other Museum tasks, which included standing in for Barnett in his absences, he carried out some rearrangement of the Babylonian Room of the department. This was in the days when such work was undertaken with the help of a Museum carpenter and painter, any labels being put out to a jobbing printer. The project was completed in 1963, in time for the twelfth Rencontre assyriologique internationale which took place in London in July of that year.

In this period he also completed a volume which he had begun in Geneva, *The Business and Administrative Correspondence under the Kings of Ur* (1966), the first in a new series, *Texts from Cuneiform Sources*, of which he was a joint editor. In this he transliterated and translated over 370 texts, many of them previously unpublished, and provided an Introduction and a lengthy Glossary (100 pages) occupying half the volume, giving useful lexical data from this body of texts, one of the stated intentions of the Series being to ‘facilitate the work of the [Chicago Assyrian] Dictionary staff’.<sup>43</sup> This glossary has very innovative qualities, treating the Sumerian words as elements of language, and not simply as a graphemic system, and has to be consulted constantly by every scholar working with materials of the period of the Third Dynasty of Ur.<sup>44</sup>

In December 1966, having completed the necessary period of residence, he obtained British Nationality, and following the formality of a Civil Service Commission competition in which he was successful, he was established in the Museum in the grade Assistant Keeper I in July 1967.

At the beginning of January 1970, following energetic lobbying by Barnett, he was promoted to Deputy Keeper, and following the death of Cyril Gadd in 1969 he was appointed to succeed him as one of the three editors of the revised edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History*, the others being I. E. S. Edwards and N. G. L. Hammond. He had helped the two surviving editors with the final preparation of Volume I, Part 2, which appeared in 1971, and was a full editor

<sup>43</sup> *TCS*, I, p. vii. The preparation of a vocabulary for a set body of texts by the specialist dealing with them, as a contribution towards a major language dictionary, was something advocated by Sir Alan Gardiner in the light of his experience with the Egyptian *Wörterbuch* in Berlin (*Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* (Oxford, 1947), I, pp. xix–xx).

<sup>44</sup> I am indebted to Dr Claus Wilcke for this assessment.

for Volume II, Parts 1 (1973) and 2 (1975), though for these he was largely dealing with contributions commissioned by Gadd. With Volume III the choice of contributors was in his own hands and since he was responsible for the whole of Western Asia considerable work was involved. He had seen however how Gadd's last years had been almost taken over by the heavy burden of editing other people's contributions, and was careful to keep his involvement within bounds. Various delays meant that Volume III, Part 1 did not appear until 1982 and Part 2 not until 1991 when C. B. F. Walker saw the work commissioned by him, with a few additions, to completion.

In his *Corpus* he had referred to the standard work of the great master François Thureau-Dangin, *Die sumerischen und akkadischen Königsinschriften*,<sup>45</sup> which included transliterations and translations of many of the texts he was dealing with, but which was naturally rather out of date. In his Preface he says 'La refonte complète de SAK par A. Falkenstein étant imminente, je n'ai joint à mes copies ni transcriptions ni traductions', depending on what Falkenstein had told him. When asked in the early 1960s for his definition of the word 'imminente' (used in 1956) he smiled ruefully and saw the funny side. In 1971 he partially supplied the gap when in collaboration with Jean-Robert Kupper he published the very convenient volume *Inscriptions royales Sumeriennes et Akkadiennes* which gave new translations (Sumerian by him and Akkadian by Kupper) of about a third of the inscriptions dealt with by Thureau-Dangin with more recently discovered texts together with brief notes and a sixty-page 'Répertoire des noms propres'. This was the third volume of a new series, *Littératures anciennes du proche-orient*, published under the aegis of the École Biblique of Jerusalem by the Éditions du Cerf, who had been associated previously in the production of the Jerusalem Bible. For this series, which it was proposed would cover material in all ancient near eastern languages, he had been Editor-in-Charge (*Directeur*) of Sumerian texts since 1966, and was arranging that other volumes would follow.<sup>46</sup> In this volume, he agreed to use the middle chronology, while stating that he favoured the high one, and also denied himself his preference for the writing Sur- instead of Ur- in personal names such as Ur-Nammu, for which following Pinches and Poebel he would have preferred Sur-Nammu.<sup>47</sup>

He also participated with Dietz Otto Edzard and Gertrud Farber in the preparation of a basic reference work, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der*

<sup>45</sup> Vorderasiatische Bibliothek, 1. 1 (Leipzig, 1907), referred to as SAK.

