



JOHN GOULD

John Philip Algernon¹ Gould

1927–2001

JOHN GOULD was a leading scholar of Greek literature (especially tragedy) and religion, a pioneer in the serious use of anthropological theory and practice, and an inspiring teacher of all aspects of ancient Greek language, literature and culture; he was a lover of modern Greece and its people, and delighted to explore continuities between the two worlds, despite the differences to which he was equally alive. Many wished he had published more; but his work on the festivals and performance of Athenian drama, his book on Herodotus, and the eighteen or so papers, many of them achieving the status of classics, collected and published just before his death,² constitute a powerful and lasting memorial. It was above all the exceptional quality of these classic articles, which were of greater significance than many books and set agendas for subsequent research, which made him a scholar of the highest international importance. His impact on the thinking of scholars in many countries and many disciplines was greatly enhanced by the excitement of his teaching and his informal conversation, with its constant flow of fresh ideas and profound observations.

John Gould was born on 20 December 1927. His father was Harold Ernest Gould, a Classics teacher first at Wellingborough School and then at Kilburn Grammar School. From the 1930s to the 1950s Harold Gould published, mostly in collaboration with J. L. Whitely, two Latin textbooks and nearly twenty school editions of Cicero, Caesar, Livy, Horace, Virgil,

¹ John hated the Algernon and if asked would refuse to say what the A. stood for.

² John Gould, *Myth, Ritual, Memory and Exchange: Essays in Greek Literature and Culture* (Oxford, 2001): henceforth *MRME*.

and Ovid, many of which are still in print. John's mother Marjorie Gould was also a language teacher, employed as a lecturer in French at Birkbeck College, London between 1922 and 1955, and the author of school textbooks on French language and prose composition. For his pupils at school Harold was apparently 'too august a figure to have had a nick-name'. He had a characteristic bark of a laugh, with head thrown back (e.g. when a pupil made an inept translation); this was equally characteristic of his son John when amused or outraged. It was evidently a cultivated family, and John became a literary scholar whose intellectual interests included a deep knowledge and love of French and English literature and language as well as those of Greece and Rome. His approach however was to be very different from those exemplified by his parents.

After moving to London the Goulds lived in the upmarket part of Kensal Rise, and John moved from Wellingborough School to University College School, Hampstead, where he formed a lifelong friendship with George Forrest—a friendship he movingly recalled in his last public talk in July 2000 at a conference in honour of Forrest in Wadham College, Oxford. At this stage too he began a relationship with Pauline Bending, the daughter of an East End secondary school headmaster. Both families were Catholic. Though John lost his faith, the attempt to comprehend and explain the essential characteristics of Greek pagan religion was to be a constant feature of his scholarship, and he would later profess that an upbringing in Catholic traditions in a northern European context did no harm to this endeavour.³

In 1945 he won a scholarship to Jesus College, Cambridge, where he took a double first in the Classical Tripos, with 'special merit' in Part Two in Ancient Philosophy (1948). Before starting postgraduate research, he left to perform the necessary eighteen months of National Service (1948–9) where, under a procedure known as 'Emergency Commission', he served as an army captain in the Educational Corps. Of his commission Gould would say that it showed how desperate they were. Not surprisingly, he did not greatly enjoy army life, and was happy to return to Cambridge. His intellectual interests at Cambridge were remarkably wide-ranging, and already displayed the commitment to modern cultural movements which lasted throughout his life.⁴ He attended lectures by Wittgenstein, Pevsner and others, as well as those by distinguished classicists; he was friends

³ See the end of his paper on 'Herodotus and religion', *MRME*, pp. 376–7.

⁴ For details here and elsewhere I am indebted especially to a memoir written by his lifelong friend, Roy Waters, who was at St John's.

with poets like Thom Gunn, attended early music concerts or performances of new works, and listened to recordings of French singers such as Trenet and Brassens. Above all he and his friends were devoted to films, especially the new European cinema. His first publication seems to have been an undergraduate review of *La règle du jeu*. He was a founding member of a small dining club with the indicative name of the Gin & Baudelaire Society. Additional members of the society, the patrician New Englander Charles van Doren and his then girlfriend, brought glamour and an emotional disturbance, as John became hopelessly enamoured of the girlfriend, both in Cambridge and during a summer vacation on the Left Bank in Paris.⁵

On his return in autumn 1949 to Jesus he began research on Plato's Ethics, funded by a scholarship, a travel exhibition and a College Research Studentship, and under the supervision of John Raven, while Francis Cornford was a major influence. This resulted in a research fellowship thesis and an appointment as a Research Fellow; a few years later the work became his first book, published at the age of 28, *The Development of Plato's Ethics* (Cambridge, 1955). This was an original attempt to understand profound developments in Plato's ethical thought from the *Apology* to the *Laws*. A number of characteristic features distinguish this book from the main trends of Platonic scholarship at the time. One is the focus on Plato's changing approaches to the major moral questions as a key to his thought, whereas contemporary philosophers were perhaps more interested in the Theory of Forms and related metaphysical issues. This led Gould to devote much closer attention than was usual at the time to the *Laws* and its educational views; the structure of the book brings this out clearly, as the *Laws* is considered in Part Two, immediately after the discussion of initial 'Socratic' positions, as an indication of how far Plato's conceptions of human capabilities for right action moved in a pessimistic direction over his long life. We can also see the signs of the subtle literary critic operating with the widest frames of cultural reference, for example in the attention paid to the developments of Plato's style, with frequent comparisons to other exponents of highly elaborate and baroque styles such as Henry James and Proust. Some found these 'far-fetched'.⁶ The book starts with an argument which shows already the commitment to the

⁵Van Doren was later to be embroiled in a famous Quiz Show scandal, admitting at a Congressional Subcommittee hearing that the contest in the TV show *Twenty One*, at which he had won more than \$129,000, had been rigged. The story became the subject of a 1994 Robert Redford film starring Ralph Fiennes.

⁶T. G. Rosenmeyer in *Classical World*, 50 (1956), 72–3.

historical study of Greek words and concepts from Homer onwards: he made a case (which was not in fact widely accepted at the time or later) that *episteme* in Plato's Socratic works has more of the sense 'knowledge of how to be good' than 'knowledge of the good', a question of technique rather than intellectual knowledge. The book, however, stands rather apart from his subsequent interests, and he does not seem to have commented much on it in later life. He only rarely returned to Plato, most significantly in a brief but powerful paper, first published in 1992, on Plato's deeply felt and contradictory relations with the most profound forms of literature, Homer and tragedy.⁷ The central and characteristic argument of this paper is that Plato responded with such puzzling hostility to the complex imaginative literature of his culture precisely because its acceptance of plurality and contradictions were irreconcilable with his philosophic commitment to univocal answers to the questions of reality.

