



DOUGLAS MACDOWELL

## Douglas Maurice MacDowell 1931–2010

DOUGLAS MAURICE MACDOWELL, who died on 16 January 2010, was one of the most distinguished students of Greek oratory, law and comedy of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

He was born on 8 March 1931, the only child of Maurice Alfred MacDowell and his wife Dorothy Jean, née Allan. Both parents were of Scottish/Northern Irish extraction. His father worked for the London office of the Northern Assurance Company in Moorgate. His mother was a shorthand typist before giving up work on becoming a mother. One side benefit of his mother's previous occupation was that Douglas had learned to type (as well as to read and write) at the age of four.

His parents had no profound influence on his ultimate career choice. Neither parent had the opportunity to go to university and neither had ever studied Latin or Greek. His father, with whom he had a difficult and distant relationship throughout his life, had no sympathy with his intellectual interests, and indeed never attended school prize-giving or subsequent degree ceremonies. His mother, though always puzzled by Douglas's academic and professional activities, was invariably supportive and her visits with him to the theatre were later to pay dividends. He remained close to his mother and in adulthood continued to visit her until her death in 1990. His upbringing was secure and his childhood solitary and contented, disrupted only briefly at the age of eight by the war. He never developed a love of games and much preferred activities such as reading. This quietness remained with him throughout his life. In adult life he developed strong friendships but remained shy and was always more comfortable in his own company than with others.

He attended Keble Preparatory School for Boys, with an interval at Elgin Academy and Madras College St Andrews (when his father was sent by the RAF to Lossiemouth and Leuchars during the war), and then Highgate School. He later observed that he learned more English grammar at Elgin than anywhere else. His interest in Classics, as is often the case, was ultimately due to a good school teacher. His Classics master at Highgate School, the Revd C. H. Benson, was an ideal teacher for a bookish boy like Douglas. A poor disciplinarian but a good scholar, he was good at bringing on those students who were able and inclined to listen. It is at this point that the footprint for much of the later MacDowell is laid down. He particularly enjoyed the more technical and demanding aspects of the study of Classics. He enjoyed prose and verse composition in both languages but especially in Greek. He was particularly taken by the lyrics of Horace, not (he later said) for their literary quality but for the skill with which Horace was able to fit recalcitrant Latin words into complex and demanding alien metres. He also enjoyed ancient history, and especially fifth-century Athens. The other piece in the jigsaw is supplied by Aristophanes, whom (primed by his affection for Lewis Carroll and a fondness for Gilbert and Sullivan derived from his mother) he came to love, though (unlike most schoolboys) more for the wit than for the vulgarity; the editions through which he encountered Aristophanes were the expurgated ones at that stage (in the era before Kenneth Dover) considered fit for growing minds. At this time he also became interested in acting, an interest which continued into his university years. His most important parts were Mr Twigg in *Badger's Green* and Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night*. Shy people frequently enjoy acting for the opportunity it gives to assume a role in public and Douglas felt later that his time on the stage had been of great benefit to him. It stimulated a performative side to his nature which he was later to let loose in lectures. And (with an irony which will not have been lost on a man who later came to love Demosthenes, who famously—at least in the later biographical tradition—struggled to bring on a weak voice) it taught him to develop and project a naturally quiet speaking voice.

In 1948 he was awarded a Domus Exhibition at Balliol College, Oxford (to which he had applied against the wishes of his school), and left school earlier than anticipated in March 1949 in order to complete his eighteen months of National Service (suddenly raised from twelve months) in time to commence his studies at Oxford in autumn 1950. He disliked National Service, though he was aware of the benefit alongside the tedium. Even the basic training, he felt, was not without value for a bookish young man

from a sheltered and comfortable middle-class background, since it exposed him to kinds of people he would otherwise never have encountered. After his basic training he was made a sergeant instructor in the Army Apprentices School at Chepstow, and his duties consisted largely of teaching English to schoolboys. He felt that the experience was useful for his later career.

