

# V. THE ORIGIN AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL TRIPOS<sup>1</sup>

By JEAN O. McLACHLAN

SOME years ago the late Ronald Balfour wrote a paper on the Study of History at Cambridge.<sup>2</sup> His main preoccupation was the nature of history as a study. To-day interest is focused on more practical matters of detail, and we wish to know why the Cambridge Historical Tripos developed as it did, what was the purpose behind the various reforms, how far the character of the Tripos was affected by the example of foreign Universities, by experience at Oxford or by the requirements of the Civil Service examinations, and, finally, who most influenced the Tripos, the professors or the more junior College lecturers and supervisors.

Though the Regius Professorship of Modern History was founded at Cambridge, as at Oxford, in 1724, history was not seriously studied at Cambridge until the creation of a separate History Tripos by Grace of the Senate in February 1873.<sup>3</sup> Up till that time a little modern history had been studied as part of the Moral Sciences Tripos, but the very superficial and amateur character of this work is eloquently illustrated by the experience of the two Regius Professors who occupied the Chair of Modern History immediately before the creation of an Historical Tripos.

Sir James Stephen<sup>4</sup> became Regius Professor in 1849, when Macaulay refused the appointment,<sup>5</sup> and although he was amazed at the spirit of educational reform which he found beginning to stir in Cambridge this had not touched the syllabus of historical studies and was to have little effect on them for another thirty years. Since Stephen had been an undergraduate, thirty years before, enormous changes had taken place.

All the old text-books in science and literature have been superseded. All the public examinations had altered their character. Studies unheard of in the first

<sup>1</sup> This article obviously owes much to L. S. Wood's *Selected Epigraphs: the Inaugural Lectures of the Regius Professors of Modern History at Oxford and Cambridge since 1831*, published by the Historical Association, and *Essays on the Teaching of History*, edited by F. W. Maitland (1901). It is based on biographies, lectures and published correspondence of many Cambridge historians and especially on the unpublished records of the History Faculty Board, the Cambridge Historical Society and the Junior Historians, for permission to use which the author is extremely grateful. The author is also most grateful to Mr T. Thornely and to the Master of St John's College who have read the article in MS. and corrected some errors of fact, though obviously the responsibility for the interpretation put upon the facts rests entirely on the author.

<sup>2</sup> *Cambridge University Studies* (1933, ed. Wright).

<sup>3</sup> *Cambridge University Calendar* (1873).

<sup>4</sup> J. Stephen, *Lectures on the History of France* (1851). This has a very illuminating dedicatory epistle.

<sup>5</sup> G. O. Trevelyan, *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* (1876).

decade of the present century, were either occupying or contending for a foremost place in our system of education... Reformatory enactments had succeeded each other in such number and with such rapidity, as to exercise the skill of the most practical interpreter of the law. Every principle of education, however well established, and every habit of teaching, however inveterate, had been fearlessly questioned and not seldom laid aside.

The dominating genius directing these changes, Whewell, explained to Stephen that it was essential to the success of the reforms that he should at once begin both to lecture and examine—‘that the abandonment of’ these public duties ‘even for a single year, would defeat one essential part of the general scheme’—but as to the value of either examining or lecturing in history Stephen was soon very sceptical. Modern History was then still included among the Moral Sciences together with such subjects as English Law, General Jurisprudence and Political Economy. Stephen found it ridiculous that young men should be expected to acquire any real knowledge of such difficult subjects while they were working on classical, mathematical and theological studies until within a month or two of their examination in the five moral sciences, and he roundly criticized the system of examination as positively encouraging ‘the habit of substituting a shabby plausibility for sound knowledge’. In his opinion the wide field covered by the syllabus and the short time given men to prepare for the examination actually encouraged ‘an adroit and dextrous man’ to ‘assume the deceptive semblance of such knowledge’. However, Stephen applied himself to conduct the examinations even though he was highly sceptical as to their value. He also applied himself to lecture, though he was almost equally doubtful of the value of this practice. Seeley, who attended these lectures, afterwards described them<sup>6</sup> in terms which show how little modern history was esteemed in the middle of the nineteenth century. Stephen was a ‘master of his subject skilful in the exposition of it, and not sparing in pains, yet of his audience, most were there by compulsion, few were what we called “reading men”, I myself only went because I was ill and had been recommended not to study too hard. It was, and I think the Professor felt it, a painful waste of power.’ This was exactly what Stephen thought himself. As soon as he had delivered his course of lectures he decided to publish them for

after once making the experiment, I have renounced the hope of being ever able to repeat the same discourses year after year. I must venture to add, that I am extremely sceptical as to the real value of public oral teaching on such a subject as mine. If Abelard himself were living now, I believe that he would address his instruction, not to the ears of thousands crowding round his chair, but to the eyes of myriads reading them in studious seclusion.

The low level of historical studies was further demonstrated by the experience of Stephen’s successor Charles Kingsley,<sup>7</sup> for though his lectures proved

<sup>6</sup> J. Seeley, *Lectures and Essays* (1870).

<sup>7</sup> F. Kingsley, *Charles Kingsley, his letters and memories of his life* (1885).

amazingly popular their appeal lay in their eloquence as sermons rather than in their excellence as scientific history. Kingsley started with the advantage of having a reputation which attracted much interest among undergraduates. The fact that he was in Cambridge was exciting news to young men who knew of him as the reforming curate who had written *The Saint's Tragedy* and the Chartist parson who had written *Alton Locke*, a book which had severely criticized Cambridge itself. At first there was even some hostility towards the new Professor but

within a few days after he had stood up in the Senate House and delivered his inaugural lecture, men who were opposed to him began to say, 'Whether we agree with this or that, we like Kingsley' and so it was, every creature that came near him began to love him, one could so thoroughly trust him, he rang so thoroughly true. Then he began to lecture and we undergraduates began to crowd him out of room after room till he had to have the largest of all the schools, and we crowded that—crammed it. . . . Tutors and fellows and lecturers came too, and sat on the same benches with the undergraduates. . . . often as he told a story of heroism. . . . or uttered one of his noble sayings that rang through us like trumpet calls, loud and sudden cheers would break out irresistibly, spontaneously. . . . and again as the audience dispersed, a hearer has said, 'Kingsley is right—I'm wrong—my life is a cowardly life—I'll turn over a new leaf so help me God', and many a lad did too. Kingsley preached without seeming to do so. History was his text. Men and women of history were the words that built up his sermon. . . . Had Kingsley had to lecture upon broom-handles he would have done more good than many men would do with the most suggestive themes.

This impression is confirmed by Max Müller.<sup>8</sup>

His lectures. . . contained the thoughts of a poet and a moralist, a politician and a theologian, and before all of a friend and counsellor of young men while reading for them and with them one of the most awful periods in the history of mankind, the agonies of a dying empire, and the birth of new nationalities. History was but his text his chief aim was that of the teacher and preacher.

That Kingsley's was a moral approach to history had been revealed in his own Inaugural<sup>9</sup> when he had said 'History is the history of men and women, and of nothing else', and he had urged his audience to make biography or, better still, autobiography the foundation of their studies. According to his view history should concern itself with understanding people and discovering exactly what they had done. In the then state of historical knowledge, Kingsley did not think that it was possible to form an exact science of history, but he believed that history and especially modern history, which for him began with the Revelation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, was full of moral lessons since it was the process of man's education by God. Kingsley's influence as a teacher was enormous, but his standards of historical scholarship were not high. Even his

<sup>8</sup> Preface by Max Müller to C. Kingsley, *The Roman and the Teuton* (1884).

<sup>9</sup> Published as an appendix to C. Kingsley, *The Roman and the Teuton* (1884).

friend Max Müller, who edited the famous lectures on the fall of the Roman Empire for publication, had to admit that

I am not so blinded by my friendship for Kingsley as to say that these lectures are throughout what academical lectures ought to be. . . . It is easy to say what these lectures are not. They do not profess to contain the results of long and original research. They are not based on critical appreciation of the authorities which had to be consulted. They are not well arranged, systematic or complete. . . . I must say even more. It seems to me that these lectures were not always written in a perfectly impartial and judicial spirit.

Such was the state of historical scholarship on the eve of the foundation of the Tripos.