In 1953 Gould, now married to Pauline, who had trained as a nurse, was enticed from Cambridge and appointed for a first probationary year as Lecturer at Christ Church, Oxford (as was then usual). A year later he became a permanent Student and Tutor in Greek and Latin Literature. Following Denys Page's departure for the Regius Chair at Cambridge in 1950, Greek and Latin language and literature ('Mods') at Christ Church had been taught for a year by Anthony Chevenix-Trench who then, to the surprise of his colleagues, returned to Shrewsbury School as a housemaster, and from there to various headships.⁸ It took a couple of years after that for the college to find the 'right man'. R. H. Dundas's comment in the Christ Church Annual Report was: 'We have for some time been lacking a Classics tutor. Now we hope and believe we have found what we are looking for.... All the omens are favourable.' Dundas had praised Chevenix-Trench, at his departure, for the 'vast' work he had done to revive the college's rowing tradition. He would not find Gould shared such sporting concerns.⁹ It is noticeable that after a record of his appointment as Student and the birth of his first child, 'Mr Gould' appears only rarely in the Dundas reports. It is said that the appointment owed very much to Eric Dodds, the holder of the Regius Chair of Greek (1936–60) and *ex*

⁷ 'Plato and performance', in A. Barker and M. Warner (eds.), *The Language of the Cave: Apeiron*, 25 (1992), 13–25: *MRME*, chap. 13.

⁸ Chevenix-Trench went on to hold headships at Bradfield, Eton and Fettes. Revelations in 1979 and in the 1990s of an extreme predilection for flogging might suggest one reason for his return to public school life.

⁹ Gould's response—NO—survives to the invitation issued to freshmen at Jesus to declare what college games they intend to play.

officio a member of Christ Church Governing Body, who had been impressed by the Plato book. Invited to lunch in Christ Church, Gould was surprised at the end by Dodds's asking 'Well, are you going to take this job?' Dodds then persuaded him it would be a good idea. Christ Church had more than its fair share (even for Oxford) of rich undergraduates educated at Eton, Westminster and other public schools, and a good few traditional members of Governing Body were happy to fit such men for the world; but Dodds and the tutors concerned with *Literae Humaniores* ('Greats') shared more intellectual and egalitarian values and expected serious study and hard work from their students.¹⁰

Dodds was to matter greatly to Gould as he settled in Oxford. The breadth of his intellectual interests, his leftist politics, and his commitment to renovate the teaching of Classics in Oxford and throughout the UK, were all very congenial;¹¹ Gould became and remained a close friend, and a collaborator in Dodds's attempt to bring about curriculum reform in Oxford. In particular, Dodds's pioneering use of comparative anthropology and psychology, seen best in his work on Euripides' *Bacchae* and in *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, CA, and London, 1951), was to exercise a profound influence on Gould's development throughout his life (cf. the preface to *MRME*).

Like many colleges, Christ Church expected its Latin and Greek tutor to cover the whole range of the syllabus in tutorials, though, less usually, it gave Studentships to both a Greek and a Roman historian; for most of Gould's time there these were David Lewis (appointed in 1955, in succession to Dundas)¹² and Eric Gray. Teaching support was given by younger Lecturers, Research Fellows and Senior Scholars, who included Michael Winterbottom, Peter Parsons (one of his earliest undergraduate pupils), Colin Austin and John Rae. Gould undertook to acquire what he saw as the required mastery of the texts, scholarship and criticism across the whole syllabus from Homer to Late Latin. The time-consuming work of preparation and teaching, carried out with scrupulous devotion and commitment, to say nothing of extra pastoral care, was initially exhausting, and was undoubtedly one reason why during the fifteen years at Christ Church he published no more than a few reviews of books on Greek Tragedy. Other reasons included the absence of pressures to publish in

¹⁰ Cf. Christopher Robinson's memoir, *Christ Church Annual Report for 2003*.

¹¹ Cf. Dodds's autobiography, *Missing Persons* (Oxford, 1977) and Donald Russell's memoir, 'Eric Robertson Dodds 1893–1979', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 67 (1981), 357–70

¹² See Simon Hornblower's memoir, 'David Lewis 1928–1994', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 94 (1996), 557–96.

days long before the introduction of such things as Research Assessment Exercises (it was then still possible to complete an Oxford career without publishing anything, but with a secure reputation as a great teacher and college man); but most of all it was a perfectionism which would remain through his career and inhibit the completion of many of his ideas. During the Oxford years Gould was working on a number of projects concerned with Greek Tragedy, only one of which was to be completed as planned.

This project reached publication in 1968, just as Gould moved to Swansea. David Lewis and he formed the ideal team to collaborate on the major revision of Pickard-Cambridge's already classic study of *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (Oxford, 1953); their work, in effect done by 1964, was a very significant improvement (and was further updated in the final edition of 1988). All later scholars of Greek Drama have relied on it, and many have spoken of its pervasive influence;¹³ Peter Wilson has observed that in some ways it has become too much of a 'classic', and may be taken as too authoritative.¹⁴ Wilson is engaged with his Sydney colleague Eric Csapo and others on a major collaborative project ('The Theatrical Revolution: the expansion of theatre outside Athens') to renew, and broaden, the work and provide a much fuller understanding of the 'documentary base of the Greek theatre, across the Greek world'.¹⁵ Fundamental to Pickard-Cambridge's book was the determination to offer a detailed presentation of the evidence for all aspects of the Athenian dramatic festivals—texts (many of them antiquarian reports from periods much later than the time of the plays), inscriptions, images on vases, terracottas, and so on, as well as the material remains of the theatres. The book operates in 'hard-core' mode, with page after page of testimonia in untranslated Greek. Gould and Lewis maintained this tradition unashamedly, a noble tribute, though one already perhaps becoming anachronistic, to the assumption

¹³e.g. for Simon Goldhill the revision is 'a marvellous example of careful, scholarly criticism that is never less than constructive: 'Representing democracy: women at the Great Dionysia', in R. Osborne and S. Hornblower (eds.), *Ritual, Finance, Politics: Athenian Democratic Accounts presented to David Lewis* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 347–70.

¹⁴See P. Wilson (ed.), *The Greek Theatre and Festivals: Documentary Studies* (Oxford, 2007), p. 3. 'Hundreds of these interpretative studies blithely refer to the relevant pages of Pickard-Cambridge's *Dramatic Festivals of Athens* and *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy*, and take all that is said in them on trust.'

¹⁵This project reflects a major shift in current thinking away from Athenocentrism and the domination of the City Dionysia, achieved by works such as O. Taplin, *Comic Angels: and Other Approaches to Greek Drama Through Vase-Paintings* (Oxford, 1993), and *Pots and Plays. Interactions between Tragedy and Greek Vase-painting of the Fourth Century BC* (Los Angeles, CA, 2007); E. Csapo, *Actors and Icons in the Ancient Theatre* (Oxford, 2010) and P. Wilson, *The Greek Theatre*.

that serious English-speaking students of ancient drama had sufficient Greek to cope. This decision was made in contrast to that taken by T. B. L. Webster when he had revised Pickard-Cambridge's *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy* (first edition London, 1927, revised edition Oxford, 1962); the need, which of course became ever more pressing, for students and the general public to have reliable English translations of many of these texts and inscriptions would later be met by Eric Csapo's and William Slater's excellent *The Context of Ancient Drama* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1995).