He found Oxford liberating. It gave him not just his own space but the opportunity to devote his time to the academic study he enjoyed, together with congenial intellectual company. His tutors included W. S. Watt, Kenneth Dover and Russell Meiggs. He learned more, he felt, from the Balliol tutors than from the Oxford lectures, which (at least in language and literature) he found 'dull' (Dodds) and (for the accent) 'largely unintelligible' (Fraenkel); on the whole he preferred the ancient history lectures (Andrewes, Brunt, Meiggs, Sherwin-White, Wade-Gery). Apart from stints as secretary, then chairman, of the Classical Society, his only other activity apart from study was drama. As the slave Xanthias in Aristophanes' *Frogs* he rode a thoroughbred pantomime donkey, one half of which was Robert Ogilvie, later Professor of Humanity at St Andrews. Though he saw himself (with typical modesty) as less gifted than some of his contemporaries (Ogilvie, Frederiksen), he took firsts in both Mods and Greats.

Despite this success, his progress into academic life was neither obvious nor inevitable. By the time he graduated he had begun to contemplate a career in the academy. Russell Meiggs was not encouraging and advised him to take the civil service exam, which he failed (he recalled later that he made a mess of the interview). Like many before and after him he then drifted into school teaching, first at Allhallows School, Rousdon, and then at Merchant Taylors'. He enjoyed teaching bright students at sixth form level but (again like many before and since) not the lower forms and by 1958 he had decided that this was not what he wanted out of life. He returned to the idea of university teaching, encouraged by his former classics teacher, Revd Benson. Early applications brought no interviews and he began to suspect that his referee, Meiggs, was not supportive, a suspicion reinforced when he substituted Dover for Meiggs and was successfully interviewed at Manchester in 1958. The feeling that Meiggs had been a lukewarm referee stayed with him, so that he never felt entirely comfortable with Meiggs afterward. But teaching now at a level more to his taste, he enjoyed life at Manchester and rose rapidly from assistant lecturer to lecturer (1961–8), then senior lecturer (1968–70) and reader.

He was appointed to the chair of Greek at Glasgow at the age of forty in 1971. Throughout his life he felt—sincerely—that this was a great

honour. He was conscious of the distinguished line of predecessors who had occupied the chair, including Richard Jebb, Gilbert Murray and A. W. Gomme. When he moved to Glasgow, it was to a separate department of Greek, though in 1988 the separate departments for ancient world studies were merged into a single department of Classics. The world he entered was a very traditional one and left undisturbed the subjects would have slid quietly into obsolescence. He was (justly) proud of two innovations he introduced. The first was the teaching of Greek language from scratch, which (aware both of its importance and of its demands) unlike some senior academics he taught personally rather than passing it off to junior colleagues. The second was the class in Greek civilisation taught in translation, of a kind he had taught in Manchester. Both teaching in translation and *ab initio* language teaching have played a major role both in reversing the decline in numbers studying Classics visible throughout the UK from at least the late nineteenth century; they have also helped the discipline not only to survive in a highly competitive higher education environment but also to shrug off the elitist image which had plagued it on its long retreat from its heyday as the basis for a gentlemanly education and underpinning of empire. These were however the most radical changes in the curriculum for a hundred years at Glasgow and (there as elsewhere in the UK) met with resistance. They were however accepted and colleagues who worked with him both then and later recognise them as an important step in the evolution of Classics teaching in its modern form and an important part of his legacy to the department. His impact was also felt in the revival of the Glasgow branch of the Classical Association of Scotland. Though it never had the impact he wanted at high school level (largely because of the decline in Classics in the state sector), it was important not just for Classics in Glasgow but also for the larger Classics community in Scotland. He was chairman of the Scottish Hellenic Society, and of the Classical Association of Scotland and its Glasgow branch; he was also secretary of the UK Council of University Classical Departments. His commitment to Scotland, not just Glasgow, was shown in the publication series he instigated, *Scottish Classical Studies*, intended to raise the profile of research in Classics in Scotland. In the area of what we now call academic management he regarded himself as no more than a competent organiser. Certainly administrative duties gave him no great pleasure and he never sought them out. But he had an accurate sense of what needed to be done and a capacity to make things happen which he underrated.