It was just before the introduction of history as a separate Honours course at Cambridge that it was announced as one of the subjects in the examination for the Civil Service.<sup>10</sup> The principle of competitive examination had been tentatively adopted by Order in Council in 1855, and the 'ancestor of all schemes for Class I of the Home Civil Service' was the examination adopted at a very early date by the Colonial Office. This was in two parts, a preliminary examination to test among other things handwriting, arithmetic, and précis writing, and a final examination in three subjects one of which might be Modern History. The earliest open examination for the Civil Service of India held in 1858 contained a paper on English Literature and History including that of the Laws and Constitution. When open competitive examinations were introduced for the Home Civil Service in 1870 the History of England including that of the Laws and Constitution was one of the possible subjects which candidates might offer and the language papers whether Greek, Latin, French, German or Italian all included sections on history. In 1895 General Modern History and Economic History were added as further possible papers and in 1906 English History was divided into two papers, one up to 1485 and the other after 1485, each paper carrying almost as many marks as the single paper on the whole of English History had carried in the past. It is, however, an indication of the relative unimportance of historical studies that whereas mathematics carried a total of 1000 marks English History earned only 500 in 1870, and whereas Greek earned 750 Greek History earned only 400 in the 1895 scheme. In 1906 when candidates were limited in their choice to subjects which would make up a total of 6000 marks, two periods of English History, a period of General Modern History, Economic History and Political Science, altogether totalled only 2500 marks.

It was after history had been recognized as a subject for Civil Service Examination that a 'small but resolute band of believers', one of whom was

<sup>10</sup> *Report*, dated 20 January 1917, of the Committee appointed by the Lords Commissioners of H.M. Treasury to consider and report upon the scheme of examination for Class I of the Civil Service. Parliamentary Papers, 1917-18, vol. VIII.

probably A. W. Ward,<sup>11</sup> began to feel that 'something more must be done to promote the close study' of history. Ward says that it was the example of Oxford which suggested 'the doubtful experiment of constituting... a two-legged Tripos'; and, in 1872, Modern History 'was for a time united with Law in a *mariage de convenance*'. The experiment was not, however, successful. As Ward put it, 'the equality of conjugal rights is only nominal'. Out of ten papers only three were devoted to history<sup>12</sup> and 'the budding barrister regards the getting up' of certain specified periods of history as an unmitigated nuisance, while the obvious necessity of requiring only a limited knowledge of special portions of 'Modern History' from all candidates in the joint Tripos has produced a dead level of mediocrity in the historical performances of the large majority of them. As had already happened at Oxford the 'hastily assorted couple' were separated. The question was then what was to become of 'Modern History'.

In April 1872 a Syndicate was set up to consider how the subjects of Law and History could best be separated. One school of thought as to how historical studies should be organized was led by A. W. Ward, who, though at that time in Manchester where he held the Chair of Professor of History at Owens College, was still a Fellow of Peterhouse and a non-resident member of the Board of Legal and Historical Studies at Cambridge. Because he was unable to express his views verbally Ward put them in a pamphlet addressed to the Members of the Senate of the University of Cambridge.<sup>13</sup> In this he made two main points: that it was essential to include Ancient History in the course of historical studies, not to relegate it to the Classical Tripos as had been the practice up till that time; and that the breadth of knowledge and level of scholarship required of candidates in the Historical Tripos should be really considerable so that at the end of their course they might justly deserve the 'supreme approval' of the University. The inclusion of Ancient History is a simple point. The other is more difficult. In his pamphlet to the Members of the Senate, Ward explained his ideas of the necessary level of scholarship as being

something far beyond the accumulation, and exhibition under examination, of a certain amount of knowledge. It is necessary that this knowledge should be possessed in such a manner as to admit of its being, in the full sense of the term, *used*; in other words, that the students possessing it should be capable of proving themselves at the same time to possess the special kind of power—the Historical power—which it should imply... Historical power, as I understand it, means the power of applying to the original treatment of Historical questions Historical knowledge

<sup>11</sup> A. W. Ward, 'The Study of History at Cambridge', *The Saturday Review*, 6 July 1872, reprinted in *Collected Works*, vol. v.

<sup>12</sup> A. W. Ward, *Suggestions Towards the Establishment of a History Tripos*. A pamphlet published by the Cambridge University Press, 1872. A copy of this is in the Cambridge University Library.

<sup>13</sup> A. W. Ward, *Suggestions Towards the Establishment of a History Tripos*.

which has been accumulated by reading, which has been sifted by criticism, which has been illustrated by comparison, and which has been invested with a literary form by composition.

Ward suggested that in order to acquire this 'power' students must obviously master the elements of general history, and have some acquaintance with the rudiments of those sciences such as historical geography, political economy and constitutional law. They should also have some advanced knowledge of the history of their own country. But this was not enough, in Ward's view. The student must also study history both by periods and by topics,

for should a student content himself with dividing History into *periods*, and studying it bit by bit, the result will be deadening; while, should he divide it into subjects or questions, and study it merely so to speak, aspect by aspect, the result will be delusive and even dangerous. Those who study History after the former method only will run the danger of becoming annalists; those who study it after the latter only, of becoming doctrinaires. In a combination of the two methods alone lies safety.

In support of his plan for a comprehensive study of history Ward published details of the lectures and seminars being given at such German universities as Leipzig, Heidelberg and Bonn. He also drew the attention of the Senate to the course of studies prescribed for the School of Modern History at Oxford. In addition he made pointed comments on the large numbers of lectures available to the German student and the considerable number of Oxford Professors, Readers, and Lecturers able to devote their time to the study of history. In Cambridge he pointed out 'the University *teaches* only a division of General History by means of a single chair, while of the Colleges only one [Trinity] *teaches* the same division by means of a single lectureship'. There were no prizes to encourage the study of the subject and no adequate system of examinations to test the candidate's knowledge.

Ward himself would have preferred the Cambridge course to be modelled on the German rather than the Oxford example. He was particularly dubious of the value of the Oxford method of studying periods only; he particularly preferred the combination of period and subject which was achieved in the German Degree Exercises and Examinations. He was also critical of the Oxford habit of giving official advice as to what books the undergraduate ought to consult. 'It is at once more in consonance with the approved usage of our University, and more likely to lead to a productive originality of research, to leave this to the student.'

Ward's specific proposals for an examination were original. He suggested that the examination should be in two halves, the first an elementary test consisting of one paper in Ancient, one in Medieval, one in Modern and two in English History. Only those candidates who satisfied the examiners in this part of the examination were to be allowed to proceed to the second. The second part, which Ward suggested should follow a few days after the first, was to consist of 'as exhaustive as possible a series of questions' on some

subject such as Puritanism, the Renaissance, the origin of the Temporal Power or the struggle between Bourbon and Habsburg. In addition the second part of the examination was to include a test of the candidate's knowledge of a given period of General History which included in its range the subject already selected for study by the candidate.

Ward's school of thought was nicknamed by irreverent undergraduates 'Facts without Thought'.<sup>14</sup> The other school known as 'Thought without Facts' was that represented by the new Regius Professor, the future Sir John Seeley<sup>15</sup> who, throughout his career, laid special stress on the importance of history as a 'school for statesmanship'.<sup>16</sup> History was for him past politics: politics present history.

In the end the new Tripos was designed so as to meet the demands of both schools of thought. The result was an uneasy combination of 'factual' subjects and subjects of a more abstract, theoretical character. The tendency during the next thirty years was for the theoretical—or political—subjects to decrease in number and importance, and ultimately to become almost redundant as the 'factual' subjects developed in subtlety until they provided completely adequate vehicles for training a young man in abstract thought. This change is quite obvious if the examination papers of the 1870's<sup>17</sup> are compared with those of the twentieth century. At the earlier period the knowledge required in the purely historical papers was so factual, and the exposition was so bald that Mr Hammond of Trinity,<sup>18</sup> in an explanatory article on the aims of the new Tripos, could make out a very convincing case for having taken over several theoretical subjects from the Moral Science Tripos such as Principles of Political Philosophy and General Jurisprudence, Political Economy and Economic History and finally Public International Law.

Without them the most valuable elements of historical knowledge cannot be adequately appropriated. . . .

The study of history alone, at least in the earlier stages, has a tendency to exercise too exclusively the memory and receptive imagination of the student, and to leave comparatively unemployed the higher faculties of apprehending clearly and applying accurately general principles and handling abstract ideas with ease and precision.

In addition to these theoretical subjects the other subjects which formed part of the Tripos in its earliest days were short periods of Modern, Medieval and Ancient History. There was at that time no suggestion that the candidate should be expected to cover the whole of European History in outline, but so

<sup>14</sup> This is noted in J. P. Whitney, 'Sir George Prothero as an Historian', an unpublished paper given to the Royal Historical Society in 1922. A copy is preserved in the Library of King's College, Cambridge. The author is very grateful to Mr J. Saltmarsh for having brought it to her attention.

<sup>15</sup> On Seeley's work as a teacher see an article by J. R. Tanner, *English Historical Review*, vol. x.

<sup>16</sup> Inaugural Lecture published in his *Lectures and Essays* (1870).

