

# EDWARD JOHN JORY FAHA

1936–2016

FELLOW · ELECTED 1984



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I first met John Jory when we both turned up as freshers in the Department of Greek and Latin at University College London in September 1955. He struck me at the time as an archetypal non-conformist Cornishman, and it has since been shown that he could trace his family back in Cornwall to 1760 and probably earlier. One could not claim that that was why he felt at home when he moved to Western Australia, but the likelihood remains.

At the time he was remarkable for his quick intelligence, his fine sense of humour, and his wide social interests that went hand in hand with his participation in sport. He largely gave up rugby at university, but he did play cricket. He played it seriously enough to have trials for Middlesex. There are not many who could play First Eleven Cricket for the University (not simply the College) and still achieve First Class Honours in Latin with subsidiary Greek.

Like so many of us of that generation and background, he found his future in the Antipodes. In 1959 he and his wife Marie sailed from Southampton on the *Oronsay* to take up a lectureship at the University of Western Australia. At that time it was a fairly remote location and, partly as a consequence, teaching was hard work, with little time

for research and few people to discuss one's research with. In 1961–62 he was able to return to University College London (UCL) for a year on exchange where he was also able to take advantage of the recently-established Institute of Classical Studies (to which he was later appointed a Senior Research Fellow). It gave him the opportunity to lay the groundwork for his PhD, 'Some Aspects of the Acting Profession in Rome'.

When he came back to Perth he encountered great change. Not only was the distinguished Latinist James Willis persuaded to stay after a six-month visit, but the department was growing rapidly with the appointments of bright, energetic young men, so that he had the company of, among others, three other future Fellows of the Academy, Graeme Clarke, John Melville Jones and Paul Weaver. Brian Bosworth arrived in 1967. The Department developed its own dynamic. Jory reacted not so much by pressing on with his PhD (finally completed in 1967), but by moving in a somewhat different direction. The University acquired its first computer in 1962 and he had what was then the innovative idea of using it to create an index to Volume VI of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (he was never interested in computers for their own sake, simply for what they could do). The *CIL* had been founded in 1853 by Theodor Mommsen and now comprises some seventeen volumes in around seventy parts in folio-size editions, holding transcriptions of about 180,000 inscriptions, along with thirteen supplementary volumes. It contains inscriptions from all over the Roman Empire but the material in Volume VI is from Rome and contains roughly a quarter of the total. Jory's starting point was that among all this were inscriptions concerning actors and their performances: it was a classic example of how one can become seduced in to a large project by the needs of a comparatively small issue. He developed a full word index as well as the ability to record features of the stones themselves.

His article 'Problems and Prospects for the Production of Computer Compiled Indices to Epigraphic Works', in *Antiquités africaines* 9 (1975), readily obtainable on the web, makes interesting reading, although it is somewhat laconic if heartfelt on the 'problems': one can read between the lines. Although he made no explicit mention, the *CIL*'s home was in East Berlin, with all that that implied at the time. A copy of *CIL* VI itself had to be obtained from the Berlin Academy. He had to compete for

time on the machine with other (non-Arts) departments and it did not become available to him before 1965. The machine was driven by punch-cards. After intensive labour by him and his assistant and computer expert Dennis Moore, checking readings and later publications as well as persuading the system to produce camera-ready copy, the results were published in six fascicules in 1974–75. They remain a permanent contribution to a major enterprise.

Jory was appointed to the chair of Classics and Ancient History following the retirement of Mervyn Austin in 1979. He immediately startled many in the Department by instituting Departmental meetings. By then he had already served as elected Dean of the Faculty of Arts from 1976–78. He also came to serve as Head of Division (Arts and Architecture), and from 1994 as inaugural Executive Dean of the Faculty, a position in which he remained until his retirement in 2001. One may add that it was only after his retirement that the Department realised how much he had done to protect them during those years. Despite his outgoing personality, he was capable of being extremely discreet.

He was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 1984, and was a member of Council from 1992–95. He served as a member of the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel of the Australian Research Council from 1990–92, succeeding Michael Osborne. In 1999–2000 he was the inaugural T.B.L. Webster Fellow at the Institute of Classical Studies in London. In the Institute's files it is recorded of his public lecture that 'despite the 20-minute break after an unscheduled fire alarm (termed by the lecturer as the wake-up call), the original audience returned for the second half, together with various latecomers and those from a rival event who were coming on to Senate House for the reception'.

It was inevitable that his research suffered as the result of the time and effort he put into his other work. It is also fair to say that although he could be a decisive and sometimes even ruthless administrator, he was extraordinarily modest and even insecure about the presentation of his research, in my view needlessly so. Despite his innovative use of the computer with the *CIL*, his research and writing style remained by many modern standards old-fashioned. He believed he needed firm evidence before presenting 'facts', and he put a lot of worry and effort into detail – as epigraphists need to do. He had great respect for textual critics. On the other hand he enjoyed it when colleagues pushed him further with a touch of relevant speculation, and his eyes would twinkle in a way that those who knew him will remember.

During those years as Executive Dean he had a great deal of help from his PhD student and research assistant Glenys Wootton, and she was capable of standing up to his sometimes combative approach with good humour.

The results are there in a constant run of important articles, though never the book we wished for. These days he is invariably quoted as a key reference by scholars interested in Roman Pantomime – so called because a single performer mimed the range of roles on a tragic theme, changing his mask appropriately and adapting his body-language to the part as the music changed behind him. It rapidly became the most popular form of theatre in the Roman Empire, especially following the sponsorship of performers by Augustus, but because of its very nature (and lack of texts) it is the most difficult of the theatre genres to grasp. As a result of an Australian Research Council grant, we had enjoyable times together searching for and examining the material evidence for the appearance and style of Pantomime, including a trip from Paris to Aix-en-Provence and Marseilles via such places as Lyons, Avignon, Toulouse and Montpellier, as well as the town of St Jory which we found very disappointing. We also had a notable trip to Cairo and to Alexandria, where, with some difficulty, I managed to keep him out of the casino.

It is also worth noting that, thanks to the kindness of his sons and of John Melville Jones, his photographic records, including those of unpublished items he saw on his trip to a number of museums and sites in Asia Minor, have now been deposited with the Centre for Classical and Near Eastern Studies of Australia (CCANESA) at the University of Sydney, where they are available for consultation.

John Jory was always capable of lateral thinking; for example, when the children were young and the family was on leave in England, he took them all to Spain, largely to look at the Roman theatres, and he did it in a retired London taxi (and the doors in those days were not fitted with locks). In retirement he spent a great deal of time at the Golf Club as well as at the University Club which he had done much to support over the years. It was saddening to others that his worsening state of health prevented him from doing all he had hoped, despite his efforts to continue and his unwillingness to complain. To return to cricket, he was relatively small in stature and so he often tempted bowlers to bowl short to him: he relished bouncers and knocking them to the boundary. So he did in the rest of his life.

His wife of so many years, Marie, lived for only a few months after him. He is survived by his three sons of whom he was extremely proud, enjoying argument with them from time to time, as he had with his own father.

J. R. GREEN