It was a work of complete collaboration, and reveals well the breadth of conception of their subject that the two shared. Lewis was an epigraphically based historian whose conception of the subject none the less embraced literature, religion, archaeology and art,¹⁶ though he was totally committed to making ancient historians understand the centrality of inscriptions to all these topics. Gould was a literary specialist, though one with the deepest interest in historical and cultural contexts (for his final refusal to be labelled a historian see the *MRME* preface). Lewis had initial responsibility for chapters I and II (the Festivals), and VI and VII (the Audience and the Artists of Dionysus), and greatly improved the accuracy and breadth of the presentation of the epigraphic material; Gould was more responsible for the chapters on the visual appearance and production of the plays and the roles of the performers (III–V, Actors, Costumes and Chorus). The revision was thoroughgoing, but discreetly carried out (Pickard-Cambridge's name remains on the cover), and the text only rarely offers explicit dissent from Pickard-Cambridge's views, or signals where the material is essentially new, though the authors indicate in summary form in the preface areas where major changes were made (for example a new paragraph on the politics of the plays and their productions).¹⁷ Chapter III on actors and their styles alters the emphasis in a number of places, often to insert more caution against assuming naturalistic gesture, or underestimating the degree of stylisation; and chapter IV on costumes and masks was given a more drastic recast and revision, in order to place greater emphasis on precise presentation of the visual evidence in chronological order and to privilege the Athenian material over the South Italian.¹⁸

¹⁶Cf. Hornblower's 'David Lewis'.

¹⁷p. 90. Cf. Hornblower's 'David Lewis', pp. 578–80.

¹⁸In 1988 they published a second edition of their revision, with seven pages of updating addenda, setting out and discussing new evidence, particularly iconographical, and offering a typically concise and sceptical note on the disputed issue of official censorship of political satire.

Gould's preparedness to accept highly unnaturalistic modes of representation, hinted at in the revision, became more explicit when he returned to the theme of 'Tragedy in performance', in a chapter written for a more general readership in the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature*.¹⁹ Here he asserts positively that Euripides' supposed taste for showing unfortunate characters in rags may be the result of Aristophanes exploiting the intensification of descriptive language, rather than a significant change in actual costumes,²⁰ and suggests that the experience of Japanese theatre should teach us not to underestimate the extent to which an audience's acceptance of a tradition of stylisation in performance can persuade it to experience it as naturalistic and emotionally powerful. In the mid-1960s Gould was already thinking hard about the relevance of Noh and Kabuki theatre, and engaged in discussions with Masaaki Kubo, a Japanese classical scholar whom he knew both in Oxford and during the year he spent at the Hellenic Centre in Washington (1962–3), under the Directorship of Bernard Knox. This continued to have an effect on his thinking.

In the Oxford years, Gould was engaged in detailed thinking about how the formal elements of Greek tragic drama, so different from the practices of contemporary bourgeois theatre, worked in performance: elements such as the choral songs, the actor's lyrics, the convention of masking and duplication of parts, the combination of elaborate rhetorical speeches and dramatic, if 'unrealistic', stichomythia, the distancing effects of the verse and choral idiolects. He was influenced by German work such as Kranz's book on the choral songs (*Stasimon*: Berlin, 1933); but his concern was to go beyond this formal approach towards more satisfactory analysis of what these elements all contributed to the plays' effects and polyvalent meanings. In his mind at this time were a book on Euripidean techniques, and a general book on tragedy; neither ever approached completion, but the central ideas found their way, revised in the light of later developments in scholarship, into the later influential articles on tragedy (see below).

His tutorials were a combination of rigour, inspiration and fun. Christ Church pupils were taught both in seminar classes (e.g. on Homer and Virgil) and in individual essay tutorials. I remember how the class on Homer (1963–4) threw first term undergraduates into the main topics of

¹⁹P. Easterling and B. M. W. Knox (eds.), *Cambridge History of Classical Literature: I: Greek Literature* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 263–91: *MRME*, chap. 6.

²⁰Merely a tentative footnote in the second edition of *Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (Oxford, 1969: see above, n. 14). See now the work of Eric Csapo on Euripidean developments in music and representation in *Actors and Icons in the Ancient Theatre* (Oxford, 2010).

current scholarship in that rather positivist age, such as the theory of oral poetics, the historical contexts of the poems and the historicity of the Trojan war, and also, more interestingly for some of us, the political structures of Homer's own time, and the conceptions of society, personality and morality conveyed by an often puzzling language (Finley's *The World of Odysseus* (London, 1956), Snell's *The Discovery of the Mind* (Oxford, 1953), and Adkins's *Merit and Responsibility* (Oxford, 1960) were much discussed). He persuaded us we could participate in these detailed and technical debates with scholars like Milman and Adam Parry, Page, Finley, Snell, Dodds and Adkins; at the same time he did not let us lose sight of the underlying point of the project, to appreciate that these were great texts, with fundamental connections to all subsequent Western literature. It was not clear to me that he then had reached the conviction, which would be powerfully developed, for example by his successors at Christ Church, Colin Macleod and Richard Rutherford, and his friend Oliver Taplin, that the greatness of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* lies above all in their presentation of coherent—or coherently contradictory—fictional societies, and a complex and balanced picture of war as both heroic and tragic; and that this demands the assumption of an essentially unified structure and single author for each poem. Such conceptions certainly pervade his later forays into Homeric issues, the articles on 'Supplication', 'Homer and the tragic moment', and 'The idea of society in the *Iliad*' (*MRME*, chapters 2, 5 and 15).

Gould's tutorial method approximated more to the traditional Oxford ideal of exploring students' ideas and encouraging their intellectual development; there was little sustained exposition (as, for example, Christ Church undergraduates got from Eric Gray or those at New College or Magdalen from Geoffrey de Ste. Croix).²¹ One felt drawn into a deeply serious engagement with issues of interpretation and the shared pursuit of understanding poetry and ideas through precise attention to the words and their linguistic and cultural contexts. The style was in the best sense democratic and open, conducted in a room of friendly disorder shrouded in Woodbine smoke. Some of the less confident of us might have wished for a more explicit indication of how good or bad our essay had been (one somehow knew not to seek anything as definite as a mark); but a different and more valuable form of confidence—and determination to study further—came from the experience of being opened up to a vast range of

²¹ Cf. Robert Parker's memoir of 'Geoffrey de Ste. Croix 1910–2000', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 111 (2000), 461.

cultural references and connections across languages, centuries and cultural patterns (for example comparable discontinuities in form in Euripides and Bartok). One was guided to realise that understanding a literature from a very different culture was a vitally important, if demanding and difficult, activity.

In addition to the ceaseless flow of ideas and connections between classical texts and the modern world at tutorials, his students benefited tremendously from the regular and generous hospitality and friendship offered by the whole Gould family: his wife Pauline, now planning to retrain as a teacher, and their four children Rachel, Jessica, Christopher (Kit) and John Mark (Yanni) in their large Christ Church house ('Compas') at 62 Iffley Road. They shared the house with John Burrow and his family. Burrow was an English tutor at Christ Church and a close friend, who would later take up a Chair at Bristol, like Gould; he, and later his son Colin, currently a Senior Research Fellow at All Souls, Oxford, like many scholars in other disciplines, found much stimulation over the years in Gould's conversation and writings on literature. We found Sunday afternoons there a delightful relief from the pressures of undergraduate life, and enjoyed inspiring absorption into cultural forms ranging from Webern and Kurt Weill to the Stones and Dylan. It was there too that we became aware of what was to become increasingly vital to his development and his life, the engagement with the language, culture, poetry, music, landscape and people of modern Greece; we would read Seferis and listen to the Theodorakis versions. The family summers were occupied with travels across Greece in VW camper vans, all too liable to break down. It seemed an idyllically happy family.

