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Preamble to Part I

Part I of this *Festschrift* mainly contains Atkinson's own memoirs. Five short chapters, modestly called *Fragments of University Reminiscence*, preserved in typescript among the Atkinson Papers in Glasgow University's Archives, are edited, annotated and published here for the first time, with the permission of his youngest daughter, Elspeth Horsman (*née* Atkinson). While the typescript is undated, internal evidence indicates that he largely wrote these memoirs within a year or two of his retirement on 30 September 1972; though it is likely that he made some changes and insertions—particularly to Chapters 4 and 5—at a later date, but not later than the mid 1980s.

Each chapter of these reminiscences deals in turn, in a self-contained way, with every decade of his career. Therefore, Chapter 1 describes his postgraduate year (1924–1925), in Spain, where he did research but also spent time 'Discovering the Spaniard'. Chapter 2, after a passing mention of his first post (Lecturer in charge of Spanish at Armstrong College, Newcastle, 1926–1932), concerns the decade that begins from '1932–: Glasgow and a Chair'.

The free-standing nature of each chapter has made it possible to insert, before Chapter 2 begins, a facsimile of the letter which in 1932 Atkinson sent, with testimonials, to Glasgow University, to apply for the Stevenson Chair of Spanish. Of the three testimonials (also included here), two in particular contribute something of interest to the history of our discipline. One was written by E. Allison Peers, Gilmour Professor Spanish at Liverpool University and founder-editor of the *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*; while the other was from Ignacio González-Llubera, Professor of Spanish, Queen's University Belfast.

As its title indicates, Chapter 3, '1942–: One Man's War', recounts Atkinson's activities during the Second World War. Seconded to the Foreign Office, and based in Oxford, he researched and reported on the contents of Spanish and Portuguese newspapers; but he was also sent on fact-finding missions to the Iberian Peninsula. In Chapter 4, '1952–: Around and about a Quincentenary', he focuses once more on Glasgow University and his career there from the early 1950s into the early 1960s. The quincentenary referred to is the one which the University, founded in 1451, had recently celebrated, and about which Atkinson has much of interest to record.

For both chronological and thematic reasons, after this Chapter 4 it seemed appropriate to insert the article which John C. McIntyre has contributed to this *Festschrift*. In 'Professor William C. Atkinson (WCA) As Remembered by Some Former Students', McIntyre sets down the respectful, affectionate and vivid memories which, fifty-five years after graduation, he and several contemporaries still value of Atkinson at

Glasgow University in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as teacher, professor and head of Hispanic Studies. Facsimiles of selected letters which he wrote to one of his postgraduates (myself) in 1965–1967 are inserted here, too, providing further evidence of Atkinson’s commitment to his students even after graduation, and of the help he gave them in furthering their careers.

Chapter 5 follows, dealing with his fifth decade (1962–1972) as Hispanist. Titled ‘1962–: Brave New World’, it concentrates on his lecture tours and experiences in Latin America. But this apparently closing chapter of *Fragments of University Reminiscence* was not, after all, to give us Atkinson’s last words about his career. After returning from his final visit to Latin America in 1971, he wrote what is, in its content, though he did not call it so, a sixth part of his memoirs. That part, too, is published here, to provide the true conclusion to his reminiscences. In ‘A Rolling Stone Bows Out’ (first published in the *Glasgow University Gazette* [December 1971]), he has quite a lot more to say about Latin America. While, for purposes of comparison, he looks back at his earlier visits to its twenty different countries, his main concern is to describe his final lecture tour made to that ‘Brave New World’ the year before he retired. As he gives up his ‘rolling’ and duly ‘bows out’, his closing words are: ‘But the lecturer has ceased from lecturing. He has said his farewell to Latin America.’

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