

Heinrich (Henry) Hoenigswald

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The son of an important neo-Kantian philosopher, he emigrated to Switzerland in 1933. He then decided to pursue his studies in Italy, at first in Padua and later in Florence, where the linguist Giacomo Devoto became his mentor. In 1939 he managed to reach the United States, where he completed his education and started his academic career, becoming a distinguished and versatile scholar.

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A young linguist forced into exile

Heinrich Max Franz Hönigswald was born on 17 April 1915 in Breslau (Wrocław, Poland since 1945), which was then within the boundaries of the German *Reich*. His father Richard (Magyaróvár 1875 - New Haven 1947) – of Jewish origin but later a convert to Protestantism though non-practicing – was a professor of philosophy at the local university. A student of Alois Riehl and a prominent exponent of neo-Kantianism, he dealt with gnoseology, epistemology, philosophy of language and psychology,¹ among other themes. Heinrich's mother Gertrud Grunwald died in 1921, when he was only six.

In Breslau Hoenigswald included among his students Norbert Elias, whose PhD thesis he supervised, Hans Gadamer and Edith Stein.

¹ See Utz Maas' entry, *Hoenigswald, Richard*, updated on 3 October 2018, in *Verfolgung und Auswanderung deutschsprachiger Sprachforscher 1933-1945* <<https://zflprojekte.de>> (accessed on 8 May 2021); a memoir about his father in Henry Hoenigswald, *Zu Leben und Werk von Richard Hönigswald*, in Wolfdietrich Schmied-Kowarzik (Hrsg.), *Erkennen – Monas – Sprache, Internationales Richard-Hönigswald-Symposion Kassel 1995*, Würzburg, Königshausen und Neumann, 1997, pp. 425-436. Richard Hoenigswald has gained renewed interest since the 1990s: in addition to the already cited work, in which all the writings by the philosopher can be found, see e.g. Roswitha Grassl, Peter Richart-Wiles, *Denker in seiner Zeit. Ein Personenglossar zum Umfeld Richard Hönigswalds*, Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 1997; Roswitha Grassl, *Der junge Richard Hönigswald. Eine biographisch fundierte Kontextualisierung in historischer Absicht*, Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 1998; Luca Guidetti, *L'ontologia del pensiero. Il «nuovo neokantismo» di Richard Hönigswald e Wolfgang Cramer*, Macerata, Quodlibet, 2004; Christian Swertz, Norbert Meder, Stephan Nachtsheim, Wolfdietrich Schmied-Kowarzik, Kurt Walter Zeidler (Hrsg.), *Heimkehr des Logos. Beiträge anlässlich der 70. Wiederkehr des Todestages von Richard Hönigswald am 11. Juni 1947*, Köln, Janus, 2019.

During a conversation in the Eighties, Elias declared that Richard had been to him a very significant model of clear thinking. Although they had a terrible clash about his doctoral thesis, concerning the interpretation of Kantian *a priori*, this did not diminish in any way what he owed him, namely the trust in thought and in the discipline of thinking².

Elias himself has described very effectively academic and urban environment in the the early 20th-century, along with the difficult situation for intellectuals of Jewish background as outsiders³.

Heinrich attended the Johannes-Gymnasium in Breslau until 1930, then he moved to Munich when his father became a professor of philosophy and psychology at the University of Munich. In the same year Richard remarried, to Hilde Bohn, and in 1934 they had a daughter, Gertrud Maria. Heinrich completed his education in the spring of 1932, graduating with full marks at the Humanistisches Gymnasium in the Bavarian capital⁴.

Many years later, Heinrich himself revealed how his early interest in linguistics emerged, starting from his classical education background:

I suppose I was a fairly typical product of German secondary education. We had a Greek teacher who must have had a course in Indo-European and who taught us some of the things he knew. I bought Kiecker's *Historical Greek Grammar* [...] and one birthday I got Brugmann's *Kurze vergleichende Grammatik*. Since then I knew I wanted to be a classicist or, even better, a linguist⁵.