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix B for specimen examination papers.

<sup>18</sup> *Student's Guide to Cambridge* (1874).

as to qualify for an honours degree he must study more than the old course of Modern History which had formed a minor part of the Moral Science Tripos. The sample periods were, however, very brief. For example in 1875 the period in Ancient History was the Macedonian Power to 323 B.C., in Medieval History it was the History of England from the accession of Edward the Confessor to the Battle of Hastings, and in Modern History the foreign politics of France from 1789 to 1815. In addition to these short historical papers there was a paper in the General History of England, and an Essay.

The first meeting of the Board<sup>19</sup> for operating the newly created Tripos was 'holden at Professor Seeley's Rooms on November 30, 1876'. The *ex officio* members of the Board, in addition to Professor Seeley himself, were the Regius Professor of Civil Law, the Professor of Political Economy, and the Whewell Professor of International Law, and there were six other members, but of all these only five attended the first meeting at which Seeley took the Chair and Mr Hammond of Trinity acted as Secretary.

The first lecture list produced by the Board contained particulars of seven courses:

*Lent Term 1877*

The Regius Professor of Modern History

History of England, 1660-1702. Conversation Class

Mr O. Browning, King's College

History of Europe, 1706-1792, and Treaties, 1756-1783

Mr Hammond, Trinity College

Class in History of England, 1660-1702

Mr Lawrence, Downing College

Constitutional History of England from 1485 to the present time

Mr Stanton, Trinity College

Political Economy

Mr Prothero, King's College

Constitutional History of England, 1258-1307

and it is a curious fact that the list was only produced because Mr Sidgwick asked the Board if it would recommend a course offered by Mr Browning who was not a College Lecturer. After some discussion the Board decided to issue a list of lectures which it officially recommended.

Three topics chiefly occupied the attention of the Board in those early years. One was the creation of an historical library and reading-room for the use of historical students. Professor Symonds, the predecessor of Sir James Stephen, had left a collection of about 1000 volumes which had been increased by later Regius Professors such as Stephen and Kingsley until it numbered

<sup>19</sup> The records of what is now the History Board, including three volumes of Minutes from 1876 to 1927, are deposited in the Seeley Library, Cambridge. These records will be referred to as History Board Minutes though in fact the Board has various names at different times. They have been made available by the courtesy of the present Secretary of the Board, Mr Oakeshott.



about 1600 volumes, and although no important additions had been made for seventy or eighty years it made a useful nucleus for a Faculty Library.<sup>20</sup> In 1884 the collection was housed in the gallery of the Philosophical Library and Oscar Browning became the first librarian. At first there was a serious shortage of money to buy books and for some years the library was very little used by students—Gwatkin when he made his first Report as librarian in 1889 estimated that one or two a term was perhaps a liberal estimate<sup>21</sup>—but after the library was moved to a room under the library of King's College in 1890 it began to be more popular.<sup>22</sup>

The second matter to engage the attention of the Board was the revision of the list of recommended books which in spite of Ward's criticism had been issued when the Tripos was set up. The first revision was proposed early in 1882 and completed at the end of 1883,<sup>23</sup> and a second in 1886.

The third matter was the reform of the Tripos. The first very minor move in this direction was when in 1879 Oscar Browning pointed out that undergraduates were overburdened with lectures and that the arrangement of the courses was completely haphazard. His proposal, which was substantially approved by the Board,<sup>24</sup> was that first-year lectures should cover Ancient History, the General History of England and Economic History, second-year lectures Medieval History with English Constitutional History and a period of medieval political history of France, Germany or Italy, and third-year lectures Modern History and the study of selected Treaties.

A more serious proposal for the reform of the Tripos emerged five years later as the result of a conflict between the views of the Regius Professor and some of his younger colleagues.

From 1869 the Chair of Modern History was occupied by Professor, later Sir John, Seeley. For the first ten years of the Tripos' existence he was the Faculty's only Professor. In addition to his fondness for politics he was specially interested in what he called 'large considerations'.<sup>25</sup> In a supervision, or in his famous 'Conversation Class' he inculcated lucidity and thoroughness. He never allowed a pupil to wrap up a fallacy in fine phrases for history was always for him a very serious study. He hated the picturesque as being the property of the 'stage manager and scene painter', but his very interest in serious, fundamental problems led him to adopt a method which was as it were astronomical. He swept the whole heavens with his telescope. Later students came to associate the 'broad sweeps' characteristic of the Cambridge Historical Tripos with the outline periods introduced while Lord Acton was Regius Professor, but it was Seeley who had first set the fashion. Whether he

<sup>20</sup> Report to the Senate filed in Minute Book of History Board under 24 February 1885.

<sup>21</sup> Librarian's Report for the year ending 1889 filed in History Board Minutes.

<sup>22</sup> Librarian's Report for the years ending 1891 and 1892 filed in History Board Minutes.

<sup>23</sup> List of books recommended by the Board 1874, see Appendix A.

<sup>24</sup> History Board Minutes, 12 June 1879.

<sup>25</sup> J. R. Tanner in *English Historical Review*, vol. x.

was lecturing on the international history of Modern Europe or on Political Science 'the whole drift of his mind was towards the suggestive treatment of large phenomena'. History in his view was a serious study concerned with great events and the analysis of their causes and results.

This interest in 'large considerations' did not satisfy the new standards of historical scholarship which were coming to be appreciated by a group of younger historians who became influential in the 1880's. A brilliant example of what the historian could do had been given in Oxford. Stubbs published his *Constitutional History* between 1873 and 1878. Furthermore, in 1874, John Richard Green published his *Short History of the English People*, and between 1878 and 1890 appeared Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, and Freeman and Froude were both writing at this time.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the 1870's and 1880's saw the emergence in both Universities of the first generation of scholars who had been trained in historical studies. Before that time history had been taught by amateurs. Stephen had been a public servant and man of affairs, Kingsley a minister of religion, Seeley himself had been trained as a classic, but in the late 1870's men who had taken their degrees in history began to produce works of first-class historical scholarship.

In Cambridge this new generation with new standards of historical scholarship was led by Mr (later Sir George) Prothero of King's, who in 1879 had become Secretary of the Board.<sup>27</sup> This position he occupied continuously for nearly twenty years and in it he exercised a decisive influence on the formation of the Cambridge tradition of history. The qualities which made Prothero an excellent editor of the *Quarterly Review* from 1899 and Director of the Historical Section of the Foreign Office in the War of 1914-18, made him an excellent Secretary of the History Board. His own views on history, as expressed in his Inaugural Lecture at Edinburgh University in 1894, were in considerable agreement with those of Professor Seeley. He believed that it had a peculiar value as an educational vehicle because of the close connection between history and politics, though for him 'the verdict of History is mostly oracular'. He believed also that history encouraged certain moral standards such as the devotion to truth under peculiarly difficult conditions, that it widened and strengthened political principles, that it tempered judgement and heightened impartiality, and that it was a great preparation for politics just because it dealt with probabilities and not with certainties. His special bent became clear while he was still at Cambridge for he produced an admirable selection of *Statutes and Documents of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James* which revealed him as a particularly gifted editor interested in making available original documents to provide a sound basis for scientific rather than literary history.

<sup>26</sup> E. L. Woodward, *British Historians* (1943).

<sup>27</sup> History Board Minutes, 25 March 1879. See also an obituary notice on Sir George Prothero, *Quarterly Review*, 1922. The text of his Inaugural Lecture at Edinburgh University is in *National Review*, 1894.

The most able representative of the new generation of historians was undoubtedly F. W. Maitland<sup>28</sup> who became reader in Law in 1884. Maitland had been trained partly as a mathematician and finally as a moral scientist when he had come greatly under the influence of Henry Sidgwick, but he was to be one of the greatest historians Cambridge ever produced. 'As an historian he was eminently a pathfinder, and has probably done more to revolutionize our ideas of English origins than any one except Stubbs and possibly Liebermann.' For a time he had worked as a lawyer, and had been a supremely good one, but his bent was always for scientific, theoretical law, and having studied Savigny's *History of Roman Law* he determined to make use of the vast deluge of materials now becoming available to the historian to do for English Law what Savigny had done for Roman, 'that is to produce, after due investigation and collation of the undigested and scattered materials, a scientific and philosophical history of English law from the earliest times in all its bearings upon the economic, political, constitutional, social and religious life of the English people'. In 1888 he was elected Downing Professor of English Law and his Inaugural Lecture was 'a popular exposition of his aims and an appeal for fellow workers'. Already in 1887 he had founded the Selden Society to encourage the study and advance the knowledge of the history of English law. In the twenty years between its foundation and his own death the society issued twenty-one volumes edited either by himself or editors chosen by him. His own output was considerable and it was all of an unfailingly high standard and of unusual lucidity, grace and realism.