If higher education is vulnerable to the financial climate, small departments are especially so. Classics departments throughout the UK felt

under threat during the 1980s (a threat partly alleviated but not removed by the amalgamations late in the decade in the wake of the Barron report) and MacDowell was anxious that Classics might be closed down. Aberdeen did in fact close their department in the 1970s, reducing university teaching and research in Classics in Scotland by 25 per cent at a stroke. The worst never happened at Glasgow, partly headed off by the merger of the departments of Greek and Humanity into Classics; but obtaining even senior replacements was a struggle. MacDowell's own post was one of the counters in the game. Under the terms of his appointment he had the right to retire at 70. Despite encouragement from the Principal, Graeme Davies, to retire earlier, he elected to stay on, unconvinced that he would be replaced, and finally retired in 2001 after 30 years in post (an achievement of which he was proud, and one not equalled since Lushington in 1875). His argument for staying on reflected not just his commitment to the chair and the department but his habitual modesty; acknowledging that a younger professor was more desirable, he reflected that 'even an elderly professor of Greek was better than none at all'. It was the same concern for the department that led him to apply for (and obtain) the Oxford D.Litt. in 1992; in an age when the doctorate had become the norm for anyone entering an academic career, he felt that it would add in a small way to the department's HR statistics (which as the then Head of Department he had to compile). In the same way, part of his pleasure in being admitted to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1991 and the British Academy in 1993 was the boost it might give to the standing of the department in the eyes of the university.

He was in the end proved right about the chair. He was not replaced on retirement. The strength of his own commitment was underlined by a remarkable gesture in his will; he left Glasgow University £2m, the bulk of his estate, to support the chair of Greek. He evidently (astutely) held off to the last in the hope that against all the signs the university might still invest its own money; despite the frustration and profound disappointment, it must have given him consolation to be in a position to do something to rescue a chair which he was proud to have occupied. At the time of writing I understand that the university has agreed to accept the bequest and to establish a MacDowell Chair in Greek.

He brought to his teaching the gifts which made his research so accessible, a serious commitment to getting it right and a rare capacity for making complex problems intelligible without superficiality. Lecturing also allowed an outlet for his histrionic side. He had discovered in the 1960s (at a time when lecturing was a dry business) a talent for presenting

Aristophanes in a theatrical way, acting out the parts in a range of voices; this had proved popular in public lectures and he used it to good effect in his lectures on comedy at Glasgow. Both for colleagues and for students he maintained an open door policy. He is remembered by former students as a generous teacher in every sense. A remorselessly rigorous researcher himself, who could be unforgiving with inaccuracies, inconsistencies or superficiality from professionals, he was patient with students struggling to find their way, though unsympathetic to mere show. One of his former students recalls a seminar in which MacDowell asked a question and a student gave an answer which was not just wrong but also totally irrelevant to the question. To the amusement of a visiting academic who was present Douglas patiently replied 'not quite', before proceeding to steer the discussion in the right direction. He was passionate about the value of a classical education and went to extraordinary lengths to support promising students. A member of the Senior Honours class of 1982 recalled that he bought everyone in the class ('and I'm pretty sure all Senior Honours students every year') a subscription to *Journal of Hellenic Studies*. He was equally generous with time. Douglas Cairns, now Professor of Greek at Edinburgh, recalls: 'When I was in my first year, on the grounds that I needed to read more Greek than was read in the Ordinary syllabus, we met once a week in his room to read the *Acharnians* together.' When the department started to recruit postgraduate students in the late 1980s and after, he made a point of holding a weekly reading class on Aristophanes with them. Graduate students in financial difficulties would find that an anonymous donor had been found to assist with their costs. Only the most perceptive guessed that the donor was MacDowell himself. This was part of a large pattern of quiet philanthropy.

At the time of his first appointment at Manchester he had undertaken no research at all. Immediately on taking up the job he set about making good the lacuna. The direction he took was in part—but only in part—a matter of chance. Both at school and at university he had always been interested in Greek history. While teaching at Merchant Taylors' he had picked up a copy of the selection of texts from the Athenian orators which Sir Richard Jebb had produced for school use in 1880 (a book ironically, as MacDowell later noted, dedicated to 'the Greek class at the University of Glasgow'). He had never studied the orators in any depth and he immediately recognised both the potential of the corpus as a way into the social and political history of ancient Athens from a direction distinct from and complementary to the historians and the lacuna in twentieth-century British scholarship. So he decided to write a commentary on an oratorical