² Norbert Elias, «*Sociology... Done in the Right Way*» (1984-5) – Interview with Johan Heilbron, in Norbert Elias, *Interviews and Autobiographical Reflections*, edited by Edmund Jephcott, Stephen Menzell, Richard Kilminster and Katie Liston, Dublin, UCD Press, 2013, pp. 141-159. About Gadamer, see Jean Grondin, *Der junge Gadamer und Richard Höningwald*, in W. Schmied-Kowarzik (Hrsg.), *Erkennen – Monas – Sprache*, cit., pp. 159-170; Karl-Heinz Lembeck, *Gadamer and Neokantism*, «Paradigms», 3, 2008, p. 29. About Stein's memories, Edith Stein, *Dalla vita di una famiglia ebrea e altri scritti autobiografici*, Rome, OCD 2007, pp. 210-211 and *passim*.

³ N. Elias, «*Sociology... done in the right way*», cit.

⁴ AC, SS, f. «Hoenigswald Heinrich», manuscript translation of his high school graduation certificate, dated 4 April 1935. Documentation related to the first two years of university is missing from the damaged folder.

⁵ Henry M. Hoenigswald, *A Reconstruction*, in Boyd H. Davis, Raymond K. O'Cain (eds.), *First Person Singular. Papers from the Conference on an Oral Archive for the History of American Linguistics, Charlotte, NC, 9-10 March 1979*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing, 1980, p. 23, cit. in George Cardona, *Henry M. Hoenigswald 1915-2003. A Biographical Memoir*, Washington (DC), National Academy of Sciences, 2006, p. 4.

He enrolled at the University of Munich in the academic year 1932-33, where he started attending courses in classical subjects; among his teachers were Ferdinand Sommer, lecturer in Indo-European studies, and Eva Lehmann Fiesel, *Privatdozentin* and an expert in Etruscan studies at an international level⁶.

In consequence of the legal proceedings in April 1933, Richard was expelled as a Jew from the university in September and was forced into retirement⁷. Some faculty members took his side, including Karl Vossler, an expert in Italian studies and former rector, as well as thirteen full professors from other universities and even Giovanni Gentile. Martin Heidegger was called upon to express his opinion to the President of the University Board, Rudolf Einhauser, and replied on 26 June with a letter in which academic resentments and faculty rivalries were intertwined with a discursive strategy that coincided with national-socialist formulations:

Hönigswald comes from the neo-Kantian school, which represents a philosophy directly corresponding to liberalism. The essence of man is dissolved there in a freely floating consciousness in general, and this is diluted to a universally logical world reason. In this way, through an apparently rigorous scientific justification, attention is deflected from man in his historical rootedness and in his folkish [*volkhaften*] tradition from his origins from soil and blood. Together with it went a conscious pushing back of all metaphysical questions, and man appeared only as the servant of an indifferent universal world culture [...]. It is however the case that Hönigswald defends the thoughts of neo-Kantianism with an especially dangerous acumen and an idle dialectic. The danger consists

⁶ About Sommer, see Bernhard Forssman, *Sommer, Ferdinand*, in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 24, 2010, pp. 566-567 <<https://www.deutsche-biographie.de>> (accessed on 8 May 2021); about Eva Fiesel, see Hiltrud Häntzschel, *Die Philologin Eva Fiesel (1891-1937): Porträt einer Wissenschaftskarriere im Spannungsfeld von Weiblichkeit und Antisemitismus*, «Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schillergesellschaft», 38, 1994, pp. 339-363; about the history of the Sprachwissenschaftliches Institut, with reference to Henry Hönigswald and his future wife Gabriele Schöpflich, see Hanne Adrom, unter Mitarbeit von Markus Hartmann, *Indogermanistik in München 1826-2001. Geschichte eines Faches und eines Institutes* <<https://www.indogermanistik.uni-muenchen.de>> (accessed on 8 May 2021); about the University of Munich, see Elisabeth Kraus (Hrsg.), *Die Universität München im Dritten Reich*, voll. 2, München, Herbert Utz, 2006-2008.