It was characteristic of the wide interests of this genius among historians that although his main preoccupation was with English legal and economic developments he fully appreciated the importance of correlating English developments with those in the whole of Western Europe. As Figgis pointed out: 'Creighton and Maitland and Acton were in fact at work on one problem—the development of the modern Western mind and its relation to the sources from which it had proceeded.'

A third member of the group of younger historians was the Rev. William Cunningham.<sup>29</sup> He having been bracketed with Maitland at the top of the Moral Science Tripos in 1872, and having begun to examine in the History Tripos in 1878 was struck at once by the urgent need for more authoritative works on economic history, and in 1882 he produced the first edition of his classic *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, which laid the foundations of the study of economic history at Cambridge.

Yet another of the group was the Rev. (later Professor) Gwatkin<sup>30</sup> who in spite of most disconcerting mannerisms and such defective speech and poor

<sup>28</sup> H. A. L. Fisher, *Frederick William Maitland, a biographical sketch* (1910).

<sup>29</sup> Obituary notice, *Economic Journal*, 1919.

<sup>30</sup> His educational views are charmingly expressed in the essay he contributed to *Essays on the Teaching of History*, edited by F. W. Maitland (1901).

sight as would have incapacitated any other man, managed to be not only a very distinguished medieval scholar but an extraordinarily good teacher.

These young lecturers and College supervisors were very much encouraged by the arrival in 1884 of Creighton<sup>31</sup> as first Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History. Creighton was one of the most eminent of the new generation of Oxford historians. Two years before his appointment he had published the first two volumes of his *History of the Papacy* and two years after his appointment he became the first editor of the *English Historical Review*. At Cambridge his lectures were so popular that it became a current joke to say that any visitor could be 'left in Creighton's lecture room till called for'. He also held discussion classes both at Newnham and in his rooms at Emmanuel, and was at great pains to encourage pupils to understand the processes of historical scholarship. He was also very eager to induce young men to undertake original research. He would say: 'You must get an object, you must decide to write a book, for your own good, to pull yourself together.' It was symptomatic of this growing interest in research that, in 1885, a syndicate of which Creighton was a member, laid down regulations for the Prince Consort and Thirlwall Historical Prizes which ensured the publication of the prize-winning essay. Creighton also did much to encourage the scheme for an historical essay prize which was started at this time in Newnham. Even while he was at Cambridge Creighton was very busy with ecclesiastical work, and finally he had to resign from his professorship to devote himself entirely to his duties as a bishop, but while he was there he brought to Cambridge 'a wholesome intellectual stir' such as he always brought to any company in which he found himself.

This was the group which in 1885 achieved the first and most successful reform of the Tripos.

As early as 1884 Prothero and Gwatkin had written to the *Cambridge Review*<sup>32</sup> criticizing the existing Tripos. Gwatkin had asked whether the only object of the Tripos was to train public servants, and when Professor Seeley disclaimed all interest in the Tripos 'as a thing which does not concern me, and which might conceivably...mar the effectiveness of my teaching', Prothero had retorted that if the Regius Professor could afford to ignore the Tripos this was impossible for college supervisors and lecturers. The men who wanted to reform the Tripos to provide a training in the methods of historical scholarship were much encouraged by Creighton's Inaugural Lecture<sup>33</sup> for in it he had stressed the value of historical method and declared that one of the duties of a Professor was to attract students to do post-graduate research. In the struggles to reform the Tripos they found him a very useful ally. Seeley's indifference, if not opposition, to reform made any change very difficult, but

<sup>31</sup> *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton*, by his wife (1904).

<sup>32</sup> *Cambridge Review*, 1884.

<sup>33</sup> *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton*, by his wife (1904).

Creighton, though he was equally bored by discussions of syllabus and examination, took the line that since examinations must exist they should be as little harmful as possible. Prothero certainly believed that it was largely due to Creighton's skill and influence that a satisfactory compromise was reached. The struggle to reform the Tripos began in February 1885 when at a meeting of the Board Prothero 'brought forward certain proposals for change in the regulations of the Historical Tripos, on which some discussions took place, but no conclusion was arrived at'.<sup>34</sup> At the next meeting of the Board three weeks later Prothero again brought the matter up and moved that a special meeting should be held at the beginning of the next term to discuss whether any, and if so what, changes in the present regulations of the Historical Tripos were advisable. This special meeting<sup>35</sup> was held, not in the house of the Regius Professor, but in the Syndicate Room and was attended not by the usual four or six men but by a full dozen.

At this meeting it was decided 'that the present examination is unsatisfactory in that insufficient attention is paid to the study of original authorities'. To remedy this two further decisions were taken. It was agreed to reduce to one the number of compulsory special subjects which had to be studied with reference to original documents, and, even if a candidate liked this kind of work, in future no one might offer more than two of these subjects. Another reform to encourage thoroughness was that in future two papers were to be set on Constitutional History. Another change with the same object limited Economic and Constitutional History to the History of England.<sup>36</sup>

The policy of the younger historians was not only to encourage a thorough study of original material but also to provide alternatives, so that a man could specialize either on this more thorough factual work or on abstract speculative subjects such as International Law and Political Economy. Every candidate had to offer two papers on a special historical subject and one on a theoretical subject, but he was allowed a choice between two more papers in another special historical subject or two more theoretical papers. At the same time the scope of the theoretical papers was made clearer by the separation of Political Economy from Economic History, and of International Law from the study of specific treaties.

Minor reforms limited the paper in English History to essays on General English History for the earlier form of the paper had been shown by experience to be unsatisfactory since Constitutional and Economic subjects were covered in other papers. Another minor change was that special periods of Ancient History were to be chosen from the years after 31 B.C. since the proper study of the History of Greece and of the Roman Republic had been shown to involve a knowledge of classical languages unusual in candidates for the

<sup>34</sup> History Board Minutes, 3 February 1885.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* 2 May 1885.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 9 May 1885.

Historical Tripos. The purpose of these reforms was explained in a draft Report prepared by Prothero for the final meeting in June 1885.<sup>37</sup>

Under the reformed regulations a candidate had to offer ten papers, two on English Constitutional History, one on English Economic History, one on Political Science and two on a Special Subject. He had also to take an Essay paper and a paper on General English History. The only choice open to him was between two papers in another Special Subject and two theoretical subjects, Political Economy and International Law.

The new standards of scholarship which had been successfully championed by Prothero, Maitland, Cunningham and Gwatkin with the help of Professor Creighton were wholeheartedly supported and proclaimed by the new Regius Professor when in 1895 Seeley was succeeded by Lord Acton.<sup>38</sup> Acton brought to the Chair prodigious erudition and width of interest which embraced all Europe, but of even more importance was his sense of moral purpose.

Part of Lord Acton's sense of the moral responsibility of the historian found expression in his insistence on impartiality. In his Inaugural<sup>39</sup> he had said: 'The . . . distinctive note of the generation of writers who dug so deep a trench between history as known to our grandfathers and as it appears to us, is their dogma of impartiality', which had become possible because since the middle of the nineteenth century what Acton described as an 'incessant deluge of new and unsuspected material' had begun to gush into the sea in which earlier historians had timidly paddled. In Acton's view this new material made possible for the historians of his generation entirely new standards of objectivity and accuracy, and made Acton's approach to history radically different from that of Kingsley only thirty years before. 'History', Acton said, 'must stand on documents not on opinions', but as he went on to point out the essence of the new approach to history was not simply the accumulation of documents.

For our purpose, the main thing to learn is not the art of accumulating material, but the sublime art of investigating it. . . . It is by solidity of criticism more than by plenitude of erudition, that the study of history strengthens, and straightens and extends the mind.

It was Acton who taught the necessity of studying events in the archives of more than one country, and this ultimately bore fruit in the work of such diplomatic historians as Sir Charles Webster and Professor Temperley.

Another effect of Lord Acton's European breadth of interest was the production of the *Cambridge Modern History* of which he was appointed the first editor.<sup>40</sup> The original idea was not his, and he did not live to edit the work

<sup>37</sup> History Board Minutes, 9 June 1885, to which is attached a Draft Report.

<sup>38</sup> A most illuminating essay on Creighton, Maitland and Acton is in an appendix to J. N. Figgis, *Churches and the Modern State* (1914).

<sup>39</sup> Lord Acton, *The Study of History* (1905).

<sup>40</sup> G. N. Clark on 'The origins of the *Cambridge Modern History*', in *Cambridge Historical Journal* (1946).

or indeed to write any part of it, but he planned the general scheme and his spirit of profound erudition, exact and disciplined criticism and austere impartiality inspired the whole band of his collaborators.

