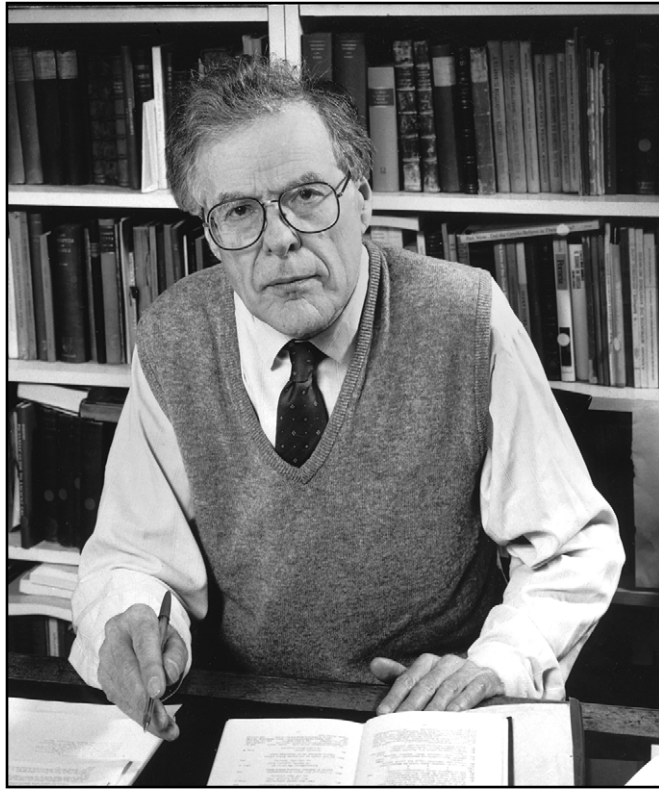

SIR HUGH LLOYD-JONES



THOMAS-PHOTOS, OXFORD

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SIR (PETER) HUGH (JEFFERD) LLOYD-JONES, Regius Professor of Greek Emeritus in the University of Oxford, died in Wellesley, Massachusetts, on 5 October 2009, at the age of eighty-seven. He is survived by his first wife, Frances Hedley, and their children, Edmund, Ralph, and Antonia; and by his second wife, Mary Lefkowitz.

Hugh Lloyd-Jones, born on 21 September 1922, came from a military family, but had his education at the Lycée Français in London and then at Westminster School. He thought of becoming a historian; it was, he said, the teaching of John Christie at Westminster that converted him to Classics, and it was the classical course (“Greats”) on which he embarked at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1940. Military service interrupted his undergraduate career: in this he learned Japanese, and was stationed at Delhi and later on the Burmese border. Back in Oxford, and recovering from tuberculosis, he graduated in 1948 and began his academic career as fellow of Jesus College Cambridge. From there he returned to Oxford as praelector in Classics at Corpus Christi College (1954), and then as Regius Professor of Greek from 1960 to 1989, during which time he held also visiting professorships at Yale (twice), Berkeley, Chicago, and Harvard. He became a fellow of the British Academy in 1966, a member of the American Philosophical Society in 1992; on his retirement he received the honour of knighthood. Once relieved of professorial duties, he made his home largely in Wellesley, with his wife Mary Lefkowitz. There he continued to work vigorously until, in his last two years, his health failed. His seventy-fifth birthday was celebrated by a conference in Oxford, with papers by many of his pupils, published as *Sophocles Revisited* (1999).

Greek literature covers a wide field; and the variety of Lloyd-Jones’s interests can be gauged from the three volumes of his *Academic Papers* (1–2: 1990; 3: 2005). Greek tragedy formed one focus. One of his first published papers concerned “Zeus in Aeschylus” (1956); he re-edited the new papyrus fragments of the poet for a volume in the Loeb Classical Library (1957), and produced a successful translation of the *Oresteia* (1970). Aeschylus was central also to his Sather Lectures, *The Justice of Zeus* (1971), which argue that Aeschylus’ “theology” is the elaborate expression of a primitive fatalism, not the monotheism *avant la lettre* so dear to the Victorians—a fatalism that the scholar shared with the poet. (“Life is pointless,” he once said, “so we may as well do what we do.”) Later he would devote himself to Sophocles, the master of complex simplicity: a critical Greek text, and two volumes of adversaria, in collaboration with Nigel Wilson (1990, 1997), and the complete works for the Loeb Classical Library (1994–96). However, he felt equal interest for the archaic baroque of Pindar, and the devious

modernism of Callimachus. Pindar, and his Orphism, and his modern interpreters, brought forth magisterial papers. Callimachus' fragments, and those of other fragmentary poets of the third century BC and after, provided the material of the substantial *Supplementum Hellenisticum* (1983, with Peter Parsons), to which he added his own further supplement in 2005.