⁷ By virtue of the «Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums» («Law for the reconstitution of the civil service»), adopted on 7 April 1933. For more details on Hönigswald's case, see Claudia Schorcht, *Philosophie an den Bayerischen Universitäten 1933-1945*, Erlangen, Harald Fischer, 1990, pp. 157-161.

above all in that this drive awakens the impression of highest objectivity and rigorous science and already has deceived and induced many young people into error.

I must also today again qualify the calling of this man to the University of Munich as a scandal [...]⁸.

Heinrich was also forced to give up his studies⁹ and moved to Zurich, where in 1933-34 he continued his academic career and had among his teachers Manu Leumann, an expert in Latin and Indo-European studies. Among his fellow students was Ernst Risch, who would remain a lifelong friend¹⁰.

A student in Italy

In the autumn of 1934, Heinrich applied for a transfer to the University of Padua; the Academic Senate approved his enrolment in the third year, requiring him to sit three exams and prepare a written paper in order to be admitted to the following year. Here, Heinrich became a student of Giacomo Devoto, under whom he defended a short dissertation on the Sanskrit language and passed an exam in Historical Linguistics (Glottology) with distinction. In May 1936 he applied to the University of Florence, after Devoto's appointment there¹¹.

It is conceivable that Heinrich's decision move south of the Alps was due to the result of several factors. On the one hand, both Sommer and Manu

⁸ Translation into English and comment about the letter in Tom Rockmore, *Philosophy or Weltanschauung? Heidegger on Hönigswald*, «History of Philosophy Quarterly», 16, 1, 1999, pp. 97-98. Original text in C. Schorcht, *Philosophie an den Bayerischen Universitäten*, cit., p. 161; Reinhold Aschenberg, *Ent-Subjektivierung des Menschen. Lager und Shoah in philosophischer Reflexion*, Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 2003, pp. 121-122; reference to these contributions is made for a contextualisation of the letter.

⁹ On the law «against the overcrowding of German schools and universities» («Gesetz gegen die Überfüllung deutscher Schulen und Hochschulen»), adopted on 25 April 1933, see Béla Bodo, *The Role of Antisemitism in the Expulsion of non-Aryan Students, 1933-1945*, «Yad Vashem Studies», XXX, 2002, pp. 189-228 <<https://www.yadvashem.org>> (accessed on 8 May 2021).

¹⁰ About Leumann, see Rudolf Wachter, *Leumann, Manu*, in *Historical Dictionary of Switzerland*, 17 January 2008 <<https://hls-dhs-dss.ch>> (accessed on 8 May 2021); H. Adrom, M. Hartmann, *Indogermanistik in München*, cit., pp. 33-34; about Risch see Rüdiger Schmitt, *Risch, Ernst*, in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* (NDB), vol. 21, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 2003 <<https://www.deutsche-biographie.de>> (accessed on 8 May 2021); about Heinrich's friendship with Risch, see G. Cardona, *Henry M. Hoenigswald*, cit., p. 5.

¹¹ ASUFi, AC, SS, f. «Hoenigswald Heinrich», University of Padua, discharge paper, 8 May 1936; H. Hoenigswald, enrolment application on 23 May 1936; thesis application on 25 May 1936.

Leumann knew Devoto, with whom they shared the same interest in Indo-European studies and historical linguistics. On the other hand, Heinrich's father – who as we have seen had at least indirect contacts with Italy – must have considered Italy, with its classicist and philological tradition, a stimulating and relatively safe environment for Heinrich. Still, it is plausible that the careers of some people close to the young student had a significant role: Eva Lehmann Fiesel, the sister of the well-known archaeologist Karl Lehmann, after losing her job as a lecturer in Munich, found refuge in Florence, since she was already working with the «Rivista di studi etruschi» [Journal of Etruscan Studies]¹². In the autumn of 1933, Gabriele Lina («Gabi») Schöpflich moved to Florence together with Eva. Gabi was a classicist and a fellow student of Heinrich's: she emigrated to the US in 1940 and later became his wife¹³.

