CLASSICAL PRESENCES

General Editors

LORNA HARDWICK  JAMES I. PORTER
CLASSICAL PRESENCES

Attempts to receive the texts, images, and material culture of ancient Greece and Rome inevitably run the risk of appropriating the past in order to authenticate the present. Exploring the ways in which the classical past has been mapped over the centuries allows us to trace the avowal and disavowal of values and identities, old and new. Classical Presences brings the latest scholarship to bear on the contexts, theory, and practice of such use, and abuse, of the classical past.
Women Classical Scholars

Unsealing the Fountain from the Renaissance to Jacqueline de Romilly

EDITED BY
Rosie Wyles and Edith Hall
This book is dedicated to the memory of three outstanding women classical scholars, and one great indexer of classics books, who died between 2012 and 2016 and were our friends: Kathryn Bosher, Barbara McManus, Anna Morpurgo Davies, and Brenda Hall.
Frontispiece Plaque showing Minerva, originally accompanied by a quotation from Tennyson’s ‘The Princess’, hanging in Nottingham Girls’ High School, Assembly Hall. Photograph reproduced courtesy of Rosie Whyles.
Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Lottie Parkyn for outstanding organization and hosting of the original conference which gave rise to this publication. We are also grateful to the generous financial support for the conference given by King’s College London, the University of Notre Dame, the Classical Association, the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, and the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies.

This volume has involved the contributors and editors consulting, and asking for help from, a vast number of archives, museums, and libraries. They are too many to mention individually, though the team at Bristol Special collections (Hannah Lowery, Michael Richardson, and Jamie Carstairs) deserves special mention. We are equally grateful to all the other institutions that have made this project possible and have enabled us to bring rarely seen material to light.

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We thank all our contributors for their unflagging commitment to this project. Above all, it is not invidious to single out Judy Hallett for going way beyond the call of duty as a contributor, and helping us with virtually every dimension of the project.

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In the last frantic days of proof-reading, Caroline Latham came to our rescue on the index when Edith Hall’s mother died. She is a kind and generous classical scholar herself.

Finally, we are grateful to everyone at Oxford University Press who has been involved in bringing this volume to press; in particular we owe special thanks to Hilary O’Shea, Charlotte Loveridge, Franziska Broeckl, Jim Porter, and Lorna Hardwick.
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1

Introduction
Approaches to the Fountain

*Edith Hall and Rosie Wyles*

‘O lift your natures up:
Embrace our aims: work out your freedom. Girls,
Knowledge is now no more a fountain sealed’.

Alfred Lord Tennyson, ‘The Princess’

It is more than a century and a half since Princess Ida, with the inspirational words quoted as our epigraph, welcomed new recruits to the revolutionary university for maidens in Lord Tennyson’s ‘The Princess’. This long poem was itself partly a response to the opening of the pioneering Queen’s College for girls, established by a group led by F.D. Maurice of King’s College London, on Harley Street in 1847. Although many have questioned the seriousness with which Tennyson himself supported women’s education, his poem, especially after it was turned into the comic opera *Princess Ida; or, Castle Adamant* by Arthur Sullivan and W.S. Gilbert in 1884, became embedded in the public imagination. It continued to inform arguments around the establishment of schools and colleges for women until at least the Edwardian era.

1 Tennyson (1847) II, lines 74–75. Maurice’s plan for the college was described in a public lecture published as Maurice (1848). See also Tweedie (1898) and Grylls (1948). For the curriculum taught there, see Gordon (1955).

2 The ideology of the poem has been regarded as fundamentally sexist and reactionary by several feminist scholars including D. Hall (1991); see also Fasick (2008). But it was extraordinarily popular and achieved deep cultural penetration: see e.g. Kooistra (2007).
It is also a long time—nearly half a century—since Edith Hall, as a teenager on a grammar school scholarship funded by a direct grant from the British government, was intrigued by the same quotation. She read it every day during compulsory school prayers, for it was inscribed under the head of Minerva on a large plaque in the assembly hall of what was then Nottingham Girls High School GPDST, founded in 1875.3 [See Frontispiece] The quotation had been adopted as the motto of GPDST in 1872.

