

# Roger David Dawe

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On 17 February 2020 the sad death of Roger Dawe was reported. He and I had shared the great good fortune of having the legendary Dennis Page for our Supervisor in our first research, Dawe in the first three years of his time (1957-63) as a Research Fellow at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and I as a Research Student at the same College from 1959-60. It was Page who suggested to me the subject of my research, and who, on my departure in 1960 to the University of Glasgow, continued to read and comment unofficially on everything that I wrote, on one occasion even from his hospital bed when he was seriously ill. Dawe and I agreed from the very beginning that there could never be a better supervisor than Page. I had also the advantage of Dawe's seniority to me, in that, having started earlier, he was able to guide me as to what 'research' meant and what libraries were for.

In 1963 Dawe moved to Trinity College as a Teaching Fellow, and in 1964 his doctoral dissertation, in, as he put it, 'an expurgated version', was published under the title *The Collation and Investigation of Manuscripts of Aeschylus*. The effect upon the scholarly world was startling. He showed how the traditional assumptions about the relationship between manuscripts was flawed, and that his own collations must replace those 'of all other editions in print'. The result is that the apparatus criticus of any more recent edition of Aeschylus (except for those with only one manuscript) looks very different from those published before him. Almost as essential for the editor of Aeschylus is the *Repertory of Conjectures on Aeschylus*, which Dawe published in 1965 to bring up to date a similar collection which appeared in 1885 and was enlarged in 1893. Next, Dawe turned his attention to Sophocles, with, among other things, a work on Sophocles' text in three volumes, and a Commentary on his *Oedipus Tyrannus*. His publications, both books and articles in learned journals, were

many and varied. One of the latest (1993) is the very large volume, *The Odyssey: Translation and Analysis*. One could wish that he had not retired from the University so early.

Dawe has for long had a worldwide reputation as a scholar. He has been a visiting professor at the Universities of Harvard, Illinois, and Colorado. In 1979 the distinguished Austrian scholar Albin Lesky said that he was “one of the best of the present generation of philologists”. A learned American wrote that he was “Cambridge’s most distinguished Hellenist”. He held strong opinions, often in opposition to those current at the time, and he was not afraid to voice them. For example, the cover of his Homer book rightly warns the reader that “Professional Hellenists may well find this book controversial”, before going on to claim that “there can be no doubt that this clear statement of the obstacles to belief in a single composer of the *Odyssey* will lead to fruitful discussion”, etc. What he writes or says is always interesting, whether it is revolutionary or not, and often amusing and entertaining.

Finally, Dawe was a most congenial companion. I shall always remember the time spent together as we enjoyed the friendly hospitality of Italian colleagues at conferences held in that country which he loved so much.<sup>1</sup>

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**1** Pubblichiamo questo ricordo di Roger Dawe, scritto da una persona che gli fu collega ed amico. È nostra intenzione ritornare, nel prossimo numero della rivista, su questa straordinaria personalità di uomo e di filologo che ha lasciato un segno memorabile nella storia dei nostri studi.