<sup>46</sup> It had been intended that the important inscriptions of Gudea of Lagash would form a separate volume in the series, the translations to be supplied by Falkenstein. Sadly he died in 1966 at the early age of sixty and this did not take place.

<sup>47</sup> He repeated his defence of this reading in his note 'Sur-Nanše' in *Revue d'assyriologie*, 79 (1985), 87–8.

*präsargonischen und sargonischen Zeit* (Weisbaden, 1977) in the series *Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes*, 1.<sup>48</sup>

He had a clear hand both in copying cuneiform signs, but also in writing Romanised script, as he had shown in his *Corpus*. When he was invited by the volume editor of the Pontifical Biblical Institute to prepare an introductory grammar of Sumerian, he proposed that he would write it out entirely by hand. He suggested the title *A Sumerian Primer*, but other commitments kept him from carrying this out.

Richard Barnett was due to reach his sixty-fifth birthday in 1974, and after the element of uncertainty already mentioned Sollberger was successful in the competition for the Keepership and took up the post at the beginning of February 1974. His appointment had been confirmed in October 1973, very soon after his election in July 1973 to Fellowship of the British Academy. At this time, in addition to other roles, he was also serving on the editorial board of the *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*.

His new duties in the Museum inevitably meant that he had to deal with more administration than had been involved with the tablet collection, which he now delegated to Christopher Walker. He gave full support to the continuation of the *Catalogue of Babylonian Tablets*, which had been initiated under Barnett with the publication of the first volume by H. H. Figulla in 1961, taking up from the Catalogue of Assyrian tablets prepared long before by Carl Bezold (1889–99) and Leonard W. King (1914), and continued with the preparation of three volumes largely on the collections from Abu Habbah, ancient Sippar, by Erle Leichty of Philadelphia.

He introduced an orderly and indeed rigid system of filing his papers, something he would not entrust to anyone else, and could always put his hand on any document he needed. In his period as Keeper he was able to see a new Syrian and an Ivories gallery arranged, and two other temporary galleries in what was known as the ‘Instant Scheme’ for Iran and Anatolia, in space (originally occupied by the Ethnographic collections and briefly by the Tut-ankh-Amun exhibition) where the floors would eventually need strengthening. The need to strengthen these floors (above the King’s Library) caused him particular frustration with one Iranian antiquity, a column base from Persepolis, acquired by Barnett from the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago in exchange for two Assyrian reliefs, which was too heavy even for the north-east staircase landing, and involved him in prolonged paper exchanges with Works Services, culminating in its placing in a basement gallery,<sup>49</sup> far away from anything else Iranian. This gave him a thorough baptism into the cares of office.

<sup>48</sup> W. Röllig (ed.), *Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients*, B, 7/1.

<sup>49</sup> Where it still remains in late 1997.

He made some selective acquisitions of antiquities for the Museum, but the most important was of the British share of material excavated at Tell ed-Duweir, ancient Lachish, reckoned at that time at about 50,000 pieces but subsequently at nearer 17,000, purchased in 1980 from the Institute of Archaeology of the University of London. The British Museum collection of Palestinian antiquities had always been rather meagre, so this acquisition of material excavated between 1932 and 1938 by a British expedition under James Starcky, opened the possibility of a very much improved permanent exhibition of Levantine, including Palestinian, antiquities in due course.<sup>50</sup> At the beginning of his Keepership he recommended to the Trustees that the Museum give financial support to outside excavators without any expectation of receiving antiquities in return. He was able to see this policy established, and British Museum support for Near Eastern excavations became a regular procedure.