Acton's influence on the spirit of historical studies at Cambridge was immense, but the changes in the Tripos which took place while he was Regius Professor did not originate from him. As he said himself in a discussion of the Tripos in January 1897:<sup>41</sup>

he had not come to Cambridge with any design of reorganizing the scheme of the Historical Tripos with which he had not been acquainted; he had had no innovations of his own to produce, and had taken no initiative in originating the change. He was therefore able to speak of the scheme now brought forward without any excess of personal or parental interest. The proposals which had been made included all points which appeared to him important for making the Historical School as efficient as possible.

He then went on to praise three points in particular, the retention of Special Subjects, the inclusion of theoretical subjects of a political character and the introduction of outline courses on European History.

The reforms of 1895–7 began with the seemingly simple administrative problem of dividing the Tripos into two halves so as to make it possible for a man to take Honours in two subjects. This question had been raised as early as 1877 and again in the great reforms of 1885 but had come to nothing even though on the second occasion it had been supported by Dr Cunningham.<sup>42</sup> In 1894 Mr Thornely raised a minor point—the question of separating class lists into divisions to give a clearer idea of a candidate's merits; and it was at this meeting that Gwatkin, who had succeeded Creighton as Dixie Professor, again raised the question of altering the Regulations so as to make provision for a candidate from another Tripos who wanted to read History, Part II.<sup>43</sup> It was Alfred Marshall, Professor of Political Economy, who first suggested that the best solution of the problem of the man wanting to read for double honours would be to divide the Tripos into two parts.

But in 1894 as distinct from 1884 the reformers were far from having any clear conception of the principles which ought to determine the character of the two parts of the Tripos. They were, indeed, very far from certain that any changes ought to be made at all, as Cunningham said in a letter to Tanner who had succeeded Prothero as Secretary of the Board: 'I only intervened to try to suggest the direction in which it seems to me that we would be wise to move, if we move at all.'<sup>44</sup> The atmosphere was very different from that of 1884–5 when the younger men had urgently wanted specific reforms to achieve clearly defined educational purposes. Ten years later the only thing that was clearly perceived was that for administrative reasons—to meet the needs of the

<sup>41</sup> History Board Minutes, 2 February 1897, to which is attached a report of speeches made 28 January 1897.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 9 May 1885.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* 24 November 1894.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* 22 October 1895, to which is attached a letter from Cunningham dated 18 October 1895.

man who wanted to read for a double honours degree—the Tripos must be divided. Whether the purposes of the two parts were to be different no one seemed to know.

The principle of dividing the Tripos into two parts was carried *nem. con.*,<sup>45</sup> but which subjects were to be allocated to which part provoked long and energetic controversy, and finally the solution achieved in 1897 was most unsatisfactory. In fact, even when Part II after some minor adjustments in 1909 had become a fairly satisfactory examination, Part I remained an examination based on no clear educational principle.

The only clear proposal for a coherent Part I was made by Cunningham<sup>46</sup> but came to nothing. He envisaged it as an examination in English History being made up of two papers in Constitutional History, one each in English Economic History and the General History of England and two on a selected period which he thought ought always to be selected from English History of the fifteenth or an earlier century as 'this would render the First Part a fairly complete study of the development of one civilization. . . and. . . would compel men to use authorities in some other language than their own, quite as effectively as the choice of a foreign period would do'. His scheme would also have had the advantage of making Part I a purely historical examination by cutting out Political Science altogether and substituting a second paper on Constitutional History in its place. This was entirely consistent with the views Cunningham had expressed in the reform controversy of 1884. If there must be a choice between facts without thought and thought without facts, Cunningham would have preferred to see Part I consecrated to the study of fact.

When, however, a sub-committee of the Board produced its draft scheme for the Tripos<sup>47</sup> all homogeneity had vanished from Part I for in addition to English Economic History 'to 1707', English Constitutional History to 1485, and outlines of English History the draft scheme suggested that this Part of the Tripos should cover Ancient History and a Special Subject as well. When the Board considered the scheme they made this confusion even worse by transferring to Part I the outlines of European History.<sup>48</sup> Mr Hammond even suggested destroying the English character of Part I completely by transferring Economic History to Part II but this was rejected, though another breach was made in Cunningham's original conception when Maitland carried a proposal that the Special Subject in Part I might be either medieval or modern. English Constitutional History after 1485 had been put into Part II in the sub-committee's Draft<sup>49</sup> and no one suggested its transfer to Part I. In fact as it emerged in 1897, Part I was not English, not medieval and not a training in historical method.

<sup>45</sup> History Board Minutes, 22 October 1895.

<sup>46</sup> Letter of 18 October 1895, attached to History Board Minutes, 22 October 1895.

<sup>47</sup> History Board Minutes, 19 November 1895.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* 23 November 1895.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* 19 November 1895.



The chief innovation made at this time was the introduction of three papers on the outline history of Europe, two covering the period before the fifteenth century and one the period after. This idea was sharply criticized by Oscar Browning who expressed his agreement with the view formerly held by Sir John Seeley that this was not only a bad subject but the bad subject—that it would ruin the study in Cambridge, that it belonged to the infancy of historical study. It was a study found at the *École Normale*, in Victoria University and in the inferior Universities in Germany<sup>50</sup>. But the outlines gained the weighty support of Lord Acton. This introduction was, in fact, one of the few reforms which were inspired by some clear educational principle. As Professor Westlake explained when he first proposed the innovation:<sup>51</sup> ‘It is quite possible that a man who had obtained an historical first class may exhibit an ignorance, little creditable to the University, on all parts of history outside one or two special subjects.’ His suggested remedy was that candidates should be questioned *viva voce* and required to fill in outline maps. A sub-committee, composed of Professor Gwatkin, Tanner, Cunningham and Lord Acton, which was set up by the Board to produce the draft scheme for the Tripos, proposed including in Part II a paper on outlines of European History and Historical Geography.<sup>52</sup> Professor Sidgwick and Mr Browning, when called into consultation as political scientists,<sup>53</sup> suggested that instead of outlines of Medieval and Modern European History and a special period of Ancient History, Part I should include two papers on the development of the European Policy. Mr Leathes and Mr Tanner carried a modified version of this proposal through the Board<sup>54</sup> substituting two papers on General History for the papers on Medieval and Modern European History. Finally it was agreed<sup>55</sup> on a motion proposed by Professor Maitland, supported by Mr Thornely, that one paper on General European History should be in Part II and that this paper should begin at 1453. Lord Acton warmly supported this, and successfully suggested that the paper on Modern History should be compulsory.<sup>56</sup> The further division of the period before the fifteenth century into two papers was proposed by Mr Archbold, ‘it being understood that these two papers would receive less credit in the examination than any other two papers’.

True to the principles which had inspired the founders of the Tripos, and in spite of Cunningham’s tentative proposal to the contrary, both parts of the Tripos finally contained papers on theoretical subjects such as Comparative Politics or Political Economy. But even so the treatment of the theoretical subjects provoked much criticism as for example from Oscar Browning,<sup>57</sup> who felt that these branches of learning were being squeezed out in favour of the

<sup>50</sup> History Board Minutes, 2 February 1897, to which is attached reports of speeches made 28 January 1897.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 5 November 1895.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* 29 February 1896.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 10 March 1896.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 2 February 1897, to which is attached reports of speeches made 28 January 1897.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* 19 November 1895.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 5 March 1896.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* 5 May 1896.

more factual studies. 'Dr Maitland had urged that no more concessions should be made (at the expense of History proper). It was not a question of concessions. If a robber took a man's watch and chain it was no concession to give him back the watch-key.' The threatened robbery of which Oscar Browning, as a political scientist complained, was the proposal made originally by Cunningham and adopted by the sub-committee of the Board, to drop Political Science entirely from Part I substituting a second paper on Constitutional History, and though, in fact, Comparative Politics was retained in Part I as an alternative to Ancient History,<sup>58</sup> Mr Browning was still very dissatisfied. In his view 'the examination had been and was largely of a political character'. It was to prepare for such an examination that the historical teaching at Colleges like King's had been built up. He had written a flysheet 'to show that the Tripos ought to some extent... be regarded as a Political Tripos'. He doubted whether it was the time to set up a new Political Tripos, but he urged strongly that in Part II it might be possible for a man to take all four theoretical subjects—Comparative Politics, Deductive Politics, International Law and Political Economy—which would make a good Political Tripos. Here at last was a conception of one part of the Tripos as a coherent whole, but Browning's interest in politics was never in harmony with the ideas of the majority of the members of the Board. The emphasis for good or evil was on the study of historical facts though as yet there was no clear idea of what periods or countries or techniques ought most to be encouraged.

