

NOTES & VARIA

NECROLOGICA

1. Professor Donald Russell FBA, born 13 October 1920, died 9 February 2020*

Soon after the war the young Donald Russell, still fairly fresh from his military service at Bletchley Park, was faced with a choice: should he accept an Oxford research fellowship in Classics or a lectureship elsewhere in Ancient Philosophy? A mentor told him it was a choice between Virtue and Vice, but unfortunately did not make clear which was which. Donald chose Classics and Oxford, and less than a year later was elected tutorial fellow at St John's in Greek and Latin languages and literature. When he died at the age of 99 he had held his fellowship for more than 71 years, the longest term known in the college's history. That choice also reflects the qualities that typified his later work, a sure grasp of language, a sensitive feeling for literature, and a fascination with the thinking that underlay ancient philosophy. He added to these a humane and gentle sociability, and his pupils adored him: the St John's Classics society is now 'the Russell Society'.

For Plutarchans, it is of interest that Russell began work at that early time on Plutarch's essay *On the Daimonion of Socrates*, discussing that inner 'sign' that Socrates so prized as a guide to conduct. For many years he laid this aside, but he returned to it in retirement, and his work was the core of a 2010 collected volume. Plutarch remained a lifelong interest, and a series of seminal articles in the 1960s was followed in 1972 by a general book, ranging authoritatively as few scholars can over both Plutarch's moral essays and the *Parallel Lives*. These have proved immensely influential, launching a renaissance of Plutarch studies including, *inter alia*, the journal *Ploutarchos* n.s. in which this obituary is being recorded. The forthcoming *Cambridge Companion to Plutarch* includes a chapter by him on Plutarch's style, and the volume will now be dedicated to his memory.

The 1960s also saw a deepening interest in the ways that ancient critics themselves thought about their literature, especially about style and rhetoric. His edition with commentary of *On the Sublime*, attributed to Longinus, came out in 1964 and remains a standard work; later works included *Ancient Literary*

* Adapted from the 29 March 2020 obituary by CHRISTOPHER PELLING in the *Daily Telegraph*. See also the Obituary published by CHR. PELLING & M. WINTERBOTTOM in the *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the British Academy*, XIX, 213–229, posted 7 July 2020. © British Academy 2020 (<https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publishing/memoirs/19/russell-donald-1920-2020/>), as well as the Memorial page created by the St. John's College, Oxford, (<https://www.sjc.ox.ac.uk/discover/about-college/in-memoriam/donald-russell/>).

Criticism (with Michael Winterbottom 1972), *Criticism in Antiquity* (1981), *Menander Rhetor* (with Nigel Wilson, 1981), and *Greek Declamation* (1983), the book he said he enjoyed writing most. More books followed after his retirement in 1988, well on into the 2010s: particularly notable is his five-volume translation of Quintilian (2001).

He became a Fellow of the British Academy in 1971, and in Oxford was promoted to a readership in 1978 and a personal chair in 1985. His friends and pupils marked his seventy-fifth birthday with a *Festschrift*, marking his distinctive interests by its title *Ethics and Rhetoric* (1995). His pedagogic style was indeed to respect and foster whatever strengths they might have, while gently offering corrections and supplements that they might – and did – use as they chose. He continued to teach, with pupils coming to learn prose and verse composition; every year he wrote his own sparkling versions of the passages set for university prizes, and so really every year's prize should have gone to him. He was busy to the end.

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2. Ricordo del Professore Federicomaria Muccoli (8 dicembre 1965 - 14 maggio 2020)

Federicomaria Muccoli, professore ordinario di Storia Greca nel Dipartimento di Storia Cultura Civiltà dell'Alma Mater Università di Bologna si è spento il 14 maggio 2020 a Rimini, dove era nato 54 anni fa. Una malattia non guaribile ne aveva minato la salute dal 2014, ma la

sua tempra fisica, un carattere forte e un senso del dovere poco comune non ne hanno mai fermato o rallentato la partecipazione alla vita accademica, né l'attività di ricerca, eccezionalmente intensa, feconda e da lui tanto amata. Le precarie condizioni di salute tanto meno poi gli hanno impedito di proseguire in questi anni l'insegnamento in tutti i livelli previsti: si è speso fino agli ultimi giorni, potremmo dire fino alle ultime ore della sua vita, per insegnare e far amare la storia antica a tantissimi allievi, dai più giovani studenti del triennio di Lettere, ai giovani dei corsi magistrali di storiografia greca e storia ellenistica, fino ai dottorandi e post-dottorandi, cui si era dedicato prima a Roma Tor Vergata poi, anche come Coordinatore del dottorato in Scienze Storiche e Archeologiche, a Bologna.

Muccoli si era laureato nell'ateneo felsineo in Lettere classiche nel 1988 e qui ha trascorso la sua vita di studioso, lavorando prima come ricercatore poi come professore associato sia nella sede di Ravenna sia in quella bolognese, nel Dipartimento di Storia Antica prima e poi nell'attuale: alla storia infatti lo aveva condotto la sua vocazione agli studi del mondo antico, fondata su una cultura classica precocemente matura. Per affrontarne la conoscenza si costruì nel tempo una solida e ampia competenza che gli ha consentito in seguito di sviluppare temi di ricerca complessi e, in più di un caso, estremamente raffinati, attraverso la familiarità con la documentazione epigrafica e numismatica, oltre che al dominio di opere storiografiche antiche e moderne, sovente dimenticate o poco frequentate.