text. He was encouraged in the enterprise by Dover, whose own interests included Greek prose of the classical period. The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had seen some very good commentary work on Greek oratory in the UK (including a clutch of commentaries from J. E. Sandys) but interest had largely fizzled out. The lack of interest was reinforced by a tendency to think in discipline terms, with Plato left largely to the philosophers and orators and historiographers to the ancient historians. The orators had effectively become subsidiary material in larger works on political history, or, worse, models of style for Greek prose composition. The blight did not affect Continental and American scholarship. The Budé series in France and the Loeb series in the USA patiently plugged the gaps in the works of the orators. MacDowell's interest in the orators was ahead of its time in British classical scholarship. But though he can claim the credit for stimulating a resurgence of interest in the Greek orators in the United Kingdom, there was no rush to follow. In fact it was not until the eighties (two decades after his first book) that MacDowell's commentary work found successors in the UK, with the appearance of Edwards–Usher, *Antiphon and Lysias*,<sup>1</sup> and *Demosthenes: Selected Private Speeches* by Carey–Reid.<sup>2</sup> From then on interest in the Greek orators has burgeoned to the point that it is difficult to recollect a time when MacDowell was almost alone (apart from Stephen Usher at Royal Holloway) in the field in the UK.

The author and text he chose for his first book, Andokides *On the Mysteries* (Oxford, 1962), reflected his sense of the potential of the orators as a complement to historiography. *On the Mysteries* deals at one remove with the notorious incident of the mutilation of the herms (stone tetragonal columns with a human head and genitals) which took place overnight not long before the sailing of the Athenian expedition against the city of Syracuse in Sicily in 415 BC. The atrocity (both because it had the potential to blight the expedition as a bad omen and because it smacked of conspiracy) triggered a witch hunt which had a convulsive effect on Athenian political life and probably doomed the expedition by removing the talented and mercurial Alkibiades from command. The incident is told briefly in the sixth book of Thucydides' history. Andokides was a whistleblower who revealed the names of some of the perpetrators and his speech *On the Mysteries* (which was written not at the time of the original

<sup>1</sup> M. Edwards and S. Usher, *Greek Orators I. Antiphon and Lysias* (Warminster, 1985).

<sup>2</sup> C. Carey and R. A. Reid, *Demosthenes: Selected Private Speeches* (Cambridge, 1985).

affair but for a subsequent political trial fifteen years or so later) both complements and disagrees with Thucydides on some key points.

MacDowell's work on Andokides led by a (retrospectively) natural route to his second project, which added a complementary strand to his research. While working on his commentary, he was reading the speeches of Andokides' contemporary, Antiphon (the Robespierre of Athenian politics), one of the key instigators of the coup which overthrew the Athenian democracy in 411. Antiphon was a professional writer of speeches for the courts and the corpus which survives is devoted to homicide cases. His reading alerted MacDowell to a gap both in the scholarship and in his own knowledge. He reflected that there was no book available to explain the intricacies of Athenian homicide law, a fascinating blend of religious and legal ritual remarkable for its complexity in a system which was characterised both by its relative simplicity and by its efficiency. The result was his second book, *Athenian Homicide Law in the Age of the Orators* (Manchester, 1963). The combination of oratory and law in MacDowell's interests bridges a perceptible divide in the scholarship. Though the orators are our most important source for the reconstruction of the Athenian legal system both in principle and in practice, there is a tendency for people to opt for oratory (often with rhetoric) or law as the primary focus of their study. MacDowell unusually was interested in and equally strong in both.

Of both these volumes, produced in a period of four years, he was later to recall with pride and amusement that they had been typed on a portable typewriter balanced on a coffee table (there was no desk) in his lodgings in Manchester. He subsequently felt that they had been written too hastily. Certainly by the standards of his later commentaries the Andokides volume is slim. It remains however the standard English language commentary after almost five decades (though Edwards's Aris and Phillips commentary has appeared in the interval to update the discussion and to make the text available to a wider audience<sup>3</sup>). And it is marked by MacDowell's careful attention to detail and his strong sense of historical context. The book on Athenian homicide law is tiny compared with the larger word counts in subsequent books on the subject. It is however a gem of a book, still read, still cited and an invaluable work to place in the hands of students. MacDowell always had a gift for presenting challenging subjects in lucid English which makes his work accessible to the novice without surrendering either grasp of detail or rigour of argument. It also inadvertently opened up a debate which was to run for decades, about the