The Justice of Zeus is Lloyd-Jones's only monograph. Others trudged the marathon; he was the master of the sprint. New texts and special problems brought out the best of his learning and his intuition. An age prolific in papyri and inscriptions gave him ample scope, beginning with the newly discovered *Dyscolus* of Menander (1960). He was to intervene decisively in the interpretation of literary papyri old and new: the Alcaeus of Cologne, Pindar's "Law the king of all," Menander's *Sicyonius*, *Aspis*, and *Samia*, Callimachus' *Hecale*, Posidippus' "Seal," a new Hellenistic poem that threatens the poet's enemies with tattooing, even a new inscription from Halicarnassus, whose author describes in verse the cultural glories of his homeland. Taken together, the papers offer an unrivalled experience of classical scholarship at full tilt, technical virtuosity united with literary and historical imagination.

The same focused brilliance characterises his many essays directed to a wider public, collected in *Classical Survivals* and *Blood for the Ghosts* (1982) and in *Greek in a Cold Climate* (1991). These pieces, about classical authors, classical scholars, and the reception of Classics in the European tradition, combine crisp style and brisk judgment with a wide knowledge of literary and intellectual history. Germany had for him a special fascination, and professional Germanists have told me how much they too have learned from the brilliant overviews of its culture to be found in his essays and reviews (see for example *Classical Papers* 3, section 6).

As Regius Professor for twenty-nine years he invigorated his faculty. His wide scholarly contacts brought many academic visitors, and opened many doors, even in France. His seminars, however alarming ("I don't know," said a student — "Well, you ought to know," replied the professor), introduced a generation of graduate students to the criticism and elucidation of Greek texts; his many doctoral pupils found in him a kindly mentor as well as a strenuous master, who regularly referred to a fledgling dissertation as "your book." Seminars and lectures alike conveyed not just learning and insight, but a vital enthusiasm for a living inheritance, well spiced with odium philologicum. Those who knew him will not forget the nervous gestures and the sibilant vehemence: my first introduction to papyrology came from a lecture in which Hugh dwelt with relish on "all those boxes *stuffed* with the *treasures* of Oxyrhynchus."

In the college that we shared, I came to know him quite well. Hugh liked to form a nice classical corner at lunch; he knew that a large scotch at 11 a.m. brought out the best in scholarly discussion. I observed him, of course, with the usual question: how does a great scholar get to be great? There was the incisive intelligence and the prodigious memory; there was also the ferocious concentration that allowed him to gut a book and write the review in a single sitting. At meetings of the college Governing Body he rarely looked up from his Greek text. At one stage he had to lie on a plank for three days, to cure a bad back. "Weren't you bored?" I asked. "No," he said, "I read the whole of Lycophron *with the scholia*." Scholarship for him was not a vocation, in the German way, nor a hobby, as the English have sometimes felt: it was a passion, to which he gave all his nervous vitality, a passion that encompassed a thousand years of Greek literature and extended to the history of scholarship as part of the history of civilisation. His scorn was passionate: a fortunate target might be dismissed with "He doesn't know Greek"; one unfortunate with an insult characteristically borrowed from Wagner—*Pfui, du haariger, höckriger Geck!* But passionate also his admiration: he volunteered to review W. S. Barrett's edition of Euripides' *Hippolytus*, so that he could celebrate in print "the privilege of contact with a mind of such remarkable acuteness."

Hugh was not a nice man. Indeed, "nice" took a prime place in his rhetoric of distaste, alongside "rabbit" and "guttersnipe," "Christian," and "socialist," and various other categories of the weedy, the epicene, and the bien-pensant. Political correctness was not for him; and the more correctness flourished, the more pleasure he took in outraging it. He was by nature ideally equipped to understand the ancient Greeks: he did not trust in a merciful god; he refused to turn the other cheek; he had no time for the soft answer that turneth away wrath. He hated his enemies and he loved his friends; and his ogreish reputation made his support all the more valued by the younger scholars whom he befriended on both sides of the Atlantic. "I never knew a man so charming and so terrifying at the same time," wrote a German colleague; "Oxford without Lloyd-Jones," said an Italian, "is like bread without salt." His own books testify to the range and depth and vitality of his scholarly achievement; the books of many others attest the generous enthusiasm and encouragement with which he forwarded their work, and for that they remember him with all affection and gratitude.

Elected 1992

PETER PARSONS

Regius Professor of Greek 1989–2003
University of Oxford