

(Francis) David Harvey (1937-2024)

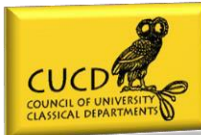
***by John Wilkins, with contributions
from Paul Cartledge, Robert Parker,
David Braund, and Matthew Wright***



Photo courtesy of Myfanwy Nixon.

David Harvey, who has died at the age of 87, was born in the West Country and spent much of his professional life in Exeter. In the late 1980s ill health forced him into a long retirement, throughout which he maintained close links with colleagues in the Exeter Classics Department.

From his Exeter base, David made frequent trips to London and Oxford, and attended many conferences. He was an enthusiastic congressist, to borrow Paul Cartledge's term (see below) and in this way maintained a complex network of friends and colleagues in the UK and abroad.

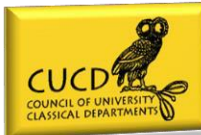


David's strength as an ancient historian lay in his mastery of primary sources combined with a curiosity about ancient life, especially in the area of social history. This led him to write seminal articles on democracy, women, and literacy, whose details and quality I leave to the inimitable words of the contributors below. Numerous other articles followed, many of them based on Herodotus, his main object of study.

In retirement, he developed a talent for co-editing collected papers. This was first seen in *CRUX*, the Festschrift for Geoffrey de Ste. Croix which David co-edited with Paul Cartledge in 1985. David was a dedicated and diligent editor, as I discovered in the volumes *Food in Antiquity* (Exeter 1995) and *The Rivals of Aristophanes* (London 2000), and as others too have attested (*Lost Dramas of Classical Athens: Greek Tragic Fragments*: Exeter 2005, with F. McHardy and J. Robson).

He combined the scholarly curiosity to take on such topics as food history, comic fragments, and tragic fragments with a delight in good expression and a correct use of English. He improved many a chapter both for native and non-native speakers, and suggested improvements, additions, and bibliography. This is deeply committed editing and among the best that I have experienced. I believe it may have originated with early training in the family bookshop and printing business, Polypress in Bideford. He showed his intellectual commitment with his chapters in the food volume based on the Lydian section of Herodotus Book One and in the comedy volume on Phrynichos the comic poet. Undaunted by the discovery that 'ancient judgments on Phrynichos are all unfavourable', he concluded that these negative judgments 'are all worthless. All of them are jokes'. For my chapter on animal choruses, David commissioned from Oliver Rackham a note on the palatability of the plants that the goat-chorus claims to eat in the *Goats* of Eupolis. David contributed heavily to the success of these volumes as coherent studies that were more than collected conference papers. He had a related impact at the conferences from which the papers came. He was a splendid co-worker.

Robert Parker notes below David's shared work with Sarah Pomeroy and with his wife Hazel Harvey in their translation of Karl Reinhardt. They also translated (with Fred



Robertson) Richard Heinze's *Virgil's Epic Technique* (c. 1993). To this should be added his notes on David Hume's essay 'Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations', which he contributed to the major Oxford edition of Hume.

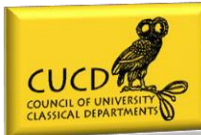
All of the comments below attest to David's kindness and to his gentle, if sometimes mischievous, sense of humour. He is remembered affectionately by many former students with whom he stayed in contact. He maintained such links formally through the departmental journal *Pegasus*, for which he maintained reports from alumni, long before universities took over such activities for money-raising purposes. David was helped in his work for *Pegasus* by Hazel Harvey, who also shared his commitment to the Exeter branch of the Classical Association. Hazel was a source of strength to David and supported his work in many ways. She ensured that he got off successfully to weekly lunches with colleagues and to rehearsals for the Bach choir.

Those who met David at lunch every week well into his 80s – and who received his postcards of museum artefacts full of detail he thought would interest us over the decades – remember a kind and generous friend.

David is survived by Hazel, their children Myfanwy and Francis, and their granddaughter Tabitha.

Paul Cartledge writes:

As a fellow-pupil of Geoffrey de Ste. Croix of New College Oxford – undergraduate in my case, graduate in David's – I first learned of David's published work (and existence) during the academic year 1967/8. Geoffrey quite rightly recommended to my cohort David's brilliant article in the 1965 issue of the Danish journal of philology and history *Classica et Mediaevalia*: 'Two kinds of equality' (*CetM* 26: 101-46, with a small addendum in *CetM* 27). The two kinds were broadly oligarchic and democratic, conceived as polar opposites, but what Geoffrey singled out from the lengthy, detailed article was the quasi-mathematical ('geometric') argument in favour of oligarchic 'equality' that he considered the one serious intellectual argument brought against democracy ancient-style, and that David had so superbly explicated and analysed.