<sup>3</sup> M. Edwards, *Andocides* (Warminster, 1995).

right to prosecute in Athenian homicide cases. The wisdom was, and is, that this right was confined to blood relatives of the victim (or masters in the case of slaves). MacDowell argued that while the obligation to prosecute was confined to blood relatives, the right was open to anyone. His view has stimulated a number of refutations (and some very good research) over four decades or so, including a monograph devoted to the subject.<sup>4</sup> The difficulty of delivering a single knock-down blow to MacDowell's suggestion serves as a useful reminder of the slender base for even (perhaps especially) our most confident and persistent statements about the ancient world. The debate also illustrates two aspects of MacDowell's character. The first is a willingness to grasp nettles. The second is a good-humoured acceptance of the provisionality of research (more rare than it should be); he was later to decide that the early MacDowell was wrong.

The homicide book was important in a more fundamental sense than its contribution to the study of a particular aspect of Athenian law. When MacDowell wrote, there was scarcely anyone writing on ancient Greek law in the UK, except for A. R. W. Harrison and (from a constitutional angle) Peter Rhodes. There is a long and distinguished tradition in mainland Europe. The towering works are in German (Lipsius, Ruschenbusch, Wolff), Italian (Paoli) or French (Gernet). All—and this is significant—were operating in an environment informed by the European systems of civil law. The USA had produced excellent researchers in the field of ancient law, particularly Bonner and Calhoun; but these were in the early decades of the twentieth century. The UK had had scholars working on the orators from a legal background (like Charles Rann Kennedy) but interest in law in itself was largely absent. In the past two decades scholars working in the Anglo-American common law system have established a distinct place in the discipline. MacDowell did not create this trend. But he did blaze a trail in recognising and demonstrating the intrinsic interest of Athenian law as a subject worthy of study for itself. And it is difficult to imagine the current level of interest in Athenian law without his intervention.

The book on homicide law was followed after a long interval by a more widely focused book which confirmed his lasting place in the study of Greek law. The first volume of A. R. W. Harrison's *The Law of Athens* had appeared in 1968.<sup>5</sup> This book, which deals with property, is magnificent. The second volume on procedure was incomplete on his death in 1969. MacDowell had agreed to write a book on Greek law for Scullard's

<sup>4</sup> A. Tulin, *Dike phonou: the Right of Prosecution and Attic Homicide Procedure* (Stuttgart, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> A. R. W. Harrison, *The Law of Athens*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1968, 1971).

*Aspects of Greek and Roman Life* series and was due to spend a term as Visiting Fellow at Merton College, which would offer an opportunity to discuss his ideas with Harrison, who was Warden there. Harrison's death ruled this out and MacDowell spent his time at Merton assembling Harrison's papers for publication as Volume 2 of *The Law of Athens*, which appeared in 1971. He was offered but declined the opportunity to complete the book as Harrison's co-author. He found Harrison's approach (derived from Roman law) uncongenial and old-fashioned and he preferred to continue with his own book as an independent project. The decision to go it alone was the right one. MacDowell's *The Law in Classical Athens* (London, 1978) is still three decades later the first port of call for anyone wishing to get a grip on the basics of the Athenian legal system. The book itself however is anything but basic. It is deeply grounded in the evidence (as the rich endnotes demonstrate) and covers the whole gamut of procedure and substance. But it wears its learning unostentatiously. MacDowell preferred lucidity to adornment. Though it goes unnoticed by the reader, this was a difficult book to write, far harder than it would be today, when anglophone scholarship on Athenian law has mushroomed. There was little available in English and MacDowell had to work through a substantial bibliography in German, a language for which he professed no great facility. The book on Athenian law was followed after a long interval by a volume on Spartan law in the Scottish Classical Studies series which MacDowell had instigated.<sup>6</sup> Reliable sources for Sparta are few (far fewer than Athens, our best—but still inadequately—documented state for the classical period) and reviews of the book were more mixed. MacDowell felt afterwards that his judgement had been correct but he did not return either to Spartan history or to Spartan law. The decades after the book on Athenian law saw a steady stream of articles and chapters on law. But his lasting monument in this field is the 1978 book, which still offers a no-nonsense introduction to the beginner or non-specialist while also remaining an essential point of reference for the expert. He was disappointed that the UK publisher did not opt for a paperback reprint. But it was published in paperback in the USA (Ithaca, NY, 1986), which has ensured its availability as a coursebook and its place on reading lists. His eminence in the field of ancient Greek law was recognised in invitations from Hans Julius Wolff from the 1970s to participate in the triennial (subsequently biennial) international colloquia on ancient law (published as