Soon after his promotion to the Keepership he was elected Chairman of the British Museum branch of the First Division Association, the union of the senior academic staff, and in this capacity he was involved in some rather tough sessions with Sir John Pope-Hennessy in his early years as Keeper.

In 1977 he was invited by the Rector of the University of Rome and the Director General of Antiquities of Syria to serve on an International Committee for the Study of the Texts from Ebla, and attended the first meeting of this body in January 1978 in Rome. The site known as Tell Mardikh about 35 miles south-west of Aleppo had been selected for excavation in 1964 by a team from the University of Rome under Dr Paolo Matthiae. Inscriptions found during the excavations showed that it could be identified with the city of Ebla, already well known from Babylonian and Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions of the late third and early second millennia BC (more usually as Ibla in previous history writing). It came to particular prominence in the public eye with the discovery in 1974 and 1975 of an archive of cuneiform tablets of the 24th–23rd centuries BC, inscribed in Sumerian and Akkadian, but also in the local language, usually known now as Eblaite or Eblaic, classified by many as West Semitic, but considered by Sollberger to be ‘West-Akkadian’.<sup>51</sup> Very soon there was extensive speculation about the significance of these texts, and particularly concerning any relationships with the Old Testament. As a result of this there was disagreement between the Director of the expedition and the official Epigraphist, and the Director established the International Committee with the aim of assuring the systematic publication of the texts.<sup>52</sup> For this purpose a

<sup>50</sup> A gallery in an advanced stage of preparation in 1997. [Opened in July 1998].

<sup>51</sup> *Administrative Texts Chiefly Concerning Textiles* [Archivi Reali di Ebla. Testi, VIII] (Rome, 1986), p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> The members of the Committee were P. Matthiae (Italy; Chairman), A. Archi (Italy), G. Buccellati (USA), D. O. Edzard (Germany), P. Fronzaroli (Italy), P. Garelli (France), H. Klengel (Germany), J.-R. Kupper (Belgium), F. Rashid (Iraq), E. Sollberger (UK).

series *Archivi Reali di Ebla. Testi* was established, with a periodical *Studi Eblaiti* for preliminary and parallel material.<sup>53</sup> Members of the Committee undertook themselves to deal with groups of texts, and Sollberger characteristically took on material which resulted in his volume *Administrative Texts Chiefly Concerning Textiles* which appeared some years later, and for which he studied the texts in Aleppo in September 1981. In 1980 he contributed a paper on 'The So-called Treaty Between Ebla and "Ashur"' to the *Studi*,<sup>54</sup> in which he argued that the crucial place-name in this text, read in the first publication as Ashur, the capital of the important early kingdom of Assyria (in which case a treaty with so distant a place would be of considerable interest) could not be read more precisely than as A-bar-sal, an unidentified location, throwing a different light on the text. In this article he did not claim to have understood the text fully, but aimed to bring sobriety to the atmosphere of speculation.<sup>55</sup>

In 1979 he was involved in the establishment of another important publication project, *The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia*, based in Toronto. This series, initiated by Professor A. Kirk Grayson, aimed at providing a kind of 'Loeb' edition of all the texts in this category, with transliteration on the left, and translation on the right-hand page. Sollberger was designated Editor-in-Chief, a recognition of his international academic standing, and also Editor-in-Charge of the Sumerian Section. In this capacity he lectured in Toronto at the launch of the project.

In 1981 he played a prominent part in instigating and, jointly with the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, arranging the twenty-ninth Rencontre assyriologique internationale, due to take place in July 1982 in London. He served as Chairman of the planning committee until he was most unfortunately struck down by a serious stroke, and was obliged to take six months sick leave, at first in hospital and then at home, almost completely isolated from contact with colleagues and friends. He was much missed at the Rencontre, at which he would have been one of the leading hosts, and only the very closest friends were able to visit him during the period of the congress. He had a strong constitution, having recovered successfully on a previous occasion from an accident when a motor vehicle knocked him down in Great Russell Street, and now, with very considerable resilience, he largely recovered and was able to return to the Museum in Autumn 1982, at first on half time, but after a month and a half on full time again. At this time the Trustees were bringing in a policy of retirement at 60 for heads of departments, and since in October 1982

<sup>53</sup> A separate series, *Materiali epigrafici di Ebla*, was established under the editorship of Giovanni Pettinato in Naples.