Another feature of his time in Oxford was the work he and other colleagues such as Donald Russell undertook, under the initial leadership of Dodds, towards the major reform of the traditional Classics syllabus ('Literae Humaniores'): the aim was to end the division between the initial (five terms) study of language and literature ('Mods') and the subsequent (seven terms) exclusive concentration on Ancient History and Philosophy ('Greats'). Agreement took a long time to arrive (opposition being especially strong among the philosophers), and Gould was a strong and influential voice on the committee, though, as at other times, he was not always to be relied on with regard to punctuality or deadlines. The eventual reform introduced some history and ancient philosophy into Mods, and conversely established literature as one of three options in Greats from which undergraduates would select two; thus those who wished could intensify their studies of ancient literature throughout their four-year

degrees. The reform was only enacted after Gould had left Oxford (and long after Dodds had retired).²²

Gould's politics were consistently on the left. In 1956 he had joined with other Christ Church dons in writing a letter condemning the Suez invasion, and the use of college notepaper incurred official disapproval. During the 1960s he was active in local Oxford politics, for example canvassing along with colleagues such as Forrest for Labour candidates in local elections (one of whom was Gerry Fowler, then a Roman historian at Hertford College, and later MP for The Wrekin and a Minister of Education and Science). From 1967, again with many colleagues, he was vocal in his opposition to the rule of the Colonels in Greece, and did not visit the country during the time of the junta. Much later, he left the Labour Party in despair at its anti-socialist policies.

In the summer of 1968 he took over from Kenneth Dover as an editor of the *Classical Quarterly*. He served until 1974, sharing the duties first with Donald Russell and then with Michael Winterbottom. The editors at that time took most decisions themselves, only seeking external referees on rare occasions where neither felt able to make a judgement or where they disagreed. Gould performed these duties very conscientiously, and it is doubtful whether he heeded sufficiently the advice Dover had given him not to spend too long improving $\beta+$ articles; his lack of an adequate filing system could also cause problems, as when he had to confess to an anxious author that he had yet not been able to give a decision on publication, as he could not remember from which scholar he had asked for an opinion.

Between 1968 and 1974 he held the Chair of Classics in the University College of Swansea. Those were years of profound change both for the politics of British universities and for Classics departments in the UK, and Gould played a part in bringing about significant reforms in both areas. As an ex-officio member of the Senate, Gould was drawn, in those years of student protest and agitation, into the debates about university government, and his voice was heard, naturally enough, in favour of some student participation in most areas of decision-making, from the Council and Senate down to the departmental student/staff committees. His effectiveness in college politics, however, was not aided by an administrative vagueness and disdain for procedures, and perhaps also a reputation as something of a middle-aged radical.

Reforming the Classics Department was more successful. Gould saw the pressing need for immediate and fundamental change and welcomed

²²Dodds, *Missing Persons*, pp. 177–8.

the chance to effect reforms much more rapidly than was possible in Oxford. When he succeeded George Kerford, nothing had been done about the crisis which faced Swansea in common with many Classics departments: a traditional and rigid syllabus focused on the ancient languages and philology, and far too few students qualified or interested enough to follow or enjoy it. Gould worked closely with sympathetic colleagues, especially Alan Lloyd and Roger Ling, against the instincts of traditionalists, to 'save the Department'. The essence of the plan was first to open up the serious study of ancient literature, history and philosophy to those who had not hitherto had the opportunity to learn Latin and Greek, by introducing courses in literature in translation and a Joint Honours degree scheme in Ancient History, also taught in translation; and second to enliven the teaching of traditional Classics by a greater concentration on the serious study of the meaning of literary texts as wholes, with close attention to their language, their structures and their historical and social contexts. New appointments (e.g. Joan Booth and David Hunt) brought fresh commitment to the programme. Gould set out the basic principles in his powerful inaugural lecture.²³ This combined a rather Cantabrigian moral passion, redolent of Leavis and Eliot, for the purity of the language, the seriousness of the study of literature and the sense of a single Western literary tradition, with the growing belief in the importance of social anthropology in general, and the ethnography and experience of contemporary Greek cultures in particular, for the understanding of what is distinctive in ancient Greek experience. This approach, informed by Dodds's example, and the work of scholars like J. K. Campbell, Clifford Geertz and Godfrey Lienhardt, was enhanced by personal contact with Margaret Kenna, a social anthropologist in Swansea doing field work on the Greek islands, and by his own increasing familiarity with modern Greek language and literature and its rural world. In the Swansea years, he came to believe all the more strongly that the anthropology of those in the Evans-Pritchard school working in the Mediterranean, and particularly in rural Greece, had a particular value and relevance for students of ancient Greek history and literature, especially if reinforced by direct personal contact with rural Greek life.²⁴

²³'Ancient poetry and modern readers': *MRME*, chap. 1. See also his contribution to a debate on the teaching of literature in Classics departments, *Didaskalos*, 3 (1970), 218–26.

²⁴He told me c.1969, when we discovered that we had independently been inspired by Campbell's *Honour, Family and Patronage* on the transhumant Sarakatsani in north-west Greece, that he felt such modern ethnography could fill out many of the missing pieces of the complex jigsaw of ancient Greek social values.

Teaching at Swansea was very different from Oxford, conducted more by formal lectures than seminars or tutorials, and the students arrived with less familiarity with the texts and the ancient world in general. Gould's lecturing style, stronger on intellectual inspiration and the spontaneous development of ideas than on systematic exposition, had been successful in Oxford, for example in lectures on tragedy or on Thucydides VI and VII; but at Swansea this somewhat freewheeling style was not universally popular among students seeking more basic help and organised coverage of the syllabus.

Gould's passionate commitment to promote more effective learning of Ancient Greek for students of all ages, in the changing educational climate, led to a long-standing involvement in the Reading Greek project run by the Joint Association of Classical Teachers (JACT). Initially, John was a regular teacher at the JACT Greek Summer Schools, for sixth-formers, undergraduates and adults, then held at Dean Close School, Cheltenham. He is remembered as an inspirational figure: very tall and thin, a mass of sandy curls, in white shirt and jeans, sitting on a table and talking about any aspect of language or culture. From 1974 to 1979 he chaired the JACT Steering Committee which produced the influential and successful series of *Reading Greek* textbooks (published by Cambridge University Press) aimed at university students and adults. The committee was composed mostly of experienced teachers and supported by a team of academic advisors chosen by Gould, and he was the overall intellectual driving force and guiding spirit. The founding principles he laid down were that the language must be presented as clearly and helpfully as possible, without compromise, that the Greek to be read should, from the outset, be based on real texts (hence stories based on Aristophanes and Demosthenic forensic speeches featured early, followed by extracts from Homer, Herodotus and tragedy), and that the Greeks' different cultural values and assumptions should be presented and explained from the start, with sensitivity to cultural meaning extending from individual words to whole situations. The resulting textbooks, readers, grammars and companion volumes have been a triumphant success.