Perhaps the most illuminating comment on the reforms of 1897 was made at the time by Maitland when he said:

no Report could ever have been more thoroughly discussed. He had never known meetings so full, so numerous and so protracted... He thought the programme was much too English, much too unhistorical, and much too miscellaneous; it resembled rather the programme of a Variety Show than the sober programme of an Historical School... if any more concessions at all were made at the expense of history proper his lukewarm support would be changed to active opposition.<sup>59</sup>

Under the reformed regulations the candidate had to offer eight papers in Part I—an Essay, General European History (Medieval), English Constitutional History to 1485, and two papers on a Special Historical Subject were compulsory. Then he had a choice as between Comparative Politics or Ancient History, and between two papers in English Economic History or two papers in Political Economy. In Part II he could offer five, six or seven papers, one in English Constitutional History, one essay paper, and one paper on European History after 1485. He could then offer not less than two or more than four from among two papers on a special subject, two papers on a theoretical subject and a paper on the History of Thought, Literature and Art.

When Acton died in 1902, and it became clear that Maitland's health would not allow him to accept the Chair, the Regius Professorship was offered to

<sup>58</sup> History Board Minutes, 22 February 1896.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* 2 February 1897.

J. B. Bury<sup>60</sup> who carried on Seeley's interest in Modern History and Acton's enthusiasm for research, which in his Inaugural he declared to be 'the highest duty of the University'.

Professor Temperley has stated<sup>61</sup> that when the Tripos was next revised, in 1909, Bury's chief interest was to arrange the papers in Part II so as to give special prominence to modern history and to the teaching of the technique of research. Though most of his own published work had been medieval or classical Bury always made it perfectly clear to his pupils and colleagues that he thought modern history the most important of studies, as was only to be expected in view of his belief that civilization progressed according to laws which were comprehensible to the attentive student of history. Professor Temperley says that during the discussions of 1909

Bury made great efforts to increase the amount of modern history studied in Part II. . . . He first proposed that two out of the five papers (excluding the Essay) in Part II should be devoted to Modern History Outlines. When the Board confined the study to one paper, Bury proposed that it should have double weight, i.e. receive twice the marks of any other paper.

Another of the 1909 reforms which Professor Temperley directly attributes to Bury was that the study of special historical periods was then restricted exclusively to Part II. This was done because Bury wanted to make Part II a course of training for historical research.

The other reforms made in 1909<sup>62</sup> were all to simplify the 'variety programme' of 1897 which had shown many defects in practice. Indeed, they were the reforms which might have been expected of a Board which had Tanner as Chairman with Green as Secretary, and whose other members included Figgis, Gwatkin, Clapham, Winstanley, Vere Laurence and Temperley. It is to be noted that the Report was not signed by Bury, the Regius Professor, who thought the 'boom in English History. . . very unfortunate' and regretted the sacrifice of Ancient History. In its Report to the Senate the Board pointed out various unsatisfactory features of the Regulations of 1897 which had emerged in practice.

The extraordinary complexity of the Regulations not only gives great trouble to those who are charged with the duty of administering them, but experience has shown that it also operates to the serious disadvantage of the candidate. At the present time a student is required at the beginning of his first term (1) to decide between Ancient History and Comparative Politics, (2) to decide between Economic History and Political Economy, and (3) to select one out of five Special Historical Subjects chosen from the whole course of history. At this stage the student is without experience to guide him and his advisers do not yet possess that knowledge of his tastes and capacities which would enable them to give him good counsel.

<sup>60</sup> J. B. Bury, *Selected Essays* (1930), with an Introduction by H. W. V. Temperley. See also *Bibliography of the Works of J. B. Bury* (1929), prefaced by a memoir by N. Baynes.

<sup>61</sup> H. W. V. Temperley, Introduction to J. B. Bury's *Selected Essays*.

<sup>62</sup> History Board Minutes, 27 April 1909, to which is attached a Report to the Senate.

To remedy this the Board reduced the number of alternatives in Part I and left in it 'subjects which under any scheme of historical study all students would be expected to take'.

Another grave defect in the Regulations of 1897 was that Part I 'includes subjects so widely different in character as to make the work too heavy for the time allowed'. This forced weaker students to resort to 'small text-books of superficial character'. The remedy proposed by the Board was to assign to Part I 'the various aspects of English History (General, Constitutional and Economic), so that the work required for each of these papers will to a certain extent assist and supplement the rest'. As an additional corrective to the tendency to rely on the small text-book the Board decided to resume its practice of 'publishing lists of recommended books, in which special stress will be laid upon certain larger and more important works which all students should be encouraged to read'. To make the work in Part I less heavy the Board proposed to reduce the number of papers on Economic History from two to one.

A final defect in the Regulations of 1897 was that they had allowed a student to read for Part I without offering a theoretical subject. 'This has sometimes had the effect of encouraging the habit of accumulating facts instead of interpreting them, and of training the memory at the expense of the power of independent thought.' The remedy proposed by the Board was to make Comparative Politics compulsory, and at the same time to re-define the subject so as to include a larger element of theory, reverting to the older name of Political Science.

Part II was less open to criticism except that the number of papers seemed too large. This the Board proposed to remedy by omitting the paper on the History of Thought, Literature and Art while ensuring that these aspects of history should be recognized in all the Special Historical Subjects and actually given special prominence in one of them.

During the discussions for the reform of the Tripos in 1909 a considerable part was taken by the younger lecturers. They were consulted by the Board and submitted a memorandum<sup>63</sup> with eleven signatures including those of E. A. Benians, Z. N. Brooke, B. Goulding Brown, C. J. B. Gaskoin, J. B. Mullinger and W. F. Reddaway. Their request that a select period in Ancient History should not be included in Part I was in fact conceded, and it was in deference to their opinion that a select period in English History was put into Part I. Indeed, there was some uneasiness, expressed, as for example by Mr Glover, that the powerful combination of the College Tutors working in collaboration with the undergraduates might succeed in turning Part I into 'a pleasant and profitable way of dodging the General Examination'.<sup>64</sup> This

<sup>63</sup> *Cambridge University Reporter*, 26 May 1909.

<sup>64</sup> For extracts from the speeches made in the Senate House Discussion of 22 May 1909 see Appendix C.

fear was not, however, justified and it would seem to have been partly the influence exerted by the younger which helped to produce a Tripos eminently successful as a vehicle for education.

Of the changes which took place in the Tripos and in the composition of the History school after 1909, it is perhaps too soon to speak, though certainly much happened which was of great importance.<sup>65</sup> In 1911 the society of the Junior Historians was formed largely by those young men who had taken such an active interest in the Tripos reforms of two years earlier. In 1922 the Cambridge Historical Society was created largely to foster an interest in research and to provide an opportunity for the increasing number of graduate students to meet each other. In the same year the *Cambridge Historical Journal* was created to publish articles based on original research. In the period between 1914 and 1939 many new Chairs were created for Naval, later Imperial History, Political Science, Economic History, Modern History, Medieval History, and finally during the second Great War of 1939–45 a Chair was created to promote the study of American History. In 1934 the Tripos regulations were again reformed and an attempt was made to integrate the study of constitutional developments with the study of economic history. But to discover who was most responsible for the new developments or what was the influence exercised by the various Professors or Lecturers is a matter for further study and inquiry. Some things emerge clearly. The great influence of Lowes Dickinson as a teacher of Political Science, the influence of Lapsley as a teacher of Medieval English Constitutional History, the energy and inspiration of Temperley and the sound judgement and sound scholarship of Clapham are among features which made the inter-war period one of the great periods in the life of the Cambridge historical school. But much else is confused, and to unravel the threads is beyond the scope of an article on the origin and early development of the Tripos.

<sup>65</sup> For a comparative chart of forms of the Historical Tripos as prescribed for successive periods from 1875 to 1948 see Appendix D.

## APPENDIX A

## LIST OF BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD 1874

*Historical Tripos, 1875*

The Board of Historical Studies make the following announcement for the information of Candidates for the Historical Tripos.

