



H. A. K. HUNT

HAROLD ARTHUR KINROSS HUNT

HAROLD HUNT, Emeritus Professor of Classical Studies in the University of Melbourne and a foundation member of the AHRC and of this Academy, died on 11 April 1977. He leaves a memorable record of service to academic life in Australia and to Classics in particular.

After secondary education at Newington College, Hunt attended the University of Sydney, was awarded the Cooper Scholarship in 1924 and spent the next two years at Oxford. In 1927 he joined the staff of Melbourne Grammar School and became senior Classics master in 1931. In 1936 he joined the Classics Department of the University of Melbourne as a lecturer; he was made Associate Professor in 1950 and appointed to the chair in 1955. He retired at the end of 1968.

Outside his department Hunt was involved in a large range of administrative activities. From 1938 to 1941 he was the first sub-dean of the Faculty of Arts and was dean from 1955 to 1957. For many years he was a member of the Professorial Board Executive and of the University Council. He was at various times president of the Boat Club, the Ex-Servicemen's Association, the Fine Arts Society and University House.

His work in Classics changed the appearance and the function of the discipline in Victoria and beyond. His experience as a schoolteacher had given him a special sympathy with the schools' point of view; under his guidance the first of the Schools' Nights in Victoria was given by the Classical Association in 1940, and the teachers' wing of that Association came to be its strongest section. At the national level he was one of the promoters of the more recently founded Australian Society for Classical Studies, and he became its second president in 1968. This was some recognition of his efforts, by travelling himself and by inviting colleagues to Melbourne, to get Australian Classics departments talking to one another. Nor did anyone work harder than he to organize for Australian departments the visits of scholars from overseas.

From 1945 to 1949 Hunt was Method Lecturer in Latin in the School of Education and there he laid the foundations for the post-war teaching of the subject in Victoria. His book *Training Through Latin* (M.U.P., 1948) is still the best book available for the classroom teacher; more recent books on the subject have acknowledged its excellence and borrowed its material. During his years of war service Hunt had learned some Japanese and had been interested in the attempts made to teach Japanese quickly. In February 1946 he taught the first of the University's language summer schools: four weeks of Classical Greek, eight hours a day. He continued to teach most of the summer school

until his retirement, and produced the manual which is still used for the course.

When Hunt came to the chair, the emphasis in the Melbourne department shifted to literature and philosophy; his own published contributions in these fields were the highly respected *The Humanism of Cicero* (M.U.P., 1954) and *A Physical Description of the Universe: the Doctrines of Zeno the Stoic* (M.U.P., 1976). But the department spread itself both in method and matter. Seminar and tutorial groups replaced a great part of the formal lecturing. As early as 1962, Hunt had seen that there was a growing number of people untrained in the classical languages who were eager to study the classical world, and he introduced courses on Greece and Rome based on the translated texts. He was a speaker of modern Greek and maintained relationships with the Greek community in Melbourne; he was one of the sponsors of the appointment to the Melbourne Classics department of a lecturer in Modern Greek in 1973.

Hunt's colleagues and friends will remember him as a person of warm friendliness and unlimited energy who was always ready to take on the demanding or thankless tasks. In performing those tasks he displayed a rare combination of delicacy and bluntness. Where finesse was called for he could speak and write with subtle wit and fine discrimination, but he would crash through pretension and humbug without ceremony. He was modest, even diffident, about his own work, but he could react strongly against anyone who belittled his subject or his department. He organized that department like a social club where it was important first to meet, and then let minds meet. He treated his students with an affable gruffness which delighted them and, because gratitude embarrassed him, he never let them know the half of the casual acts of kindness he performed for them. He thought of himself as a plain and direct man, yet he will probably be remembered most for his qualities of vision and imagination.

G. H. Gellie