Heinrich graduated *magna cum laude* on 23 October 1936, defending a thesis on «Studies on Greek noun compounding. Compound nouns with prepositional prefixes in Homer and the epic poets», with Devoto as his supervisor¹⁴. He later enrolled at a postgraduate specialization course, which he completed on 29 October 1937 with a thesis entitled «Observations on punctuation in Etruscan and ancient Italic texts», graduating *magna cum laude*¹⁵. His research appeared in the journal «Rivista di studi etruschi» as one of the young scholar's earliest publications¹⁶.

¹² H. Häntzschel, *Die Philologin Eva Fiesel*, cit. Eva Lehmann Fiesel's first article in that journal was published in 1932: Eva Fiesel, Paul-Max Groth, *Etruskisch Tupi und lateinisch Tofus*, «Rivista di studi etruschi», 1932, pp. 261-272; other considerable articles followed, regularly published in the years 1933-36; her obituary was published in 1937 (ibid., 1937, p. 549).

¹³ See Lina Gabriele Schöpflich's *Life on the move*; her enrolment in Florence is documented in ASUFI, AC, SS, «Schöpflich Lina Gabriele».

¹⁴ Grade found in ASUFI, AC, SS, f. «Hoenigswald Heinrich», minutes of the specialization examination, 29 October 1937; Heinrich's Bachelor's degree certificate is missing from the folder and only the card records from his Bachelor's thesis are available in ASUFI, Registro delle tesi di laurea, 1930-31.

¹⁵ ASUFI, AC, SS, f. «Hoenigswald Heinrich», minutes of the specialization examination, 29 October 1937. The thesis is in the Biblioteca di studi umanistici, Università di Firenze, V. Tesi I 1942.

¹⁶ H. Hönigswald, *Studi sulla punteggiatura nei testi etruschi*, «Rivista di studi etruschi», 1938, pp. 169-217. Early publications are Ἐπίτοκος, «Studi italiani di filologia classica», 14, 1, 1937, pp.

From 1936 to 1938 Heinrich was a volunteer assistant at the International Institute of Etruscan Studies in Florence, a non-profit institution founded in 1932 which operated in close collaboration with the Superintendency for Etruscan Antiquities and the university¹⁷. It seems likely that in Italy Heinrich had the opportunity to reinforce and improve his multidisciplinary education in the fields of classical languages, historical linguistics and Etruscan studies. The degree programme in Florence was among the most prestigious in Italy and boasted the presence of several internationally renowned scholars, including Devoto, the classical philologists Giorgio Pasquali, Ettore Bignone and Gennaro Perrotta, the Etruscan expert Antonio Minto and the papyrologist Medea Norsa.

In 1937 Heinrich enrolled in the second year of the two-year postgraduate specialization course at the School for Librarians and Paleographer Archivists, where he wrote the thesis «Studies on the Mediterranean Pre-Indo-European linguistic substratum. 1919-1936» and applied for admission to the final exam on 17 September 1938¹⁸.

The antisemitic legislation which came into force in September 1938 also excluded Jews from universities and research institutes, and imposed expulsion for foreigners who had entered the kingdom after 1919. Heinrich could have obtained the qualification in the forthcoming autumn session, which was still part of the academic year 1937-38. However, there is no record of his defending his dissertation, which suggests that he had decided to leave Italy and to return to his family¹⁹.

83-87; *Su alcuni caratteri della derivazione e della composizione nominale indoeuropea*, «Rendiconti Istituto lombardo di scienze e lettere. Classe di lettere», 70, 1937, pp. 267-274; Ἐπίτυπος, «Studi italiani di filologia classica», 15, 1, 1938, p. 87; *Problemi di linguistica umbra – a proposito delle Tabulae Iguvinae editae a Iacobo Devoto*, «Rivista di filologia classica», 216, 1938, pp. 274-294.

¹⁷ See *L'Istituto e la sua storia* <<https://studietruschi.org>> (accessed on 8 May 2021); Annalisa Capristo, *L'espulsione degli ebrei dalle accademie italiane*, Turin, Zamorani, 2002: here, Hoenigswald's name does not appear, since he did not hold a formal assignment.