## I. That the Books recommended are the following:

- (1) In Political Philosophy and General Jurisprudence: Aristotle, *Politics*. Guizot, *Histoire de la Civilisation en Europe*. Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Régime*. Mill, *On Representative Government*. Freeman, *History of Federal Government*, Introduction. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Chapter XLIV. Mackeldey, *Lehrbuch des Römischen Rechts, Einleitung* (or, in the Latin version, *Systema Juris Romani, Proemium*), edition of Rosshirt or Fritz. Blackstone, *Commentaries*, Introduction and Book I, Chapter I, and Book II, Chapter I. Austin, *On Jurisprudence*, Chapters v and vi. Maine, *Ancient Law*.
- (2) In Constitutional Law and Constitutional History: Blackstone, *Commentaries*, Book I, Chapters II–XIII; Book II, Chapters IV–VI; Book III, Chapters III–VI; Book IV, Chapters XIX and XXXIII. Stubbs, *Select Charters*. Hallam, *Constitutional History*. Erskine May, *Constitutional History*. Guizot, *Histoire de la Civilisation en France*. Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*.
- (3) In Political Economy and Economic History: Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (McCulloch's edition), Book I, Chapters I–v and x, Book III, Book IV. Mill, *Political Economy*. Brentano, *On the History and Development of Gilds and the Origin of Trade-Unions*. Leone Levi, *History of British Commerce*. Baxter, *National Income, The Taxation of the United Kingdom, National Debts*.
- (4) In International Law: Wheaton, *International Law, History of International Law*.

II. That the words 'English History' in the regulations for the Historical Tripos are to be understood to include the history of Scotland, Ireland and the British Colonies and Dependencies.

*C.U. Calendar, 1874, p. xi.*

## APPENDIX B

*Historical Tripos**Monday, 6 December 1875. 9—12.*

## ENGLISH HISTORY

1. How was England divided by the treaty of Wedmore? Give the landmarks of the progress towards union of the two parts of England and of its interruptions from the date of this treaty to the end of Cnut's reign.
2. Trace the causes which led to the existence, during the half-century which followed the Norman Conquest, of an alliance for mutual support between the King of England and the English people. Illustrate the nature of this alliance by citing particular events.
3. Give the causes and chief incidents of King John's foreign wars, and estimate their importance to England.
4. Describe the elements of discontent which led to the revolt of the peasants in 1381, and narrate the circumstances of the insurrection and its suppression.
5. What character did the English government assume after the Wars of the Roses? and from what causes?
6. State the provisions of Poyning's Act, and describe the political circumstances of Ireland at the time when it was passed.
7. What were the principal events in the history of France, Scotland, Spain during Elizabeth's reign which materially affected the interests of England? What changes did any of them produce in Elizabeth's policy?
8. Write the history of Scotch affairs from the outbreak of rebellion against Charles I to the death of the king.
9. Write the history of England from the death of Cromwell to the Restoration.
10. Write the life of Sir A. Ashley Cooper from the Restoration.
11. Discuss the political views of Bolingbroke and his relations with the Tory party.
12. In what way and to what extent was England concerned in the Seven Years War? What did Pitt mean by 'conquering America in Germany'?
13. Give an account of the Administration of Shelburne, and explain the state of parties at the time.
14. Give a short life of Lord Castlereagh.

The Civil Service Examination papers, as for example the Open Competition for the Home Civil Service Clerkships (Class I) are of exactly the same kind though the number of questions is rather greater. In neither examination is there any indication of the number of questions a candidate was expected to answer.

## APPENDIX C

## DISCUSSION OF 22 MAY 1909

On 22 May 1909 there occurred in the Senate House an important discussion of a Report of the Special Board for History and Archaeology on the Regulations for the Historical Tripos. That Report, dated 27 April (*University Reporter*, 1908-9, pp. 820-7), removed Ancient History to Part II of the Tripos, where it was to stand as an optional subject, while Political Science A was to be made compulsory in Part I. It adopted the policy of 'assigning to Part I the various aspects of English History (General, Constitutional and Economic)'—this last being reduced to one paper—and allowing no options in that part save between a Select Period of Ancient and a Select Period of English History. It was signed by Tanner, Figgis, Gwatkin, Whitney, Clapham, Vere Laurence, Winstanley, Temperley, etc., but it met with considerable resistance in the Senate House from Glover, Bury, H. G. Wood, Heitland, Cunningham and the present Master of St John's College (*University Reporter*, 1908-9, pp. 964-74). The last of these, who was amongst a group of younger opponents of the scheme, pressed that the history of the United States should be studied for its own sake in the General Modern History paper (and not merely 'in its bearing on the history of Europe' as the Board were proposing). The Board submitted an Amended Report, 22 May 1909, removing General European History (Ancient) to Part I, where it was to replace the Select Period of Ancient History and to stand as an alternative to Political Science A. The Selected Period of English History became compulsory. The following are extracts from some of the speeches in the Discussion:

MR GLOVER: . . . He could not help thinking that they had to consider more the subjects that were likely to quicken the mind along the lines of intelligence, and he said quite candidly that he took a different view from that put forward by Professor Gwatkin [who had declared that 'anyone who could contemplate Ancient History in the First Part and Modern in the Second Part without Medieval, could have no conception of the continuity of History']. He found a good many people made the broad jump from Ancient History to Modern History exceedingly comfortably, and if anything was to be sacrificed he personally would sacrifice the Medieval Period. That was a long period, starting from one in which ideas were particularly many, particularly free, and, what was more to the point, particularly powerfully expressed; he meant the great period of Greece and Rome. It ended with another period when ideas were many, free, and very powerfully expressed. It seemed to him that to students of History those were particularly the periods which were, in the training of the mind most remunerative. Of course, to adopt such a training, as he was suggesting, purely on his own account, was to do away with the symmetry of the Tripos. But it did not seem an impossible gap to pass over; it had been successfully passed by many people in the past. . . .

PROFESSOR BURY: . . . In the first place, he thought that what he could only describe as the boom in English History was very unfortunate. They would notice that in the First Part there were four papers in English History. One of these, of course, was an alternative paper, but it was the paper of a selected period of English History which would certainly be taken by most students. Mr Glover had already explained that it was the line of least resistance, and, as a matter of fact, that was



contemplated by the framers of the Report, because at the beginning of the preamble the solid block of English papers was emphatically dwelt upon as one of the new features in the scheme which would tend to lighten the burden hitherto imposed upon the memory of the candidates. So it was clear that the special selected period of English History lay in the line of least resistance, and practically all of the candidates would take the four English subjects. If they looked at the Tripos as a whole, they would find that there were nine subjects which every student had to take... Of these nine subjects, four were English. He quite admitted that English History should occupy a large place in the Tripos, much larger than it should occupy as a subject at, say, a foreign University, but he thought that proportion was excessive. In fact, he thought it was positively indecent. It gave a certain note of insularity to the Tripos, which was much to be deplored. In his opinion, two papers on English Constitutional History were unnecessary and a defect; English Constitutional History would be quite well dealt with in one paper. What they really wanted was the history of the English Parliament, and one paper was sufficient for that. The early part of English Constitutional History, which constituted a very considerable part of the work that had to be prefaced for the first paper, was altogether obscure and dubious and difficult and only fit for advanced students. He felt emphatically that English Constitutional History should be cut down to one paper... For his own part he thought that Ancient History had far more educational value than Medieval, and he should like to see it made part of the compulsory work... There was no objection whatever to a student omitting Medieval History and passing from Ancient History, which was full of interest and ideas, to Modern History, which was also full of interest and ideas, whereas Medieval History only became full of interest when they could go down much deeper than the ordinary student was ever likely to do.

DR REID: He had said that every Tripos scheme was sure to be illogical in some respect, and he was inclined to think that some Tripos schemes suffered from excessive logicity. Illogicality or want of symmetry did not oppress him very much. He agreed with Mr Glover that the most important thing to look at was the educational effect of the scheme upon the students, and from that point of view it was extremely important that there should be special subjects in Part I. It might be illogical for a man to study a special subject before he studied the general course of History, but it was better on general educational grounds to include such subjects nevertheless, and to let a man take one of them at the beginning of his course. If they gave a man nothing for two years but a strong dose of General History, they confined him to the shorthand of History. They deadened his general faculties and his interest flagged...

DR TANNER wished to comment upon a point which had been raised by Professor Bury when he said that he considered it a mistake to retain in the new Tripos two papers on English Constitutional History. The speaker thought, on the other hand, that it would have been a matter of very great regret if the stress laid upon Constitutional History in the existing Tripos had been at all reduced in the new Tripos. The subject was extremely valuable from the educational point of view because it represented a long historical evolution on the one hand, and yet on the other was based upon charters and original documents, so that a student acquired some knowledge of the way in which history was made. He sometimes thought that the Tripos was overloaded with outline-subjects, in which men were taught the drift of things over very wide periods without having their minds brought sufficiently into

touch with the foundations on which the whole thing rested and the materials out of which it was constructed. To these subjects Constitutional History was a useful corrective, as students were really brought into touch with documents and were taught in a humble kind of way to use them. Professor Bury had also made it a charge against the subject, that its controversies were not settled; but the speaker valued it for that very reason. He remembered in the days when they were all taught their Constitutional History out of Stubbs, and the whole of human knowledge on that subject was supposed to be contained within those three volumes, how very eagerly they awaited an unsettled question—the possibility that one person was right and another wrong, and the opportunity of making up their own minds upon actual evidence on which side the balance of probability lay. The perception of the difficulty of arriving at certainty, as between different views, was an excellent corrective of the natural tendency of young men to rest content with dogmatic statements. He, therefore, valued the abundance of unsettled controversy, especially in the Early Constitutional History, as supplying a very valuable means of education, because it was an excellent thing that there should be unsettled questions and that young men should be encouraged to work at a subject where dogmatic statements could not be made, but the student had to think for himself and learn the difficulty of finding truth. . . .

