

D. M. MACDOWELL †

Douglas MacDowell was born in London on 8 March 1931, and educated in Classics at Highgate School and at Balliol College Oxford, where he graduated with a double first (Mods 1952, Greats 1954). He worked for a few years initially as a schoolteacher, but took up his first University post at Manchester (where he was successively Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, and then Reader, all in the space of 1958-1971), before being appointed at the unusually young age of forty as Professor of Greek at Glasgow, a post which he held for thirty years until retirement (1971-2001). Despite increasing ill-health, which made it impossible for him to travel to the 2009 Symposium, he remained active as a scholar throughout his retirement until shortly before his death on January 16, 2010.

MacDowell's scholarly output is perhaps best seen as comprising three separable strands: Attic oratory, Aristophanic comedy, and Athenian law. These strands were, however, often interconnected. It is notable for instance that his first major work on comedy was an edition and commentary on Aristophanes' *Wasps* (OUP 1971), a play which is best known for its extended parodies of lawcourt procedure, though his subsequent book on *Aristophanes and Athens* (OUP 1995) dealt equally with all the extant plays.

Perhaps the highlight of his work on the Athenian orators was his three substantial commentaries on particular speeches, beginning with an early study of Andokides' speech *On the Mysteries* (Andok. 1, OUP 1962), and followed somewhat later by two magisterial volumes on Demosthenes' *Against Meidias* (Dem. 21, OUP 1990) and on the same orator's *On the False Embassy* (Dem. 21, OUP 2000). Each of these displays to powerful effect his grasp of the language of the Greek text, and his ability to use this to disentangle the nuances of the argument, as well as his comprehensive knowledge of previous scholarship particularly on legal problems. The two Demosthenes commentaries are notable also for the inclusion of a facing translation that is linguistically graceful while remaining close enough to the text to serve as an exegetical tool; his wider work as a translator included two contributions to the University of Texas Press's *Oratory of Classical Greece* series (the four speeches of Andokides alongside Gagarin's Antiphon in 1998, and Demosthenes 27-38 as a free-standing volume in 2004). There were also article-length studies: two of his Symposium papers were on the authenticity of Demosthenes 29 as a source of information about Athenian law (*Symp.* 1985), and a reading of Lysias 9, which he entitled "The case of the rude soldier" (*Symp.* 1993). But Demosthenes was perhaps the one of the orators that most interested him, and it is fitting that his final book, which he lived just long enough to see, was a general study of *Demosthenes the Orator* (OUP 2009), in which the latter's career and all the speeches were covered systematically.

Of most interest to readers of this volume, however, will be MacDowell's work on Athenian law. Following the death of A. R. W. Harrison,¹ he remained the leading (and for many years the only) UK scholar working in this field. Notable among his books are the early volume on *Athenian Homicide Law in the Age of the Orators* (Manchester Univ. Press 1963), which for all its brevity remains the starting-point for all aspects of this area of law, and his handbook on *The Law of Classical Athens* (Thames & Hudson 1978), which is by some way the most readable broad survey of the field. His wider interest in the legal history of the Greek *poleis* led him to produce an adventurous if perhaps not wholly successful volume on *Spartan Law* (Edinburgh University Press, 1986). There were also many articles. He attended his first meeting of the *Symposion* for ancient Greek and Hellenistic law in 1982, and was regularly invited thereafter, though there were a few years especially in the second half of the 1990s when he turned down these invitations because he was at that time working primarily on Aristophanes. In total, he contributed papers to seven of the *Symposion* volumes (1982, 1985, 1990, 1993, 2001, 2003, 2007). Several of these, as noted above, dealt with the interpretation of particular texts and the legal problems resulting from them, which was one of his greatest strengths, as somebody whose perspective was primarily that of a philologist rather than a jurist. But he was also highly skilled at collecting, sifting and unpicking the disparate evidence for overlapping legal statutes in particular areas of law or legal procedure, as evidenced by his papers on "Athenian laws about choruses" (*Symp. 1982*), or "Mining cases in Athenian law" (*Symp. 2003*), or "The Athenian procedure of *dokimasia* of orators" (*Symp. 2001*).

MacDowell received many academic honours, most notably election as Fellow of the British Academy in 1993.

Stephen C. Todd, Manchester

¹ It is perhaps worth noting here the editorial work which MacDowell undertook in preparing the posthumous second volume of Harrison's *Law of Athens* (OUP 1971) for publication following the latter's death in 1969: it is typical of MacDowell's generosity that the book was published under Harrison's name alone.