¹⁸ ASUFI, AC, SS, f. «Hoenigswald Heinrich», enrolment application, 5 November 1937; application to the final examination on 17 September 1938.

¹⁹ The circular by the Ministry of National Education dated 6 October 1938, no. 6408, «Studenti ebrei di nazionalità straniera», explained that foreign Jewish students already enrolled at

Emigration to the USA

Heinrich's father, who notwithstanding his forced retirement had carried on his research and had supported himself by private tutoring, was deported to Dachau concentration camp in the wake of *Kristallnacht*. He was detained in Dachau for a few weeks and then released on 1 December, most likely after he formally stated his intention to leave the *Reich*²⁰.

On 26 March 1939 the entire family sought refuge in Switzerland, in Braunwald in Glarus. With the help of the industrialist Guido Jenny, Karl Vossler's brother-in-law, Richard and Gertrud had obtained *non quota visas* to the United States on 17 March. They set off from Le Havre on 1 June on board the *Washington*. Richard stated that he had a fluent command of German, English, French and Hungarian and that he had been invited from the University of Scranton, Pennsylvania²¹. The transfer had been organized by Hilde herself, who was now working at Ilse and Josef von Schenk's toy factory and had obtained an invitation for her husband at the Jesuit college in Scranton²².

Heinrich obtained his non quota visa in Zurich on 15 September and set off on the *Vulcania* on 22 September. Upon boarding, he left as his contacts the address of an aunt, Berta Kuschnitzky, who lived in New Haven, and Yale University²³. The young linguist already held a position at Yale, thanks to Edgar Howard Sturtevant. Like that of his friend Heinrich Immerwahr – Heinrich's former schoolmate at the gymnasium and in Florence, with whom he would meet again at Yale – Heinrich's move to the USA was likely

university were allowed to continue their studies, except for students of German nationality, who were not allowed to enrol in the academic year 1938-39. For an overview of the legislation, see *Leggi fascistissime [Fascist laws] and the racial laws*.

²⁰ R. Grassl, *Der junge Richard Hönigswald*, cit., p. 237.

²¹ Ibid., p. 237; *The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Passenger Search*, entry «Richard Hoenigswald» <<https://heritage.statueofliberty.org>> (accessed upon registration on 8 May 2021).

²² Cf. *Richard Hönigswald: Biografische Notizen - Teil 3*, on Roswitha Grassl's personal webpage <<http://test2.r-e-tour.de>> (accessed on 8 May 2021).

²³ *The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Passenger Search*, entry «Max Franz Honigswald» <<https://heritage.statueofliberty.org>> (accessed upon registration on 8 May 2021).

orchestrated by a transnational network of fellow academics. Sturtevant had already invited Eva Fiesel, who had arrived in 1934 with her daughter and had died of illness in 1937. A linguist and an Indo-European scholar specializing in Hittitology, he definitely had contacts with both Italian and German circles²⁴. While Pasquali played a role in the affairs of Immerwahr, Eva Fiesel and Paul Oskar Kristeller, Hoenigswald was presumably helped by Devoto. Both Pasquali and Devoto boasted international profiles and contacts, and could have recommended their students to foreign colleagues for grants and fellowships. Whereas Pasquali, even during the war, maintained his formal support for the fascist regime, obtaining the title of «Academic of Italy» in 1942, Devoto, who joined the Liberal Party during the Resistance, had developed a critical attitude towards fascism at least from the late 1930s, according to Francesco Adorno²⁵. Even before his arrival, Hoenigswald's situation was notified to the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars by William Allison Shimer (1894-1983) from the Phi Beta Kappa Society – an association that assisted the most deserving students. Heinrich's case had been presented to Shimer by Louis Fuhrman, a member of the association's branch in New York. Hoenigswald was introduced as a scholar of «Protestant persuasion and German birth», residing in Switzerland but a graduate of the University of Florence,

where he studied under Professors G. Devoto and G. Pasquali. At

²⁴ On Sturtevant, see William F. Wyatt Jr., *Sturtevant, Edgar Howard*, in Rutgers. School of Arts and Sciences, *Database of Classical Scholars* <<https://dbcs.rutgers.edu>> (accessed on 8 May 2021); on Eva Lehmann Fiesel's story, see H. Häntzschel, *Die Philologin Eva Fiesel*, cit.; on the friendship between Hoenigswald and Immerwahr cf. Heinrich (Henry) Immerwahr's *Life on the move*.

