

Duncan Fishwick, FSA, FRSC, FRHistS

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based on notes by Jonathan Edmondson and Bernard J. Kavanagh

Duncan Fishwick was one of Canada's most distinguished Roman historians, for many years the leading world expert on the Roman imperial cult in the Latin West. Born at Adlington in Lancashire, and attending a Jesuit-run school in Preston where the Classics were the highest priority, he completed a B.A. at Manchester University and an M.A. at Oxford before obtaining a D.Litt. from the University of Leiden and a Litt.D. from Manchester. In 1956 he was attracted to Canada to take up a position as lecturer in the Department of Classics at McGill University, before moving one year later to the University of Toronto, where he taught for 7 years. In 1964 he headed east to St Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia, where he chaired the Classics Department and revamped the Classics curriculum. Several years later the West beckoned and he moved to the University of Alberta at Edmonton, where he spent the rest of his very fruitful career (becoming a prestigious University Professor in 1986 and serving as Chair of Classics from 1987 to 1992) until his retirement from teaching in 1994, which was followed in turn by a highly productive 21 years of research (for him "retirement" meant simply a break from teaching). During his career he supervised a number of M.A. and Ph.D. students, including B. D. Shaw (three of whose early articles were co-written with his mentor), C. J. Simpson and B. J. Kavanagh.

He is best known for his detailed, painstaking and groundbreaking work on the Roman imperial cult, especially in the Hispanic and Gallic provinces, N Africa and Britain. Author of more than 100 articles in leading journals (*JRS*, *Historia*, *Britannia*, *ZPE*, *Epigraphica*, *AJP*, *Phoenix*), he made the study of emperor worship his particular focus. His influential series of volumes published by Brill, *The imperial cult in the Latin West*, is required reading on the subject; in three Parts, *ICLW* comprises 8 separate volumes (1987-2005). Marked by a rigorous inductive method and sane good judgment, his published work has led to major advances in our understanding of emperor worship — its cults, cult personnel and cult spaces — across the western provinces. Some of his most important articles are now collected in two Variorum volumes: *Cult, ritual, divinity and belief in the Roman world* (2012) and *Cult places and cult personnel in the Roman empire* (2014). Another major monograph, currently in press with Ashgate and entitled *Precinct, temple and altar in Roman Spain: studies on the imperial monuments at Mérida and Tarragona*, uses the latest archaeological and epigraphic discoveries to advance our understanding of the nature and development of imperial cult spaces in the urban centres of two important colonies and provincial capitals. Indeed, Duncan was active to the last, writing the preface and opening pages of another projected book just before he fell ill in the summer of 2015.

Further testimony to his stature was provided by the scholars who travelled to Edmonton in April 1994 to a conference to mark his 65th birthday and his impending retirement. No lesser luminaries than G. Alföldy, E. Badian, R. Étienne, P. Herz, J. M. Reynolds and R. Turcan gave papers, as well as many others from Canada, the U.S.A. and Europe, while Étienne gave a memorably elegant and touching tribute to the honorand at the closing banquet. The papers were published as A. Small (ed.), *Subject and ruler: the cult of the ruling power in classical antiquity* (*JRA* Suppl. 17, 1996).

Duncan was also an active sportsman. As a cricketer, he was good enough to play in the 1st XI for Manchester University and then for Preston Cricket Club. He played soccer for his University's 2nd XI and remained an avid and talented low-handicap golfer well past his retirement. He was a frequent traveller in Europe, even late in his career still receiving invitations to international conferences overseas. He often recalled his pleasure derived from the stimulating conferences on the imperial cult held in Mérida (2006) and that on Vespasian and the Flavian Empire in Rome (2009). He was modest, methodical and down-to-earth, with no little sense of wry humour, qualities also discernible in the nature of his scholarly work. He was never one to propose bold, speculative reconstructions: he worked closely, even minutely, with his sources (literary, epigraphic, numismatic, archaeological) to draw sober conclusions that were always grounded in the surviving evidence, and was always willing to defend his often revisionist conclusions with logical, tenacious argument. Those qualities will ensure that his major insights into the Roman imperial cult will long outlive him. He was also a devoted family man, and is survived by his beloved wife Birgit ("Bibi"), whom he met in Venice in 1961, married in Västerås in 1963 and to whom he would dedicate the *ICLW*, and by their three children, Birgitta, Peter and Steven.