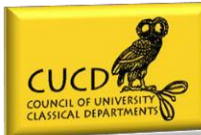
The article is a 'classic' of its kind, especially relevant now to the practice as well as theory of democratic self-governance.

When it came to assembling a Festschrift to mark and celebrate Ste. Croix's 75th birthday in 1985, it was a huge privilege and pleasure for me to help David assemble a top team of former pupils and/or colleagues, and to co-edit a volume that appeared in two successive issues of an Exeter-based academic journal, *History of Political Thought* vol. 6.1-2, and then as a standalone book, published by Ste. Croix fanboy Colin Haycraft of Duckworth (also 1985). This was a decade before email correspondence became the norm (not that it ever became so for David...), so I was treated frequently to long, longhand letters from David, many of which I have kept to this day.

David was a devoted congressist, as I am not, and travelled widely and often, so that our paths crossed from time to time. But inevitably it was mostly through letters that we maintained our friendship and that I followed David's life and career – in music as much as in ancient history academia. His death leaves me personally and the ancient Greek historical community more generally with a gaping hole.

Robert Parker writes:

'Few, but roses', the epigrammatist said of the poems of Sappho; David's writings were not so few, though they were fewer than his admirers would have wished, but they were certainly all roses. David could tackle knotty technical problems, as in 'The Conspiracy of Agasias and Aischines (Plutarch, *Aristides*, 13)' (*Klio* 66, 1984, 58-73); 'Notes on a Laconian Graffito' (*ZPE* 194, 2015, 108-110); 'The Length of the Reigns of Kleomenes' (*Historia* 58.3, 2009, 356-357); or 'Farewell Thodis, one less beautiful Athenian' (*ZPE* 175, 2010, 124 – who else would have ventured such a title?). He could think with subtlety about democratic theory, as in his seminal 'Two Kinds of Equality' (*Classica & Mediaevalia* 26, 1965, 101-146, with corrigenda *ib.* 27, 1966, 99-100). But his real forte was social history. Classic studies by him in this area are 'Literacy in the Athenian Democracy' (*REG* 79, 1966, 585-635); '*Dona Ferentes*: some aspects of bribery in Greek politics' in the Festschrift, *Crux*, that, with Paul Cartledge,



he edited for G.E.M. de Ste Croix (London, 1985, 76-117); and 'The Sykophant and Sykophancy: vexatious redefinition?', in P. Cartledge et al. (edd.), *Nomos: essays in Athenian law, politics and society* (Cambridge, 1990, 103-121). Gender studies interested him long before they became fashionable: 'Those Epirote Women Again (SEG XV, 384)' (*CP* 64.4, Oct. 1969, 226-229); 'Women in Thucydides' (*Arethusa* 18, 1985, 67-90), with a popular forerunner 'Women in Ancient Greece' (*History Today* 34.8, 1984, 45-47); 'The Silent Woman of Lydia: Manisa Museum inv. 5414 line 15' (*Liverpool Classical Monthly* 15, 1990, 78-79); and the long bibliography that (selfless as always) he compiled for Sarah Pomeroy's *Plutarch's 'Advice to the bride and groom' and 'A consolation to his wife': English translations, commentary, interpretive essays, and bibliography* (Oxford and New York, 1999, 197-215).

David's view of the world, as lucky recipients of his Christmas letters (shining exceptions to the bad reputation of that genre) will remember, was bathed in gentle humour, and he was naturally drawn to Greek comedy: he was one of four editors of *The rivals of Aristophanes: studies in Athenian Old Comedy* (Classical Press of Wales, 2000), to which he contributed (pp. 91-134) a study of 'Phrynichos and his Muses'. 'Lacomica: Aristophanes and the Spartans', was a cheerful contribution (pp. 35-58) to the grim subject of *The Shadow of Sparta* (ed. A. Powell and S. Hodkinson, London and Swansea 1994). A projected but, alas, abandoned commentary on Herodotus I left behind it 'Lydian specialties, Croesus' golden baking-woman, and dogs' dinners', in the collective work *Food in antiquity* which he edited with three colleagues (Exeter, 1995) and (co-authored with W. Dawson) 'Herodotus as Medical Writer' (*BICS* 33, 1986, 87-96). He also collaborated with his wife Hazel in a translation of Karl Reinhardt's seminal but difficult *Sophocles* (Blackwell, 1979).