The results of Gould's concern for the contribution anthropology could make to the understanding of Greek social institutions and literary texts, originally fired in Oxford by the work and personal inspiration of Dodds, are clearly seen in his first major article (1973), on the ritual of supplication (*hiketēia*) as a social institution and its significance in Greek literature.²⁵ This masterly paper, written from 1969 to 1972, and finished

²⁵'Hiketēia', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 93 (1973), 74–103 (a volume produced in honour of Dodds): *MRME*, chap. 2.

at the Fondation Hardt, immediately established itself as an exemplary and classic study of a curiously neglected topic, and has become the starting point for all subsequent treatments, some of book length.²⁶ Gould established firmly the procedural requirements of this specific ritual, whereby those facing death at the hands of an enemy, or arrivals in a strange and dangerous land, made contact submissively, touching knees or chin, with those with power (or with an altar), and uttered appropriate words and arguments; the effect was to apply moral pressure (strong, but not irresistible) on the recipient to enter into a reciprocal relationship akin to friendship and reciprocal hospitality (*philia* and *xenia*). Gould went on to explore subtly its ramifications and changes over time, and established the motif as a dramatic and morally significant action in major scenes in Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides and tragedy.

Gould's commitment to the JACT Summer School at Cheltenham was to have transforming consequences for his personal life and family. Shortly before he left Swansea in 1974, he started a love affair with Gillian Tuckett, a modern languages teacher, who was following the Greek course. The affair led to the break-up of both the Gould and the Tuckett marriages and in time to John and Gillian's remarriage, and John's becoming step-father to her three young children, Thomas, Tabitha and William. In 1974 Gould was appointed to the H. O. Wills Chair of Greek at the University of Bristol, in succession to Nicholas Hammond;²⁷ this move coincided with the marriage break-up, and a new house in Bristol. Gould attempted to make these two major changes into a complete new start in his life. But for Pauline and their children, and the Tuckett children, the ruptures were extraordinarily bitter and unhappy, and the wounds were never healed. Pauline recovered to retrain again and work as a social worker, before dying of cancer some twenty years later. After an uneasy period where some of the Gould children lived with John and Gillian and her children

²⁶e.g. K. Crotty, *The Poetics of Supplication* (Ithaca, NY, 1994); S. Goldhill, 'Supplication and authorial comment in the *Iliad*', *Hermes*, 166 (1990), 373–7; M. Lynn-George, *Epos: Word, Narrative and the Iliad* (London, 1988); A. Chaniotis, *Kernos*, 9 (1996), 65–86; S. Gödde, *Das Drama der Hikesie: Ritual und Rhetorik in Aischylos' 'Hiketiden'* (Munster, 2000). Most recently, F. S. Naiden, *Ancient Supplication* (Oxford and New York, 2006) offers the fullest account, including a valuable survey of innumerable cases of supplication in both Greek and Roman texts. His criticism of Gould's treatment (pp. 8–14), however, rests in part on reductive misunderstanding; for example he claims misleadingly that on Gould's view Greek supplication was 'invariably successful, provided the requirements of the ritual are met', and that he had as a result paid insufficient attention to other crucial aspects of the process, the justification of the request and the decision whether to accept it.

²⁷See Anthony Snodgrass's Memoir, 'Nicholas Geoffrey Lemprière Hammond 1907–2001', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 120, *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows*, II (2003), 242–59.

in Bristol, there was a complete and devastating break, and John's children were to have almost no contact with their father for the rest of his life; John ceased to make attempts to stay in touch and would not discuss with others how they were. Contacts between the Tuckett children and their father became equally minimal. These difficulties also damaged relations between Gould and some of his academic friends who had known his first family well.

Gould's years in the large and flourishing Classics Department in Bristol (1974–91), where he shared leadership with Niall Rudd, the Professor of Latin, were successful and harmonious. Substantial changes to degree schemes were not required. He shared research interests in tragedy and anthropology with Richard Buxton, and they had a common admiration for, and friendship with, the Parisian *équipes* of Jean-Paul Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, both of whom visited the department and were given honorary degrees by the university. His teaching—whether on the most basic Greek texts or the complexities of religion or tragedy—continued to be a source of inspiration and admiration for the better students, while he seems also to have improved his ability to adjust his methods for the less able; he retained the capacity to develop his ideas in mid-lecture. His distaste for the details of administration and increasing levels of bureaucracy was in no way diminished (though 'managerial' styles and governmental interference were of course to intensify greatly after his retirement); nor, apparently, was there any increase in his own powers of organisation, as demonstrated by the anarchy of his desk, where student essays might lurk undiscovered for months.

The Bristol years were much more productive in terms of publication, resulting in a series of classic articles, some reviews in the *Times Literary Supplement*, and a major book. Having given lectures on Thucydides in Oxford, at Bristol he lectured for many years on the highly congenial Herodotus, and this resulted in his *Herodotus*,²⁸ described as a 'wonderful book, still the best introduction in English to that author'.²⁹ It was later supplemented by two papers: 'Give and take in Herodotus' and 'Herodotus and religion'.³⁰ The book is concerned not so much with Herodotus'

²⁸ *Herodotus*, London, 1989. It won the Runciman Prize for 1990, awarded by the Anglo-Hellenic League.

²⁹ T. Rood, 'Review of John Gould, *Myth, Ritual, Memory, and Exchange: Essays in Greek Literature and Culture*', *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 2002.05.29.

³⁰ 'Give and take in Herodotus', J. L. Myles Lecture, Oxford 1991: *MRME*, chap. 12; 'Herodotus and religion', in S. Hornblower (ed.), *Greek Historiography* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 91–106: *MRME*, chap. 16.

reliability for constructing historical accounts as with his ‘mind’ as a historian: his handling of different types of sources, his understanding of other peoples, his method of structuring a narrative with explanations, and his conceptions of humanity, morality and divinity; and it breathes throughout a warm and sympathetic love of its subtle, entertaining, exhilarating and humane author. It presents him as pursuing radically different, but not necessarily more ‘primitive’ or simplistic, methods and purposes from his great successor Thucydides. Major features of the book continue the subtle and detailed application of the continued immersion in social anthropology and in the world of rural Greece.³¹

Gould brings to the debate on Herodotus’ trustworthiness in reporting sources (both Greek and non-Greek) a sophisticated awareness of the complexities of oral traditions (both among distinguished families and in communities) and the mythologising or politically motivated transformations that ‘social memory’ can create; this enables him to resist persuasively the arguments of Fehling and others that the historian’s wide travels and many of his stories were free inventions. Second, Gould finds the key to the work’s complex structure and its favoured forms of historical explanations in the fundamental ideas of honour, shame and reciprocity, both positive and negative. Hence the work is packed full with long-term obligations of friendship reinforced by hospitality and gift-exchange (themes also explored in the ‘Give and Take’ paper); and long chains of events, where initial acts of hostility and aggression provoke retaliations (hence ‘revenge’, *timoria*, is a vitally important motivating force, for individuals and states).³² The fundamental modes of expressing causation are characteristically personal, yet this does not prevent Herodotus from expressing in such moralising terms as ‘greed’, *hybris*, revenge and so on ideas of more generalised or collective causes which later historians might express in more abstract terms such as aggression or imperialism. Finally, Gould opposes any attempt to identify the historian’s main purpose as delivering a clear ‘message’, whether moral lessons of divine punishment of the proud or the aggressors, or a contemporary political warning against the new imperialism of the Athenians; for Gould, the *Histories*, like the *Iliad*, offer morally significant, complex and often over-determined, accounts of

³¹ Much of the book was written in a monastery in Western Crete, where Gould was staying with his wife Gillian and her daughter Tabitha; in the preface he acknowledges their substantial collaboration.