²⁵ On Devoto's opposition to the fascist regime see Francesco Adorno's words, *Giacomo Devoto e le istituzioni civili*, in Carlo Alberto Mastrelli, Alessandro Parenti (eds.), *Giacomo Devoto nel centenario della nascita. Ricerche e documenti. Scritti minori. Atti del Convegno «Giacomo Devoto e le Istituzioni» (Firenze, 24-25 ottobre 1997)*, Florence, Olschki, 1999, pp. 117-118. Adorno (1921-2010) graduated from the University of Florence in 1944 and joined the Resistance in Catholic clandestine groups. He was a professor of Ancient Philosophy in Bari, Bologna and Florence. For more details on Pasquali's position see Antonio La Penna, *Giorgio Pasquali*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 81, Rome, Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 2014 <<https://www.treccani.it>> (accessed on 8 May 2021). Information on the relationship between Pasquali and Kristeller is available in Hans Peter Obermayer, *Deutsche Altertumswissenschaftler im amerikanischen Exil. Eine Rekonstruktion*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2014, p. 468 and *passim*.

Munich, he worked under Dr. Eva Fiesel and Professor F. Sommer, from which it may be gathered that his field is Philology.

Although he states he has a fluent command of French, Italian, and German, in addition to English, his field of specialization is the Etruscan language. He is the author of a number of papers on the subject of the last-named language, in which he was commissioned to prepare an index of words, from 1936 to 1938. He also is in possession of extensive material dealing with the Homeric etymology²⁶.

Fuhrman emphasized that the young scholar had already obtained a non quota visa and was getting ready to leave for the United States, where a «research grant was waiting for him at Yale University under Dr. Sturtevant, providing the university receives a written assurance supported by a bond of \$2,000.00. Although his parents are now in this country, they are in no position to offer such a bond». Shimer therefore applied for funding from ECADFS, but the association's representative, Stephen Duggan, turned down the request on 8 August, as their limited funds were mostly used to offer «a permanent solution» to struggling scholars who had been expelled from university – that is, professors or *Privatdozenten*, and not postgraduate students, as in this case²⁷. It is unclear who contributed the required amount or whether the family was able to call on private funds. In any case, Henry managed to leave and, as soon as he arrived at Yale, became a lecturer and Sturtevant's research assistant. In his autobiography in 1980, Hoenigswald described the heady feeling of freedom and discovery he experienced in this new academic setting, together with the feeling that all the pieces that made up his study effects were finally falling into place, as if in an original mosaic:

In 1939 [...] I found myself at Yale as Sturtevant's research assistant. Quite aside from the inextricable connection (for me) with my escape to personal freedom, I wish I could convey the headiness of the experience – no amount of picture-painting of my old-world inter-war background as I have attempted it can describe it. Some of the exhilaration, of course, we all shared. I wouldn't have had the courage of Arch Hill to quote Wordsworth to the effect that to be young in that dawn was very heaven, but the feeling is just about right; and if it was more pronounced

²⁶ NYPL, MAD, ECADFS, I.B. Non grantees, b. 73, f. 31, «Hoenigswald, Henry M 1939», L. Fuhrman to Phi Beta Kappa Society, 29 June 1939. Access to the folder at the New York Public Library was possible thanks to Patrizia Guarnieri.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, S. Duggan to A. Shimer, 8 August 1939.

for some than for others, I must have been near the top. Not only were there innumerable new things to learn – the anthropological approach, articulatory phonetics, and above all phonemics [...]; but what was exciting beyond words was the way in which old things fell into place²⁸.