But sometimes our task of excavating the history of women’s achievements in classics has made it depressingly clear that there has been no simple, linear narrative of progression towards the unsealing of that fountain at some moment in the late nineteenth century. In the seventeenth century it was strongly felt, for example by Mary Astell, that women’s education had been in decline for a century. In Queen Elizabeth’s day, she lamented, Greek and Latin had been positively fashionable for women, ‘and Plato and Aristotle untranslated, were frequent Ornaments of their Closets’.4 The tuition received in the early twentieth century by aristocratic girls like the six English Mitford sisters, under-educated at home and expected to do little with their lives but enter advantageous marriages, was vastly inferior to the curriculum studied by many of the Renaissance and Early Modern women discussed in the next three chapters of this book by McCallum-Barry, Frade, and Wyles.5 Moreover, women’s access to education still remains, internationally, a political hot potato. Even in Britain, where women now hold a significant proportion of university posts, at least in Arts and Humanities, there are still few in senior positions or with salaries and executive power equivalent to their male counterparts.6 Worse, so many people prominent in

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3 On the history of the Girls Public Day School Trust, which began in 1872 as the the Girls’ Public Day School Company, and was essentially a response to the condemnation of the lack of rigorous education for girls in the report of the 1864 Schools Enquiry Commission, see Magnus (1923) and Kamm (1971).

4 Astell (2002 [1694]) 79.


6 A gender survey of the Professoriate, reported in the Times Higher Education in 2013, revealed that on average in the UK only one in five professors is female, and some institutions’ statistics are well below this; see https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/gender-survey-of-uk-professoriate-2013/2004766.article (accessed 18 September 2015).
public life were educated at exclusive all-male schools that women’s access to the highest echelons of education remains an unrelentingly topical issue.

Most of the chapters include portraits of the scholars discussed, which our contributors have gone to sometimes extraordinary lengths to procure from archives where they have lain buried for decades. They are intended to form part of our argument: how many of us have been saddened by the dearth of portraits of women in the long galleries of learned ancestors lining the walls and staircases of our colleges, universities and libraries? We hope that Women Classical Scholars, by investigating the history of earlier women’s engagement with the ancient Greek and Latin Classics, will encourage men and women to enjoy the study of these inspirational texts. The intention is to come to a clearer understanding of the difficulties women have faced over the past five hundred years in acquiring right of entry to these Classics (often historically seen as the most prestigious and exclusive of cultural and intellectual properties), and of the strategies by which a few of the most able and indefatigable women have succeeded in surmounting them.

The volume results from the excitement engendered by a two-day international conference ‘Women as Classical Scholars’, run by the Department of Classics at F.D. Maurice’s college, King’s College London, on 23–24 March 2013. The international gathering of mostly (but not exclusively) women delegates was convened as a celebration of the centenary of the birth in 1913 of the most famous female French scholar of the twentieth century, Jacqueline de Romilly. Her life and work were the subject of one of the keynote lectures, delivered by Ruth Webb, which appears here as our final chapter. The original versions of most of the other essays printed here were delivered at the conference, supplemented by this Introduction and specially commissioned contributions.7

7 The other keynote was delivered by Michele Ronnick and appears here as Chapter 9. We also extend our thanks to Ineke Sluiter, Smaro Nikolaidou-Arabatzi, Eleanor Leach, Jesús D. Cepeda Ruiz, and Tyler Jo Smith, for their papers on (respectively) Anna Maria van Schurman, Jane Ellen Harrison, Lily Ross Taylor, women in the British School at Athens, and Lillian B. Lawler. Their papers made wonderful contributions to the conference and have been instrumental in shaping our thinking. We are also grateful to Reena Perschke for sending a conference poster of her research on pioneering women archaeologists and to Russell Goulbourne for sharing with us his unpublished paper on women translating Horace in eighteenth-century France.
The task of putting the volume together has been arduous intellectually and also emotionally. It is important but not easy to remain dispassionate when reading histories of exclusion, marginalization, exploitation, and often personal loneliness, frustration, and misery. As we completed the book, it was satisfying to see the belated acknowledgement of the instrumental role played by the obscure Dr Alice Kober (1906–1950), a lecturer at Brooklyn College, in the decipherment of Linear B. She died far too young, and despite the considerable progress she had made during patient years of comparative assessment of the examples of the Mycenaean script, all the credit at the time went to Michael Ventris. Another tragic example is provided by the Viennese Eva Sachs (1882–1936). She matriculated at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Berlin, in 1904. Ten long years later, after taking innumerable courses (far more than were expected of her male counterparts), she defended her dissertation. It had been supervised by the titan of Prussian classical philology, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff himself. Sachs’ dissertation reconceptualized the relationship between Theaetetus the mathematician and Plato. An expanded version was published in 1917, and ‘has remained authoritative in its field’.