<sup>54</sup> *Studi Eblaiti*, 3 (1980), 129–55.

<sup>55</sup> The disagreement continues, G. Pettinato still calling this text a Treaty between Ebla and Ashur (*Ebla. A New Look at History* (trans. C. F. Richardson; Baltimore and London, 1991), pp. 229–37).

he had reached the age of 62, he decided to retire at the end of March 1983. At first after his illness he found that his memory of the values of cuneiform signs had gone, but in the course of the following months this returned and he was able to resume academic work, and in retirement he completed his study of the textile texts from Ebla, and returned to the Museum on a casual basis to work on a catalogue of inscribed clay cones ('nails'). His Ebla textile texts volume inevitably fell somewhat short of his normal high standard, but a re-edition of the same texts<sup>56</sup> has itself come in for severe criticism.<sup>57</sup>

He was always more interested in what might be called the practical down-to-earth side of ancient times, the history, economy etc., giving little attention to literature, religious or otherwise.<sup>58</sup> In this respect he was in sympathy with Ignace J. Gelb who, in his paper 'The Philadelphia Onion Archive',<sup>59</sup> concluded by saying, 'I have chosen this lowly topic as a modest expression of protest against such esoteric and, in the present state of our knowledge, seemingly fruitless pursuits as those devoted to the study of the resurrection of Tammuz and of the Sumerian beliefs in afterlife. This is not a question of the relative importance of studies devoted to grammar, lexicon, or material culture as against those dealing with theological or metaphysical matters. The question is simply that of priorities. As all man's ideas about things divine are human, it is my firm belief that we shall never know what was the nectar of the gods until we learn what was the daily bread of the people.' In this spirit Sollberger in his paper 'Ur-III Society: Some Unanswered Questions', delivered at the eighteenth *Rencontre assyriologique* at Munich in 1970,<sup>60</sup> pointed out that for a period rich in documents 'our texts inform us on one hand about the extraordinary, and not the trivial; on the other hand about the accidental but not the essential'. He then discussed the many details of the socio-political organisation of the Empire of the Third Dynasty of Ur which could not be learned from the texts but concluded that he was 'not a pessimist' and that he liked to 'believe that one day most, if not all, of our questions may be reasonably answered. For this, we shall of course need a systematic study of all available textual sources, trying first to understand the texts without colouring them by interpretations and speculations based on outside, and often

<sup>56</sup> G. Pettinato, *Testi amministrativi di Ebla. Archivio L. 2752* [Materiali epigrafici di Ebla 5] (Rome, 1996).

<sup>57</sup> F. Pomponio, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 54 (1997), coll. 397–9.

<sup>58</sup> Though in his article 'The Rulers of Lagaš' (*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, 21 (1967) [Festschrift for Albrecht Goetze], 279–91) he dealt with a text which he suggested might be a 'politico-satirical work written by the Lagaš scribe in answer to the author(s) of the Sumerian Ling List who had ignored the rulers of Lagaš'.

<sup>59</sup> In *Assyriological Studies*, 16 (n. 17 above), pp. 57–62.

<sup>60</sup> D. O. Edzard, *Gesellschaftsklassen im Alten Zweistromland und in den angrenzenden Gebieten—XVIII. Rencontre assyriologique internationale, München, 29. Juni bis 2. Juli 1970* [Bayerische akademie der Wissenschaften: Phil.-Hist. Kl. Abh., N.F. 75] (Munich, 1972), pp. 185–9.

far-fetched, comparisons. It will be a long and sometimes tedious task, but the rewards are tempting. Perhaps students ought to be encouraged to try and digest that *indigesta moles* rather than speculate on cosmic philosophies. But this is, after all, only my personal attitude, for, while I do not want to re-open here a famous debate, I must confess that I have always sided with the Onions.’