In connection with his European training, the linguist recalled his mentors Sommer and Fiesel, and in retrospect stressed how relevant Leumann's lecture on the «mechanics» of semantic transformations had been, which had that nourished his early interest in generalization. At Yale he had a seminal meeting with Leonard Bloomfield, a central figure in 20th-century linguistics whom Hoenigswald defined as «my teacher guide and inspiration», «along with my benefactor Giacomo Devoto»²⁹.

An American citizen and academic

Henry became a naturalized US citizen in 1945 and anglicized his name as Henry Max Hoenigswald³⁰. In 1944 he had married Gabi and they later had two daughters, Ann and Francine. His father had applied for US citizenship in October 1939, which he obtained in 1944, having lost his German citizenship in 1941. He had been living in New York with his family, carrying on his research, but without managing to find any academic posts, not even temporary ones. After the war he refused an offer, made to him in an unofficial manner, to go back to Munich, since he had no intention of returning to work with his former colleagues, who had put up with his

²⁸ H.M. Hoenigswald, *A Reconstruction*, cit., p. 25. Reference to US linguist Archibald Anderson Hill (1902-1992).

²⁹ Ibid, p. 24; Pierre Swiggers, *Languages, Language History, and the History of Linguistics: From Structure to Transformation, Between Europe and America. An Interview with Henry Hoenigswald*, in Id. (ed.), *Languages and Linguists: Aims, Perspectives, and Duties of Linguistics / Les langues et les linguistes: Buts, perspectives et devoirs de la linguistique. Interviews with / Entretiens avec: André-Georges Houdricourt, Henry M. Hoenigswald, Robert H. Robins*, «Orbis Supplementa», Louvain-Paris, Peeters, 1997, p. 42.

³⁰ Hoenigswald's application for naturalization (12 December 1939) is in Pennsylvania, US, *Federal Naturalization Records, 1795-1931*, no. 25942, available online at <<https://www.ancestry.com>> (accessed upon registration on 8 May 2021). For the year of actual naturalization, cf. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, *Indexes to Naturalization Petitions to the US Circuit and District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 1795-1951*, M1248, R 46, no. 6332977, available online *ibid*.

expulsion. Richard died in 1947, aged 72³¹.

In 1942-43 Henry was appointed lecturer at the Hartford Seminary Foundation and Hunter College, with a grant issued by the American Council of Learned Societies. In 1943-44 he was lecturer in charge at the University of Pennsylvania, with the task of teaching Hindi to a group of US Army students and preparing a textbook. After the war he resumed his Etruscan studies, since he had been entrusted with Eva Fiesel's unfinished manuscripts³².

From 1944 he was lecturer and instructor at Yale, in Hartford, at Hunter College. In 1946 he was visiting associate professor at the University of Michigan (Summer Institute of Linguistics). He then served for 11 months at the Institute of Foreign Service at the Department of State, with the role of teaching Foreign service staff.

In 1947 Henry was appointed associate professor at the University of Texas at Austin. In 1948 he was appointed at the University of Pennsylvania, where he became full professor in 1959. He remained at the Department of Linguistics, where he was chairman from 1963 to 1970 and co-chairman from 1978 to 1979, until his retirement with the status as Professor emeritus in 1985. Henry received several fellowships, such as the Guggenheim Foundation fellowship in 1950 and the National Science Foundation fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences at Palo Alto, California (1962-63).

He was a visiting scholar at various universities in the United States and abroad (Deccan College, Poona [now Pune], India, 1955; Collitz Professorship at Georgetown University, 1955; University of Michigan, 1959, 1968; Princeton University, 1959-60; Yale University, 1961-62; Universität zu Kiel, 1968; St. John's College and Oxford University 1976-77; Katholieke

³¹ Cf. *Richard Höngswald: Biografische Notizen - Teil 4*, Roswitha Grassl's personal website <<http://test2.r-e-tour.de>> (accessed on 8 May 2021).

³² See the record in P. Swiggers, *Languages, Language History*, cit., pp. 42, 42; the outcome of Hoenigswald's research in Pennsylvania was *Spoken Hindustani*, 2 volumes, New York, Henry Holt, 1945-47.

Universiteit Leuven, 1986; John Hopkins University, 1991).