DR CUNNINGHAM: . . . The next paragraph of the preamble he did not at all agree with, and he hoped the Board were making an exaggerated statement that they had not sufficiently considered, because it seemed to him a very serious charge to bring against the present teaching staff. It was to the effect that the present teaching staff was quite incapable of preventing men from merely cramming, quite incapable of giving them useful instruction under the present scheme. Therefore, a knowledge of theory was to be introduced to supplement a knowledge of facts. To his mind that was an entirely false antithesis. He believed that there was no alleged fact that might not lead one furiously to think, and think to good purpose; to think first of all whether it was a fact, to think of its far-reaching significance, and of the connexion of things physical and moral which might have brought about that occurrence. Every single fact in History could be treated in such a way as to give the opportunity for plenty of thinking; and the antithesis between fact and theory seemed to him to be entirely mistaken. He was sure that, if the lecturers were really competent and efficient, as he believed they were, there was every opportunity for helping men to think independently in connexion with the teaching of facts, and that the more questions of political or economic principle arose out of the material presented to their minds and were dealt with as bearing upon the facts, the better. The nature of the corrective which the Board introduced was to his mind a most extraordinary thing. The corrective introduced was to be Political Science to be studied systematically by those who had no acquaintance with the facts and apart from the facts. He had had a certain amount to do with Political Science. He had lectured on it, and examined on it, and he had also crammed in it. It was an easy subject to cram; nothing was easier than to cram other people's opinions. But nothing could be further from helping independent thinking than this so-called science. Just because Political Science was so systematic, it meant that other people's thoughts were to be imposed on a man's mind. That was what it had always meant all the way through; it was not a corrective to the study of too many facts, and it was not a help towards independent thinking. With regard to the other subject introduced as a corrective,

Political Economy in connexion with Economic History, there was an extraordinary sentence in the Report which he could not quite understand. However, he thought he knew what was meant. There were two ways of treating Economic History, either as an attempt to follow the growth of the economic life of a people from the beginning, or by viewing it from the modern standpoint and picking out incidents in the history of the past that can be used for the illustration of modern economic theory. The Board appeared to prefer the second mode of treatment, and it was interesting as giving a certain amount of illustration and defence of economic doctrine, but it was not tracing economic development in any way whatever. It really misled. Instead of the student being encouraged when he came across an alleged fact to weigh the evidence and consider whether it was a fact or not, he felt that if the incident was merely an illustration it did not matter whether it was a fact or not. It entirely changed the character of the study. On that ground he believed that the increased attention which the Board desired to give to economic science, in order that there should be a corrective to the unintelligent study of facts, was a misleading correction and likely to distort the intelligence of those who had, unhappily for themselves, to submit to the process. . . . Under the scheme before them some of the principles upon which Lord Acton and Professor Maitland laid stress were to be dropped. They had affirmed that there ought to be for every young man studying History in the University a survey of the whole period of European institutions. That had been maintained up to this time as the normal course in Trinity College, but henceforth it was to be prohibited. The consecutive study of the whole range of History, upon which Acton and Maitland insisted so much, was to be absolutely abandoned. . . . History as a consecutive study and an educative force was to be given up, and they were to have instead Colonial History and a great number of modern subjects to which the men were to be set loose and encouraged to browse around. . . .

APPENDIX D. HISTORICAL TRIPOS, 1875-1948

1875-	1885-	1897-	1909-	1934-	1948
<p>Nine papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*1. English History</li> <li>*2. Special } Ancient</li> <li>*3. (Subjects) } Medieval</li> <li>*4. } Modern</li> <li>*5. Principles of Political Philosophy and General Jurisprudence</li> <li>*6. Constitutional Law and Constitutional History</li> <li>*7. Political Economy and Economic History</li> <li>*8. Public International Law in connexion with Selected Treaties</li> <li>*9. Essay</li> </ul>	<p>Ten papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*1. General History of England</li> <li>*2. Constitutional History of England (2 papers)</li> <li>*3. Economic History of England</li> <li>*4. Political Science</li> <li>*5. Special Subject A (2 papers)</li> <li>*6. Special Subject B (2 papers)</li> <li>*7. (1) Political Economy (2) International Law</li> <li>*8. Essay</li> </ul>	<p>Part I Eight papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*1. Essay</li> <li>*2. Comparative Politics or General European History: Ancient</li> <li>*4. General European History: Medieval</li> <li>*5. English Constitutional History after 1485</li> <li>*6. Economic History of England (2 papers)</li> <li>*7. Political Economy (2 papers)</li> <li>*8. Special Subject (2 papers)</li> </ul> <p>Part II Six papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*1. Essay</li> <li>*2. English Constitutional History after 1485</li> <li>*3. General European History: Modern</li> <li>*4. Special Subject (2 papers)</li> <li>*5. Comparative Politics</li> <li>*6. Deductive Politics</li> <li>*7. International Law</li> <li>*8. Political Economy</li> <li>*9. History of Thought, Literature and Art</li> </ul>	<p>Part I Six papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*1. Essay</li> <li>*2. Political Science A</li> <li>*3. Ancient History</li> <li>*4. Medieval European History</li> <li>*5. English Constitutional History to 1485</li> <li>*6. English Constitutional History after 1485</li> <li>*7. English Economic History</li> <li>*8. Selected Period of English History (later dropped)</li> </ul> <p>Part II Five papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*1. Essay</li> <li>*2. Modern European History</li> <li>*3. Special Subject (2 papers)</li> <li>*4. Political Science B</li> <li>*5. Political Economy</li> <li>*6. International Law</li> </ul>	<p>Part I Six papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*1. Essay</li> <li>*2. Ancient History</li> <li>*3. Medieval European History</li> <li>*4. Modern European History or English Constitutional History to 1485</li> <li>*5. Economic and Constitutional History of England to 1485</li> <li>*6. Economic and Constitutional History of England, 1485-1689</li> <li>*7. Economic and Constitutional History of Great Britain and the British Empire from 1688</li> <li>*8. History of Political Thought</li> <li>*9. History of the U.S.A. since 1774</li> <li>*10. The Expansion of Europe</li> </ul> <p>Part II Five papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*1. Essay</li> <li>*2. Special Subject (2 papers)</li> <li>*3. Medieval European History</li> <li>*4. Modern European History or History of the Modern State</li> <li>*5. Theory of the Modern State</li> <li>*6. International Law and Organization</li> <li>*7. History of the U.S.A. since 1774</li> <li>*8. Economic and Constitutional History of Great Britain and the British Empire since 1688</li> <li>*9. Expansion of Europe</li> <li>*10. Subject to be announced (Medieval)</li> <li>*11. Subject to be announced (Modern)</li> </ul>	<p>Part I Six papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*1. Essay</li> <li>*2. Ancient History</li> <li>*3. Medieval European History</li> <li>*4. Modern European History or English Constitutional History of Great Britain and the British Empire since 1688</li> <li>*5. Economic and Constitutional History of England to 1485</li> <li>*6. Economic and Constitutional History of England, 1485-1689</li> <li>*7. Economic and Constitutional History of Great Britain and the British Empire from 1688</li> <li>*8. History of Political Thought</li> <li>*9. History of the U.S.A. since 1774</li> <li>*10. The Expansion of Europe</li> </ul> <p>Part II Five papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*1. Essay</li> <li>*2. Special Subject (2 papers)</li> <li>*3. Medieval European History</li> <li>*4. Modern European History or History of the Modern State</li> <li>*5. Theory of the Modern State</li> <li>*6. International Law and Organization</li> <li>*7. History of the U.S.A. since 1774</li> <li>*8. Economic and Constitutional History of Great Britain and the British Empire since 1688</li> <li>*9. Expansion of Europe</li> <li>*10. Subject to be announced (Medieval)</li> <li>*11. Subject to be announced (Modern)</li> </ul>

\* Compulsory subjects.