He showed the same down-to-earth approach when in his introductory paper ‘The Temple in Babylonia’ to the twentieth Rencontre assyriologique at Leiden in 1972,<sup>61</sup> he pointed out as a warning in the interpretation of evidence that, apart from a staircase at the side, the main sitting room of his house in Richmond had the same ground plan as a Babylonian temple.<sup>62</sup> There are many typically illuminating observations in this paper, some arising from the detached view he brought from his unusual academic entry to the field of Assyriology. On the usage of the Sumerian words *é*, ‘house’ (and ‘temple’), and *é-gal*, ‘big house’ (and ‘palace’) for example, and the Akkadian counterparts *bītum*, ‘house; temple’, and *ekallu*, ‘palace’, he comments that ‘the Akkadian language does not seem to perceive the semantic relation of *é-gal* to *é*, most probably because at the time of the first contact between the two languages and cultures *é-gal* had already become a frozen syntagm which simply meant “palace” and no longer, analytically, “big house”’. This may be a rather trivial point, and perhaps one answering a question not many would think to ask, but it is something that his background in linguistics enabled him to notice.<sup>63</sup>

Though brought up as a Roman Catholic he became more or less agnostic, but he was careful not to undermine the faith of others. When his daughters were preparing for confirmation in the Anglican Church, he took trouble to walk from the Museum to the area of Regent’s Street to obtain good quality Prayer Books for them. He was in fact a good walker, the British Museum to Sadlers Wells Theatre and back (about 3 miles) being a typical lunch hour expedition. In his early years at the Museum he was a frequent participant in the group of colleagues and visiting scholars working in the Students’ Room who went outside to lunch, sometimes to one of the local pubs, and on one occasion a group of seven or eight over to Regent’s Street under his direction to a café offering remarkable cream pastries. A favourite destination when the group was smaller was an Italian diner near Holborn underground station where the mature waitress was always pleased to see him in particular, and would wait anxiously to see whether he approved of the sausage, egg, and

<sup>61</sup> [F. R. Kraus (ed.),] *Le temple et le culte* (Leiden, 1975), pp. 31–4.

<sup>62</sup> This remark, which greatly amused the audience, was not included in the published version of his paper.

<sup>63</sup> It is incidentally, of course, a point which could interest Hebraists in connection with the derivation of Hebrew *hêkāl*, ‘palace; temple’; though not an aspect he would have had in mind.

chips, or whatever it happened to be. She was less concerned about the others of the party. In later years, when he was seeking to be more abstemious, he favoured small sandwich bars of the kind where the clients sit on round stools fixed to the floor and often face mirrors placed round the walls to give the impression of greater space.

Sollberger was a man of robust prejudices. He was a faithful user of Daniel Jones's *English Pronouncing Dictionary* which went through many editions following its first publication in 1917, and he made regular use of his copy of the 1947 edition. Jones sometimes gives alternative pronunciations of a word, and Sollberger would defend the pronunciations he favoured with energy and wit. He was a staunch conservative politically, and a regular reader of *The Times* newspaper, with its 'easy disposable' sections which ended up in the refuse bin at the railway station. He admired people who would 'stick to their guns', and when an opposition politician said that free school milk should be abolished, and actually carried this out in office, he quoted it with approval.

He was an entertaining, witty, and erudite companion and a firm friend, and it was a cause of great sadness to his family and friends that he was cut off at a comparatively early age. He was honoured in a memorial issue of the *Revue d'assyriologie*,<sup>64</sup> which contained an obituary notice by his old friend Paul Garelli, and a bibliography by his Museum colleague Christopher Walker, and a number of articles by former friends and colleagues. He has left a valuable body of work as a legacy, and his name will have a honoured place in the history of the subject.

TERENCE C. MITCHELL

*British Museum*

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<sup>64</sup> Volume 84, part 2 (1990).