<sup>6</sup> *Spartan Law* (*Scottish Classical Studies No. 1*) (Edinburgh, 1986).

the *Symposion* series) which he initiated and which MacDowell attended frequently from 1982.

Among the papers on Athenian law, one in particular is worth singling out as showing the calm nettle-grasping side of MacDowell. It is a piece produced while he was preparing the Athenian law book.<sup>7</sup> It was destined to have a long and controversial shelf-life. For most readers of ancient Greek texts, *hybris* was (often still is) predominantly a theological notion, the pride which comes from excessive prosperity, prompting a man to misperceive his own significance and offend against the gods. The notion has entered the collective consciousness and is now ineradicable. But it is derived largely from tragedy and is actually applicable only to a small minority of surviving plays. And it is not the way the word works in most contexts, especially but not exclusively lawcourt speeches. The reference is usually secular and relates to dealings between humans; it generally covers abusive, frequently but not inevitably physical (especially violent), mistreatment (including sexual abuse). In classical Athens it was a crime, but notoriously one which the law left to common-sense definition by the juries (the law said: 'If someone commits *hybris* ...'). MacDowell's 1976 paper in *Greece and Rome* sought to revise this picture and relocate *hybris* within inter-human conduct and within the legal system. Nick Fisher, who had independently been working on a monograph on *hybris*,<sup>8</sup> also published on it in the same volume of *Greece and Rome*,<sup>9</sup> offering an alternative interpretation. As Stephen Todd has memorably observed,<sup>10</sup> where MacDowell located *hybris* in the psychology of the perpetrator (excessive behaviour caused by surfeit—of money, drink, energy), Fisher located it in the sociology of the victim (loss of face in an honour-sensitive society). As well as good evidentiary support, both positions have their limitations (especially when one tries to turn fine differences into substantive law in a legal system where precise definitions play only a very circumscribed role) and subsequent writers have tended to look for a middle ground. But these papers continue to form the frame within which the debate takes place.

As with law, Athenian oratory (especially Demosthenes) remained a passionate interest. In 1990 he published a commentary on the speech against Meidias (*Demosthenes, Against Meidias (Oration 21)*) with Oxford

<sup>7</sup> "Hybris" in Athens', *Greece and Rome*, 23 (1976), 14–31.

<sup>8</sup> N. R. E. Fisher, *Hybris: a Study in the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece* (Warminster, 1992).

<sup>9</sup> N. R. E. Fisher, 'Hybris and dishonour I', *Greece and Rome*, 23 (1976), 177–93.

<sup>10</sup> S. C. Todd, *A Commentary on Lysias, Speeches 1–11, Part 1* (Oxford, 2007), p. 92, n. 8.

