

Dedication

PROFESSOR JAMES ALEXANDER DOULL

Dionysius provides an uniquely appropriate context within which to honour the memory and intellectual labours of James Doull. He was a founding editor of *Dionysius* as the publication of the Dalhousie Department of Classics. He wanted it to be a distinctively Canadian journal, not narrowly focused on some aspect of antiquity but instead publishing articles "which may be regarded as a contribution to the understanding and criticism of contemporary culture and its antique origins." Doull was a member of the Department from 1947 until his retirement in 1983, its Chair for eleven years (1959 – 1970), and instrumental in creating a focus in the curriculum which is not only unique in Canada but worldwide. Largely because of his innovations, the Dalhousie Department flourished, while many other Classics departments across the country were closed down, their members placed in History, Comparative Religion or Anthropology departments. When Doull was Chair, the Dalhousie Department acted in the confidence that young students, who sought to understand their world, were prepared to step outside of the skin of their immediate age, so far as was possible, in order to understand their world in its literary, philosophical and historical origins. The study of antiquity, in his view, was dead if students were to be invited to learn only what is frozen in the particularity of the past. Their interest could only be won if the way forward was understood to be at the same time the way backward. The success of his labours in the Department is embodied in its many graduates, whether professors, clergy, lawyers or whatever, who, despite their diverse interests, find in the study of the Classics a centre. Doull was passionately a Canadian because he believed that Canadians were capable of a disinterested relation to philosophy that was not possible in the United States or Europe. *Dionysius*, in the spirit of James Doull, has provided a forum that is Canadian in its origin but international in the interest it has generated.

Perhaps what was most remarkable about Doull was his unwavering, unconditional devotion to Lady Philosophy. It is hard to imagine that someone like Doull would be possible today. In 1941 he completed his M.A. at the University of Toronto under the supervision of Charles Norris Cochrane, whom he regarded as his most influential teacher. He then entered the doctoral programme in Classics at Harvard University. Although he passed the comprehensives for his doctorate, he never completed the degree, partly because he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Navy during what he always called the 'Hitler War', but perhaps more significantly because he was thoroughly disenchanted with the approach which Werner Jaeger and others at Harvard

brought to the study of ancient philosophy. Rather than return to complete his studies at Harvard after the war, he took up the Rhodes Scholarship he had been awarded in 1940 and went to Oxford University to study the natural sciences, mathematics and philosophy. He never completed a degree at Oxford. Doull was appointed to the Classics Department at Dalhousie in 1947. Apart from a book review which was published in the *Canadian Journal of Theology* in 1967, his first articles began to appear only after 1970 when he was fifty-two years old. He never published a book. His academic career up to 1970 might appear to be better characterized as a succession of misadventures, aimless wanderings, than as a period of productive scholarly work. The problem with James Doull is that he was consistently guided throughout his life by what seemed the necessary and rational thing to do in a way that bears comparison to the spirit which animated Socrates. During his seemingly unproductive period, he had studied Greek, Latin, Italian, German, French, Russian, and Persian literary and philosophical texts in their original languages in the uncompromising way that he considered the subject matter required. It has often been remarked that he not only understood what he had read but that he remembered it all. Specialists in ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary literature and philosophy found in Doull someone at home in the texts on which they were working as if their particular field of study were his only area of research. During the period from 1970 to his death on March 16, 2001, Professor Doull produced articles on ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary authors and topics. In 1996, he was co-founder of an electronic journal, *Animus*. A number of his recent articles have appeared in that journal.

His published and unpublished writings are preserved in the James Alexander Doull Archive, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Managing Editor, David Peddle. A number of his recent articles, together with commentaries by scholars who have worked closely with him, have been collected in a forthcoming book appropriately called *Philosophy and Freedom: The Legacy of James Doull*.

D.K.H.