³² The centrality of reciprocity to Herodotean narratives and explanations is accepted and extended by David Braund, in C. Gill, N. Posthlethwaite and R. Seaford (eds.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 159–80.

motives and actions, and their chains of consequences, though awareness of current examples of Greek aggression, comparable to the Persian, may be present as well.³³ On religious explanations, in the book and in the later article ('Herodotus and religion', *MRME*, chapter 16), Gould charts a delicate balance: he insists, against those who see Herodotus as a thoroughgoing sceptic, that the historian was persuaded that some events did display divine as well as human causation, but also that his frequent expressions of uncertainty reflect his firm adherence to a typically Greek awareness of the limitations of human knowledge; this helps to explain also his readiness to explore, open-mindedly and tolerantly, other religious systems.³⁴ Here Gould suggests that what can seem a rather limited concentration on matters of ritual, especially sacrifice, and on the different names of gods, has its roots in the centrality of ritual to the Greeks' conception of their own religion, and in the lack of evidence available to Herodotus of the theogonies or theology of (for example) the Persians or the Egyptians.

Probably the most read and cited of Gould's classic articles is the 1980 piece on 'Law, custom and myth: the social position of women in classical Athens'.³⁵ This paper, written in the early days of the application of feminist and structuralist ideas to Greek society, marked a considerable advance in its sophistication and use of anthropological and psychological theory. It dealt a death blow to the opposing, oversimplified, positions, that Greek men kept their womenfolk in 'oriental seclusion' and regarded them with contempt, or that they treated them with respect and allowed them much freedom (a position whose best exponent had been Gomme). Each side tended to over-emphasise alternative categories of evidence (imaginative literature or law court speeches), and both ignored the laws. Gould's methodological principle, which has now become standard, was to consider separately evidence falling under his three categories (laws, norms and customs, and the representation of myths in literature), and to argue that each category displays complementary, if significantly different, complexities and contradictions. Intelligent and eclectic use is made of anthropological and psychological studies of gender and religion and of the contrasting approaches to Greek religion and myth of both the Paris

³³On the second issue, see for example, the comparison of Fornara and Gould by P. Derow, *Classics Ireland*, 2 (1995), 29–51, and K. A. Raaflaub, in *Brill's Companion to Herodotus* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 177–81.

³⁴T. Harrison, *Divinity and History: the Religion of Herodotus* (Oxford, 2000), argues in detail for a Herodotus who firmly offered religious explanations, arguably dissipating too much the operation of Gould's 'uncertainty principle' (see pp. 11–18, 191).

³⁵*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 100 (1980), 38–59: *MRME*, chap. 4.

school of Vernant and Vidal-Naquet and the Swiss of Meuli and Burkert. This paper ends with a reflection on the difference between modern romantic ‘Love’, which Gomme had invoked as a familiar element in Greek literature, and the ‘Eros’ of the chorus from the *Antigone*, which Gomme had cited in support of his view, but which the chorus describes as a power undefeated in war, destroying properties, driving its victims to madness, the just to injustice, and provoking quarrels between kin.³⁶

A comparably powerful article which has also become a standard and unrivalled introduction to a broad topic is ‘On making sense of Greek religion’, published in a collection of essays offered to John Sharwood Smith, the prime mover behind JACT, with whom Gould had worked for many years.³⁷ This also makes detailed use of anthropological theorists (Evans-Pritchard and Lienhardt on African systems and above all Geertz’s general idea of religion as a system for making some sense of unbearable chaos), and combines a high level of generality with telling exegesis of Greek rituals and texts. Beyond its succinct identification of the salient differences between Greek polytheism and modern monotheisms, the paper pursues a crafty balancing act between apparently contrasting ideas. Greek polytheism was a mass of rituals, festivals and myths, located in the political units (polis, deme etc.) at various levels, all infinitely various, open to change, unstructured, and free of any dogmatising church or priests; yet it contained a broadly systematic, coherent and complex attempt to make sense of the infinite plurality of the world. Rituals and myths alike present divinities—contradictorily—both as human in appearance, thought and emotions, yet also uncanny and terrifying, encouraging morality yet capable of imposing inexplicable destruction and suffering (neatly summed up in Solon’s phrase to Croesus in Herodotus 1.32: ‘divinity is envious and disorderly’).³⁸

In 1989, Gould delivered the Jackson Knight Memorial Lecture at Exeter (republished as *MRME*, chapter 11) with the then topical title ‘Dionysus and the hippy convoy: ritual, myth and metaphor in the cult of Dionysus’. This offered a valuable qualification to the approach to the cults of Dionysus being then developed by Albert Henrichs, who argued that the wild maenadism and social subversion of literary representations, above all in Euripides’ *Bacchae*, were no guide to the ritual practices of

³⁶ It is difficult not to sense a certain irony in this point, in view of the effects of ‘Love’ and *Eros* on the Gould and Tuckett families at the time of writing.

³⁷ P. E. Easterling and J. V. Muir (eds.), *Greek Religion and Society* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 1–33: *MRME*, chap. 7.

³⁸ For a sympathetic recent assessment of Gould’s approach to Greek religion, in the context of a critique of the widely accepted category of ‘polis religion’, see J. Kindt, *Kernos*, 22 (2009), 9–34.

organised women's *thiasoi* in Greek *poleis* revealed by inscriptions, and that there was a firm division between the exclusively male cults involving ritual wine-drinking and female cults involving maenadic dancing. Gould argued plausibly that this was in danger of reductionism, of creating over-rigid boundaries, and simplifying the god who was—in ritual and myth—irreducibly contradictory, always 'on the move', both an unsettling outsider from (various parts of) the East and 'coming home' as a native Greek, and associated with luxuriant and uncontrollable vegetation (vines and ivy). Here again, it is the insistence on the acceptance of plurality, ambiguities and contradictions as central to the Greek understanding which marks out the approach.

Greek Tragedy remained the main focus for his research, and a long series of influential articles from 1978 to 2000 develops themes first worked out in Oxford, in discussion with other scholars in the UK, France and Germany. The prevailing concerns are characterisation, modes of narrative and the functions of the chorus. First, and most generally, he tackled the delicate issue of 'Dramatic character in Greek tragedy',³⁹ in a response to two papers by Pat Easterling.⁴⁰ In effect Gould sought to locate Greek drama along a spectrum of psychological realisation of individual personality, whose two extremes are formed by the ultra-naturalistic, highly detailed, physical and psychological presentation found in Eugene O'Neill and the most highly stylised forms of Noh theatre; Gould placed Greek plays closer to the Noh end than would many others. Formal aspects of stage-presentation (costumes, masks, staging) and of language and metrical forms (stylised or rhetorical styles, stichomythia, Dorianisms, musical accompaniments), illustrated with some telling examples, are held to militate against any great interest in the psychological details of individual characters or their back stories. Gould prefers to replace Easterling's (relatively minimal) talk of the 'human intelligibility' of the differentiated characters in a play, whose actions and words make sense to us, with an awareness that the play as a whole presents an intelligible, morally significant, metaphor for human experience. Many subsequent discussions have engaged with Gould's paper as the most influential and important example of this type of approach; especially helpful are further papers by Easterling and Goldhill, and the more general work by Christopher Gill on Greek conceptions of character and personality.⁴¹

³⁹ *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 204 (1978), 43–67: *MRME*, chap. 3.

⁴⁰ *Greece and Rome*, 20 (1973), 3–19 and 24 (1977), 121–9.