David Braund writes:

David was invariably kind to students and colleagues, always ready with a quip (if not always a funny one). He had a deep commitment to the study of the ancient world, and an unflinching curiosity about its smallest details alongside larger themes. His interests ranged from Greek literacy and the women of antiquity to helots and the uses of wheelbarrows on the Athenian acropolis. Vigorous reading and an openness to any



issue in ancient studies meant he always had something to offer on any topic. For years he was a key figure in all Classical activities (notably the CA) in Exeter, loving to discuss almost any aspect of our field with a gentle zeal that made him widely popular and always valued for his creativity and learning.

David's genial interest was invaluable at conferences. He came with me to Caucasian Georgia, just as it was emerging from Post Soviet upheavals. He was an immediate hit with Georgian colleagues and the international Black Sea fraternity. He memorably shared a room with Tom Braun at a conference in the small rural town of Vani, made famous by its archaeology and regular symposia. Among their small adventures was a midnight quest for toothbrushes in the dark byways there. David never forgot that they actually found a seller at this absurd hour. 'What a wonderful country', David often remarked during our visit. He is still fondly remembered there.

Matthew Wright writes:

David's knowledge of Greek history and Greek literature was immense, and (until the last few years) he had a phenomenally good memory. He had a particularly sharp eye for detail, and was good at spotting minor points of interest and at making connections of a sort that would have escaped most people. Whenever someone is described as having 'a well-stocked mind' I think of David. His mind was stocked to overflowing with the most astonishing information (including a rich store of trivia and mental bric-a-brac). Much of this knowledge made its way into his published work, but perhaps even more of it was channelled into other scholars' publications, in the form of his voluminous and painstaking comments as an editor and reader.

I am just one of numerous scholars to have benefitted from David's help and encouragement. Right from the start of my career, David enthusiastically took an interest in my own work on Greek drama and fragments, and he was amazingly generous with his time. I would always send him drafts of my latest book chapters and articles, and they would come back from him annotated, in his unmistakable tiny handwriting, with copious and microscopically detailed marginalia (often amounting to more words than I had originally written), pointing out dozens of things that had

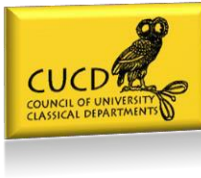


escaped my attention. Further comments, afterthoughts and *obiter dicta* would arrive in the following days and weeks in the form of notes and postcards. All of my work was hugely improved by David, and my book *The Comedian as Critic*, in particular, would have been very different (and much worse) without his input.

David was always giving things away to people. He also had a habit of remembering his friends' interests and tastes, and making special efforts to collect things that he thought they might like, especially books and newspaper cuttings on pet topics – but sometimes other things too. When I first arrived in Exeter, as an impoverished, part-time junior lecturer, I happened to mention to David that I did not have a piano to practise in my digs and so had to use the one in the University chapel. A week or two later a piano arrived at the front door, courtesy of David.

David always seemed to me to be a central figure in the Department, even though he had retired before I arrived in Exeter. Until his last illness, he was always there at Department seminars, conferences, and events, and in the Senior Common Room, where he was a learned and continually bonhomous presence. David was also brilliant at keeping in touch with former students and colleagues, in whose activities he had a deep interest. For decades he almost single-handedly maintained a network of Exeter Classics alumni, and he was the mastermind behind *Pegasus* and *Res Gestae* (the Department's in-house journal and record of the lives of past members). Because he had been in the Department longer than anyone else still alive (since the early 1960s), he formed a connecting thread with the previous generation of Exeter classicists – now long-forgotten by most people, but still commemorated in the form of David's rich fund of anecdotes.

Beyond Classics, David and I shared other interests, including (e.g.) detective stories, cakes, the novels of P.G. Wodehouse, and of course music. David was, like me, a keen pianist as well as a member of the Exeter Bach Choir (for whose concerts he used to write extremely erudite and entertaining programme notes). We often talked about music together, or found ourselves at the same concerts, and from time to time we would play duets (mostly Schubert and Beethoven) on his old Blüthner grand piano.



It often seemed, impressively, as if David knew as much about music as he did about Greek history and literature.

David had a lively sense of humour (always a valuable and even life-saving asset in the modern academy). David loved silliness, jokes, puns, wordplay, and absurdity in all forms. He was always good company and fun to be around.