University Press (subsequently reprinted by Bristol Classical Press in 2002). Like his other work this commentary blends meticulous scholarship with accessibility. Unusually for its day (but almost obligatory now) it included a translation facing the Greek text. As well as allowing the commentary to do its work more efficiently (since translation is often the best comment on linguistic minutiae), this move also acknowledged that the work would be used by readers with limited Greek or even with no Greek at all. The scholarship is visible not only in the detailed comments on matters of language, style, text, law and history but also in the care devoted to producing the text. Collations of manuscripts in previous editions had been limited. Acknowledging that it was not feasible to collate all, MacDowell still consulted forty-seven of the medieval manuscripts. He also devoted part of the introduction to the still contentious issue of the authenticity of the evidentiary documents (laws, depositions etc.) which survive in the medieval manuscripts of some Demosthenic forensic speeches (and intermittently in the manuscripts of other orators). The topic had received no serious attention since the nineteenth century. MacDowell revisited the subject of the line numbering which survives in some manuscripts to conclude (as had others) that the documents were added to the text after the stichometric edition was completed. The documents (which were read out by the clerk during the hearing, not by the litigant) appeared to have been introduced from another (possibly archive) source. His further conclusion (typically sensible) echoed that of Drerup at the end of the nineteenth century that there is no single answer to the question of authenticity; each document has to be taken on its merits. A second and equally impressive commentary on Demosthenes, *On the False Embassy*, was published (again with Oxford University Press) in 2000. The commentary covers the speech delivered by Demosthenes in 343 BC in his prosecution of his enemy Aischines for (allegedly) betraying Athens' interests as envoy to Philip II of Macedon in 346. Here as often before MacDowell was drawn to the gaps in the research; he selected the speech because it receives less attention than the later *On the Crown* (considered since antiquity to be Demosthenes' masterpiece). The book shares the strengths of its predecessor, including both a chalcenic engagement with and a magisterial treatment of the medieval manuscripts. A smaller commentary (again with translation) on the *Encomium of Helen* by Gorgias of Leontinoi was published by Bristol Classical Press in 1982. Though on a more modest scale than his other commentaries, the work reflects both his capacity to reach different audiences and his continuing concern to provide for teaching needs (it arose from a course on oratory

which he taught at Glasgow). He also found time to contribute two volumes to the series of annotated translations of the Greek orators edited by Michael Gagarin and published through University of Texas Press, the first volume with Gagarin in 1998 (on Antiphon and Andokides,<sup>11</sup> of which he contributed the Andokides section, revisiting his first research project), and a further volume on speeches 27–38 of the modern editions of Demosthenes (devoted to the cases relating to his own inheritance and a number of private actions for which he acted as professional speechwriter), which appeared in 2004.<sup>12</sup>

His final work was again on oratory and was devoted to Demosthenes.<sup>13</sup> It was produced at a time when his health was already poor and he was often tired, a testimony (as a former student observes) to his ‘inner steel’. Two recent anglophone books have addressed the corpus of fifth- and fourth-century oratory in its entirety.<sup>14</sup> But Demosthenes certainly merits a dedicated volume. He has of course attracted a great deal of interest from the direction of political history. But the only recent monograph on the speeches was devoted to style.<sup>15</sup> In depth MacDowell’s *Demosthenes* sits in the tradition of the monumental *Die attische Beredsamkeit* of Friedrich Blass. The book eschews the option of following Demosthenes’ career as a simple chronological narrative, though introductory chapters deal both with Athenian oratory in general and Demosthenes’ life and work in particular. The bulk of the volume is organised thematically by type of case/occasion, offering background information, summary and comments on the argument of each speech. Part of Demosthenes’ career was spent as a hired speechwriter (*logographos*) for the courts; this trade (though popular with litigants, as the number of surviving examples suggests) was subject to a degree of disapproval in a system which viewed legal professionalism with suspicion and aspired to equality before the law (whatever the reality) and the speeches were generally written anonymously. As a result the Demosthenic corpus contains a number of speeches whose authorship is contentious, some of which are probably or certainly spurious. MacDowell’s book addresses the whole corpus, including contentious speeches whose authenticity he accepts (such as the funeral oration allegedly delivered for the dead in the battle of Chaironeia), those on

<sup>11</sup> M. Gagarin and D. M. MacDowell, *Antiphon and Andocides* (Austin, TX, 1998).

<sup>12</sup> *Demosthenes, Speeches 27–38* (Austin, TX, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> *Demosthenes* (Oxford, 2009).

<sup>14</sup> S. Usher, *Greek Oratory: Tradition and Originality* (Oxford, 1999) and M. Edwards, *The Attic Orators* (London, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> L. Pearson, *The Art of Demosthenes* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1976).

which he is agnostic or suspicious (as the *Erotikos* which appears as the sixty-first speech in modern editions) and even those where he accepts modern arguments for misattribution (especially the set of speeches certainly or probably delivered—and written—by Apollodoros the son of Pasion). It is a fitting last work, since it distils his reading of and on Demosthenes, who had established himself as MacDowell's favourite orator (as he was for most readers in antiquity); like all of his preceding work, it is written with the reader and not the writer in mind and is designed to offer an introduction in each case to aid the reading of the text. It is destined to remain the gateway to Demosthenes' oratory (as distinct from his politics) for anglophone students for the next three decades or more.

