

JOYCE REYNOLDS



That Joyce Reynolds will celebrate her 75th birthday in December 1993 will be hard to believe for many of those who are still working with her on the many projects on which she is engaged; but this is an appropriate moment for the Society to offer her its greetings and its thanks for all that she has done — as an active member, as a frequent contributor to the *Journal*, and as President (1986–9) — and is still doing for the Society and for Roman studies.

Joyce and her contemporaries represent the youngest of the generation of scholars whose studies were interrupted by the demands of the Second World War. It must have seemed interminable, and particularly for those, such as Joyce, who were called into public service as soon as they had graduated; but five years in the Civil Service certainly left her with a sense of the practicalities of government, of how things work, which has remained characteristic of her analysis of ancient history.

The interruption of the war meant that Joyce came later to field-work than many scholars in the present generation; and that may well have its benefits. Working with John Ward-Perkins and Richard Goodchild (among others) she developed a masterly sense of inscriptions as objects, to be understood and assessed within their archaeological environment. She brings to epigraphy a combination of common sense and determination which again and again enables her to unravel the most recalcitrant of graffiti; hard years with the rock-cut funerary

inscriptions of Cyrenaica have produced an amazing flair for reading the unreadable. But for all these practical skills, and perhaps because she only came to the field later, she is first and foremost a historian; among the most individual and recalcitrant of stones she never loses sight of the historical framework within which they must be read.

The other common experience of the generation who graduated as the war began was that of being cut off from the rest of the world for six years. As soon as it became possible, in 1946, Joyce was off to the British School at Rome; but she has retained a very real appreciation of the value of links with scholars abroad which is perhaps in danger of being lost by a more mobile generation. To travel with Joyce is to follow up a network of friends — and old pupils — across the world. When the epigraphers — a group of scholars not renowned for their mutual goodwill — hold their quinquennial conference, Joyce is greeted and embraced with deep affection by scholars from a dozen countries; for her, scholarship is a calling to membership of an international fraternity, rather than a call to arms.

Her strong sense that to work abroad, and with foreign scholars, is both a pleasure and a real privilege, which also conveys serious obligations, helps to explain why Joyce has been so well received in so many countries, and above all in Libya, where she has worked virtually every year since her first visit in 1946. It has been a profound mutual relationship. Her contributions to the history of Roman Libya, from the *Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania* onwards, are well known; and in her work one can also see what she has drawn from there. Spending her formative years of research in a country which combines within its borders the easternmost Latin-speaking with the westernmost Greek-speaking Roman province ensured that she has never been seduced by one half of the Roman Empire. Even at Aphrodisias, where it is easy to be intoxicated by the flood of Greek inscribed (it sometimes seems) on every flat surface, she has never lost sight of the city's role as part of the larger empire; that insight is of course exemplified in the magisterial *Aphrodisias and Rome*, but it also pervades her work on the Diocletianic Edicts, on the major Jewish inscription, and on a host of other material from the site.

Joyce in her scholarship never loses sight of the diversity of the Roman world; and it is that sense which leads her to characteristic caution and care in all that she writes. Anyone brave enough to send her a draft will receive it back with the margin generously filled with comment; and at the heart of those comments is a warning against the temptation to impose one's own intellectual pattern on the evidence. Again and again she detects and subverts attempts to force the recalcitrant facts into a pattern, however elegant; and, above all, she does not accept haste as a justification for such activities. It is of course this approach that has made her such a very influential teacher — an influence which could only be partly reflected in the volume of essays in her honour by a group of her old pupils, *Images of Authority*. She gave — and still gives — her pupils infinite patience, and consideration as separate individuals; she does not try to force them into a correct mould any more than she allows them to do that with the historical evidence. She has, and conveys, a very strong sense of a commonwealth of learning, of a wide range of diverse individuals contributing to the richness of the subject; it is perhaps rooted in the collegiate tradition, and in that very particular form of it which has in the past characterized the women's colleges — particularly Somerville (her own college) and Newnham (her college since 1951). For her, scholarship is not a lonely path up the mountain; instead, her publications are characterized by the enormous number of acknowledgements of those whom she has consulted. That is a model of the world of learning which is not wholly fashionable at the moment. Models of competitive endeavour, which are being pressed upon us, are perhaps particularly dangerous if they transform scholarly criticism into an exercise in *πλεονεξία*. We owe a particular debt to those who continue to demonstrate that there are other ways of doing things, and we can rely on Joyce to remind us, with a characteristic combination of astringency and affection, where our calling lies.

Πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη.

C.R.