⁴¹ e.g. P. Easterling and S. Goldhill in C. Pelling (ed.), *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 89–99, 100–27; C. Gill, *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy and*

A paper published in 1983 titled ‘Homeric epic and the tragic moment’ concerned the relation between Homer and tragedy.⁴² It started from the position developed by Gould’s French friends Vernant and Vidal-Naquet on the ‘tragic moment’: the argument that fifth-century Greece saw radical new forms of thinking about many aspects of human experience, and that tragedy dealt with clashes of vision and values between the world of myths and heroes and of rationality and the citizen. While accepting this in general, Gould proceeded to argue that one should in no way underestimate the extent to which already in Homer complexity and ambiguities of values and social structures produced powerful tragic realisations.⁴³

His Corbett lecture delivered in Cambridge in 1991, ‘“And tell sad stories of the deaths of kings”’: Greek tragic drama as narrative’ (later published as *MRME*, chapter 14), engages with Gérard Genette’s apparently clear distinction between dramatic representation and narrative (and ultimately with Plato’s much earlier attempt at a similar distinction in *Republic*, 3). Greek tragedies, as Gould shows, may have no single narrative voice, but they have a controlling mind in charge of the manipulation of the story, which regularly includes narrations (often choral) of past, concurrent or future events which then guide or condition the stage actions. They also have intra-dramatic narratives, *in primis* the so-called ‘messenger speech’; these may stand as models of an authoritative account from an outsider, but other narratives, even those delivered by divine figures, may also be partial or misleading. In this, the competing narrative discourses and strategies of drama prevent acceptance of a single privileged narration, and contribute to a sense of pervasive ambiguities and multiplicity (the conclusion thus coheres with Gould’s other papers). As in all his papers, the analysis includes penetrating and convincing treatment of details, for example on the complexities of time-management and narratives of the past in *King Oedipus* and *Agamemnon*.

Philosophy (Oxford, 1996), especially pp. 107–24; see also recently B. Seidensticker in M. Revermann and P. Wilson (eds.), *Performance, Iconography, Reception: Studies in Honour of Oliver Taplin* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 333–48

⁴²T. Winniffrith, P. Murray and K. W. Gransden (eds.), *Aspects of the Epic* (London, 1983), pp. 32–45: *MRME*, chap. 5.

⁴³Cf. also J. Redfield, *History of Religion*, 31 (1991), 73–4. The nature of the reciprocal social relationships and obligations in the *Iliad*, and the conflicts and contradictions inherent in this relatively unstructured (fictional) society are penetratingly explored in Gould’s unpublished paper on ‘The idea of society in the *Iliad*’ (*MRME*, chap. 15). There are clear similarities with ideas on Homer which Oliver Taplin was developing at the same time in *Homeric Soundings* (Oxford, 1992).

Between 1987–9 Gould was also writing papers focused on specific plays, elucidating their characteristic language and imagery: they treat the *Bacchae*, *King Oedipus* and *Antigone*. ‘Mothers’ Day’, a contribution to a day in honour of Reginald Winnington-Ingram and published in 1987,⁴⁴ focuses on the mothers in the *Bacchae*, victims and perpetrators of horrific violence (Semele, Agaue, the Theban wives on the mountain), and plots the connections between the beauty, fertility, wildness and terror of their actions and emotions, and those of the landscape and its vegetation revealed in narrative and imagery. ‘The language of Oedipus’, published in 1988,⁴⁵ explores, with typical sensitivity, linked ironic contrasts in the presentation of Oedipus. It shows how Oedipus’ characteristic language, which contrasts in different ways from that of Teiresias and Creon, and which changes as his journey to self-discovery progresses, combines the increasingly haunting play with the key sites in the landscape (Delphi, the three-road crossing, Thebes, Corinth, Cithairon) to convey a profound sense of Oedipus’ isolation from the other characters. The others appear more firmly rooted in geographical and political space and in control of their own identities and language, while the set of ambiguities surrounding Oedipus brings him into close, if opaque, connection with the world of the gods whose responsibility for the events is undeniable, if impossible to state with precision. A previously unpublished lecture (‘Oedipus and Antigone at Thebes’; *MRME*, chapter 10) briefly compares and contrasts the narratives and overall meanings of *King Oedipus* and *Antigone*. Gould finds a number of parallels between the two plays, and suggests that the *Oedipus* can be profitably seen as a radical reworking of themes important in the earlier play: imagery, characterisation and the final portrayals of divine operations, human suffering, and indestructible heroism.⁴⁶

While projected books on Euripides and Greek tragedy never emerged, there is no doubt that the greater productivity of the Bristol years owed a great deal to Gillian. She acquired sufficient knowledge of the texts and scholarship to discuss his work with him, and offered constant encouragement and organisational support. They spent much time renovating a large rather run-down house in Clifton, which became a warm centre of hospitality. Gould was a loving and caring stepfather (as he had previously

⁴⁴ *Papers given at a Colloquium on Greek Drama in Honour of R. P. Winnington-Ingram*, Hellenic Society Supplementary Papers, 15 (London, 1987): *MRME*, chap. 8.

⁴⁵ H. Bloom (ed.), *Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex* (New Haven, CT, 1988): *MRME*, chap. 9.

⁴⁶ There are connections here with the discussion of the opacity of knowledge in the *Oedipus* by Claude Calame and Gould’s colleague Richard Buxton in M. S. Silk (ed.), *Tragedy and the Tragic* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 17–37, 38–48.

been a father), and took much delight in Tabitha's music, in her and Thomas's studies in Classics and English, and William's training in the Royal Ballet School and subsequent success as a dancer and choreographer; John and Gillian attended many first nights, in London and Athens.

They spent many extended periods travelling across Greece, though money was short, and journeys hampered (still) by unreliable vehicles. In 1983 Gould's Philhellenism found a new cause. Following Melina Mercouri's clarion call in August 1982, Gould was present at the initial discussions on Euboea on a plan for action, convened by the architect James Cubitt and his wife Eleni. This led to the foundation of the Committee for the Restitution of the Parthenon Marbles in 1983. Eleni Cubitt was the first secretary, and Robert Browning the first Chairman; the initial members of the Committee were Christopher Price, Brian Clark, Michael Dummett, George Forrest and Gould. This has operated ever since as a powerful lobbying and informative pressure group.⁴⁷ While the main aim is yet to be achieved, the Committee has done a great deal to change the climate of opinion and Gould contributed much to its initial progress.

In this period the Goulds' lives were blighted by disease and tragedy. Thomas, Gillian's older son, after years of drug-taking and schizophrenia, killed himself while an undergraduate studying Latin at London. Gould himself began to suffer from serious ill health, from Sjögren's syndrome, an autoimmune disease which attacks the exocrine glands, and from detached retinas in both eyes, only one of which could be saved. Subsequently, lymphatic cancer was diagnosed, which was eventually to kill him, after periods of false hope. He bore his pain with great courage, and Gillian cared for him devotedly. They remained close and mutually dependent, but their remaining years were full of tensions and grief.

By 1991, as his tenure at Bristol was coming to an end, his reputation as a scholar of the first rank was assured, and he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy, on the basis of the Herodotus book and the string of major and fundamental articles. In the next few years in retirement, though his health remained poor, he undertook some teaching in New College, Oxford,⁴⁸ and in 1993 he spent some months as a visiting Fellow at Stanford University.