During his long academic career, Henry was the editor in chief of several important journals (such as the «Journal of the History of Ideas» and the «Journal of Indo-European Studies») and scientific publications (like the «International Encyclopedia of Linguistics»). He was also a member of many academic associations, such as the American Philological Association, the National Academy of Sciences, the International Society for Historical Linguistics, the Indogermanische Gesellschaft, the Linguistics Association of Great Britain, the Linguistic Society of India, and the Società di linguistica italiana. He was president of the Linguistic Society of America in 1958, and in 1966-67 of the American Oriental Society³³.

From the start of his early studies on Etruscan and Ancient Greek, his academic publications were characterized by complex and diverse interests, ranging from his research on Indo-European to his studies on Hindi, up until his more recent contributions on comparative linguistics and ethnolinguistics.

The critical questioning of theory and methodology was always central to his research, and this was nourished by his scientific and humane reflection on the introduction of the European tradition into the United States context.

Henry had experienced at first-hand this adjustment, along with the new and stimulating opportunities that had opened up on arrival in the United States. With his robust background in philology, classical studies and «continental» historical linguistics, he found himself immersed in an really innovative academic environment, which was in the process of developing the structuralist and synchronic approach, with strong interdisciplinary openings (ranging from anthropology to semiotics) which were able to achieve a deep transformation of the discipline's paradigms.

This constant theoretical questioning is at the root of *Language Change and Linguistic Reconstruction* (1960), one of Hoenigswald's most influential texts,

³³ For his detailed academic resume see G. Cardona, *Henry M. Hoenigswald*, cit., pp. 16-18.

and of many of his contributions to methodology and the history of linguistics. His attention to the epistemological dimension and the philosophy of language (which later resulted in his membership of the American Philosophical Society) was probably inherited from his father's interests and teaching.

Henry and his wife were both fervent activists and fought for progressive association, civil rights, democratic freedom and pacifism, on which the linguist had publicly expressed his social and political views from the McCarthy era. He was a supporter of the American Civil Liberties Union and Amnesty International, while Gabi was an activist for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the League of Women Voters³⁴.

The philologist Anna Morpurgo Davies, Henry's former student and friend, remembered his personal qualities, as a mentor always committed to building warm and stimulating environment for discussion. But she lingered on the complexity of Henry's career as a person, where bonds, languages and relationships overlaid each other, a feature characteristic of the lives of so many intellectual émigrés, in whom there seems to lurk an intimate and indecipherable «elsewhere», which Henry perhaps kept in his close bonds with his wife Gabi:

George Dunkel, one of Henry's former students, wrote that in spite of his thick German accent, Henry «was deeply American: unpretentious, optimistic, encouraging, delighted with new ideas». Both George and I loved Henry, and I can subscribe to his adjectives, though perhaps I would tone down the optimism, at least in the last years. I am less certain about «American». I was always impressed by how wide ranging Henry's culture was. It was more fundamentally German than one might have expected, and beyond that it was European, though more Anglo-Saxon than French. Italy, too, had left its traces. [...] His lack of pretence and his warmth seemed to me part of his nature, as, indeed, were his self-doubt and his shyness. Yet his American experiences had given him a flexibility, a lightness of touch, a dislike of hierarchies, a willingness to make fun of himself and sometimes of others, that clearly made him

³⁴ Martin Ostwald, *Hoeningswald, Henry M*, Rutgers. School of Arts and Sciences, *Database of Classical Scholars* <<https://dbcs.rutgers.edu>> (accessed on 8 May 2021).

very different from the father to whom he was so closely linked. George is fundamentally right: Henry admired and loved Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and France, but was at home in the States and nowhere else. And, in spite of his accent, English was his real language³⁵.

Henry continued his studies assiduously even after retiring. He died on 16 June 2003 in Haverford, two years after Gabi's death.

Main publications

A list of 244 publications can be found at <<http://zelligharris.org>>.

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³⁵ Anna Morpurgo Davies, *Henry Max Hoenigswald*, «Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society», 156, 1, 2012, pp. 87-88.

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