The third strand of his research reflected his early interests at school and university. In 1971 he published a commentary on Aristophanes' *Wasps* in a series for which Kenneth Dover was general editor.<sup>16</sup> Fifth-century comedy is so inseparably embedded in its context that it cannot be read without constant recourse to its social and political environment. So Aristophanes also appealed to MacDowell's interest in Athenian history. There had been some uncertainty whether his project would be *Wasps* or *Lysistrata*. The outcome was the right one. Editing and annotating *Wasps* with its plot focus on the Athenian legal system played to MacDowell's established research strengths; the sexual theme of *Lysistrata* was less to his taste. Good commentaries have a long life and the *Wasps* commentary, now forty years old, has weathered handsomely. It deals lucidly and succinctly with text, staging, humour, style, historical and legal *Realia*. Here as in his work on the orators the textual judgements show the hallmark MacDowell style as an editor and textual critic. His approach is essentially common-sense conservatism, marked by a readiness to accept the manuscript tradition in defiance of dogma where it can be made to yield sense, neither cavalier nor credulous. As with oratory and law, the love of Aristophanes stayed with him throughout his career. It continued in a steady stream of articles and reviews over the years, to culminate in a monograph, *Aristophanes and Athens* (Oxford, 1995). The volume offers (after a chapter on the early lost plays, elusive but important both for our sense of Aristophanes' development and for our understanding of the evolution of fifth-century comedy), a reading of each of the surviving plays in chronological order. The title reflects his interests—not just Aristophanes but Aristophanes in his historical context. Comic scholarship is prolific. But there are very few books like this which one can place in the hands of

<sup>16</sup> *Aristophanes, Wasps, Edited with Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford, 1971).

students to take them into the text and context in a readable and approachable way without either superficiality or flash.

Many would be satisfied to have made the mark he did in any one of the fields which he researched. To achieve the scale and quality of Douglas MacDowell's output in three distinct fields of classical scholarship is a remarkable achievement. The long shelf-life of his early research and the guaranteed longevity of his subsequent scholarship is a legacy which speaks for itself.

The love of theatre fostered by his mother remained with him throughout his life and he would regularly visit the London theatres. In his youth he had travelled little: a family holiday with his parents to Norway in 1948, a three-week holiday in Gibraltar as a prize for an essay competition run by the Overseas League in 1950, a trip to Greece while still an undergraduate with Martin Frederiksen in 1953. He made up for this in later life. Apart from travel on academic business, one of his favourite pastimes was to visit museums and art-galleries and (importantly) opera houses in the major cultural centres of Europe—Rome, Florence, Venice, Vienna, Verona, Paris, as well as Covent Garden in London—especially in the company of his close friend and colleague, Costas Panayotakis. He remained firmly European in focus, with visits to the USA confined to academic conferences and otherwise a trip to Tangier from Gibraltar in 1950 his only ventures beyond.

Though his early shyness never left him, he was a generous friend and a kind and courteous host. The word 'gentleman' recurs in comments from those who encountered him. Though he was both aware and justifiably proud of his achievements, he was always (unduly) modest about his abilities, despite his eminence. He was (without affectation) both surprised by and appreciative of the evidence of esteem he received, not only the election to the Royal Society of Edinburgh and to the British Academy but also and especially—and more personally—the conference held in his honour on his retirement (whose proceedings were subsequently published<sup>17</sup>), which was attended by colleagues from around the world, including to his great pleasure his former research students and his teacher of fifty years previously, Sir Kenneth Dover. He remained to the end a private man who knew how to keep his counsel. A researcher who interviewed him toward the end of his life was struck by the contrast between the discreet MacDowell and the brutal honesty of Kenneth Dover, observing: 'When I

<sup>17</sup>D. L. Cairns and R. Knox (eds.), *Law, Rhetoric and Comedy in Classical Athens: Essays in Honour of Douglas M. MacDowell* (Cardiff, 2004).

talked to MacDowell I felt I was facing Alec Guinness/George Smiley: I was telling him everything, he was telling me nothing.' I think Douglas would have been both amused and pleased.

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