The last two papers Gould published during the 1990s were the final development of his long contemplation of the Greek tragic chorus. The

⁴⁷ It is now known as the Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles: see <<http://www.parthenonuk.com>>.

⁴⁸ Coincidentally, Tabitha was also in Oxford at the time, preparing for her finals in Greats and later for a doctorate in Classics and English.

more general one, originally delivered at a 1993 conference in London on 'Tragedy and the tragic', with a response from Simon Goldhill, was among his most important and influential.⁴⁹ It focuses on the status and gender of the choral personae, and what the positions and emotions expressed by their songs and speech contribute to the meaning of the plays. Assuming the unsatisfactory nature of traditional reductive formulae such as 'the ideal spectator' or 'poet's voice', Gould directs gentle corrective fire at more recent and subtler formulations offered by Vernant, Vidal-Naquet and others, that choruses tend to represent the collective 'truth' of contemporary citizens, or the collective, moderate, values of the city, as opposed to the individual heroism or excess of the leading characters. While accepting that the chorus are indeed a distinct collective entity, separate from the characters, Gould emphasises that the choruses in the surviving plays are clearly distinguished from moderate Athenian citizens, both by their language, even more distanced than that of the actors from 'ordinary' language in metre, dialect (literary Dorianisms) and diction, and, more importantly, because they are only rarely active, adult male citizens of the mythical community, and are typically marginal figures, often (and especially in Aeschylus and Euripides) women, foreign or slave (sometimes all three). The collective memory of a community is central to their presentation, but that 'community' needs to be more precisely and carefully defined for each play. Where a chorus might seem to fit the Vernant model, i.e. a group of elderly citizens, advisors to a kingdom (e.g. *Agamemnon*, *Antigone*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*), it is often cowardly, morally inadequate, or prone to dissolve into disunity and confusion; conversely, when the chorus is composed of foreign or slave women, it is present inside the play's action, as a collective, not (usually) actively causing events, but responding emotionally to them and commenting on them from the perspective of its members' relation to the place, social memory and the oral traditions of the play's city and the practices and values of its rituals and institutions.⁵⁰

⁴⁹'Tragedy and collective experience', in M. S. Silk (ed.), *Tragedy and the Tragic* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 217–43; *MRME*, chap. 17. Gould's paper is declared 'seminal' by M. Revermann in M. Revermann and P. Wilson (eds.), *Performance, Iconography, Reception: Studies in Honour of Oliver Taplin* (Oxford, 2008), p. 42.

⁵⁰Goldhill's critique (*Tragedy and the Tragic*, pp. 243–56), while applauding much, adduces strong arguments challenging Gould's emphasis on the marginality of choruses' statuses and positions, the distancing of their language and their lack of any authority; in many cases the tension between a chorus's marginality and the apparent authority of their moral, political or religious comments contributes much to the questioning of authority characteristic of the genre. See also the critique of C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy and Athenian Religion* (Lanham, MA, 2003), pp. 265–84.

The second paper was a brief contribution to a Bristol conference entitled ‘Myth, memory and the chorus: “tragic rationality”’.⁵¹ This built on the previous paper to explore ways in which choral songs contribute to the rational arguments and debates of the plays, by their awareness of relevant mythical stories and associated moral conclusions (*gnomai*). During the last two years of his life came the preparation with Oxford University Press for his collected papers (*Myth, Ritual, Memory and Exchange: Essays in Greek Literature and Culture*). Despite much pain, he fought to have all his papers included (at one stage the Press wished to exclude some previously published in its own volumes), and added the two unpublished pieces and a few mildly polemical addenda, one attacking Burkert’s sociobiological view of supplication, one dissenting from Finkleburg’s view of Homeric values, and one commenting on Connerton’s view of collective memory. The publication in February 2001 gave him much pleasure.⁵²

The Goulds spent the years of retirement divided between Somerset, where they had a cottage at Nunney near Frome, France, where they had bought a delapidated chateau near Angers, and Greece, where they had bought a small house in the hills above Stoupa in the northern Mani. The houses abroad needed much work, and money remained very tight. There were happy times, especially in the Mani, where they had more friends, and continued to feel that rural Greek customs and social relationships strengthened understanding of ancient culture and values. Eventually, the renovation problems became too much, as John’s health further deteriorated, and they sold the foreign properties and returned to Nunney.

His last academic paper was delivered in July 2000, when he was gravely ill and in much pain, at the conference in Wadham in memory of his old friend George Forrest.⁵³ This was the last occasion on which many of us saw him. His elegant, elegiac, piece brought together stories of divine interventions told in Herodotus with stories of the miraculous preservation of Piero della Francesca’s *Resurrection* in the Borgo San Sepolcro during the Second World War; a British officer, remembering that it

⁵¹ R. Buxton (ed.), *From Myth to Reason? Studies in the Development of Greek Thought* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 107–16: *MRME*, chap. 18.

⁵² Like the Herodotus book, this appropriately won a major prize offered by an Anglo-Hellenic association, the John D. Criticos Prize awarded by the London Hellenic Society: the prize for 2001 was presented posthumously on 4 October 2002.

⁵³ ‘Herodotus and the resurrection’, in P. Derow and R. Parker (eds.), *Herodotus and his World* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 297–304. It was of course too late to be included in the collected papers volume, *MRME*.

housed the painting Aldous Huxley had called ‘the best picture in the world’, allegedly delayed shelling the town, in the hope that the German troops would abandon it; and they did. Gould imagines the explanation which Herodotus would have given—an imprecise but firm supposition of the work of a supernatural power—and asks how this might contrast with various modern explanations or a modern reluctance to offer any explanation. His death came a little over a year after this conference, on 19 October 2001.

John Gould was a great scholar and inspiring teacher who had a profound influence on our thinking about Greek literature, religion and culture, and who in person had a rare power to convince one of the seriousness and the fun of the intellectual life. I was not the only person after his death to apply to him the concluding words he used of Herodotus: ‘the lasting impression is exhilaration . . . he made you laugh, not by presenting experience as comic, but by showing it as constantly surprising and stimulating; he made you glad to have known him, as one who responded to suffering and disaster with energy and ingenuity, resilient and undefeated’.⁵⁴ Throughout his work he brought out the power of the Greeks’ awareness of complexities and contradictions and of the potential for conflict and tragedy in human nature and the ‘natural’ world. Contradictions, tensions and tragedy were also not foreign to his own life.

NICK FISHER

Cardiff University

Note. I have had much help, in conversations, letters and emails, from Rachel Gould, Gillian Gould, Tabitha Tuckett, Roy Waters, Christopher Robinson, Martha Livingston, Peter Parsons, Antony Duff, Oliver Taplin, Donald Russell, Robert Parker, John Burrow, Colin Burrow, Michael Winterbottom, Richard Rutherford, Christopher Collard, Alan Lloyd, Richard Buxton, Peter Jones, Anthony Snodgrass and Robin Howells.

⁵⁴Obituary in *The Independent*, 30 Oct. 2001; Parker and Derow, *Herodotus and his World*, p. vi (applying the terms also to Forrest, as had Hornblower, *ibid.* p. 37). Other obituaries: Richard Buxton, *The Times*, 1 Nov. 2001, and Peter Jones, *The Daily Telegraph*, 2 Nov. 2001.