Although Sachs’ contribution to Wilamowitz’s thinking in his famous two-volume study of Plato, published in 1919, has occasionally been acknowledged, the full extent of his debt to dialogue with her has never been investigated. Yet Wilamowitz did not even believe that women should receive higher education at all. Although he eventually agreed to admit Sachs to prepare for the post-doctoral thesis or Habilitation, it was with great reluctance. Regardless of his patronizing treatment of her, and his emotional brutality, of which she was certainly aware, Sachs, who had been orphaned as a little girl, fell violently in love with her eminent supervisor. Her affection was not reciprocated. Before ever having a chance to complete that Habilitation, she went mad and died ‘in an insane asylum, speaking ancient Greek and believing “she could save Socrates if she got there in time.”’ And even today she is only

discussed as the source of evidence for Wilamowitz, rather than as a fascinating figure in her own right.12

Joanna Russ writes neither about scholars in general nor classical scholars in particular, yet we have learned much, while laughing heartily, from her brilliant study How to Suppress Women’s Writing (1983). Russ wittily identifies a range of ways in which writings by women have been concealed and derogated over the centuries. They include exclusion from the canon, allegations that they were mostly written by a male helper, and wives actually writing their husbands’ books for them and then putting the man’s name on the cover. Indeed, amongst Russ’s categories, the semi-concealment of a female scholar behind her more famous husband’s name is the one we have most often encountered in the course of this research.13 It seems connected with the supposition, expressed by Franz Cumont in relation to the dazzling classicist Ada Adler, that women were very good at assembling details,14 with the unspoken corollary that they could not see the big picture or conceive incisive, penetrating arguments which illuminate a general field or tendency.

One example is the brilliant epigraphist Jeanne Robert (maiden name Vanseveren), born in 1910, who indefatigably supported her prolific husband Louis Robert (author of more than thirty-five volumes) both on excavations and in the publication of inscriptions.15 Eminent Greek Homerist Ioannis Kakridis’ career and publications also benefited from his wife’s intellect and education; Olga Komninou-Kakridi (1901–1975) did however publish two books on Homer under her own name and tirelessly promoted classical studies in Greece.16 Louise Youtie (1909–2004), who was married to the much more celebrated papyrologist Herbert Youtie, was still being described in her obituaries as ‘Herbert’s...
ultimate assistant’, even though he had extreme difficulty in editing any text which she had not transcribed for him first.17

Agathe Thornton (1910–2006) even managed (eventually) to emerge from her husband’s shadow altogether. Born in Germany, she married Harry Thornton, who was appointed to a lectureship at the University of Otago in 1948. At that time the university had a rule against employing married women with children, but Agathe Thornton challenged the rule and was eventually awarded a personal chair. She is doubly remarkable, because in addition to joint publications with her husband (where her name unalphabetically follows his), and her own books on Homer and Virgil, she became an expert on Maori culture and published comparative studies of classical and Maori literature and myth.18

Not all the women discussed in this volume, just because they attempted to encroach on the masculine field of Classics, faced such extreme misery as Sachs or have suffered such near-erasure from the record as Kober. But they have still remained neglected as notable figures in intellectual history in their own right. This is puzzling. In some academic fields, for example in literature in English and in science, the historical contribution of ‘foremothers’ within the fields of scholarly endeavour has been the subject of significant academic research for more than two decades. The works on feminist literary history and on retrieving forgotten women writers which have most fundamentally informed our own practice were both originally published in 1988: Janet Todd’s Feminist Literary History, and the anthology Kissing the Rod, edited by a team led by Germaine Greer.19 Two of the publications that inspired us actually to organize the conference were The Biographical Dictionary of Women in Science edited by Marilyn Ogilvie and Joy Harvey (2000), and Mary Brück’s Women in Early British and Irish Astronomy (2009). It is not that there has been no interest in some of the exceptional women who have historically contributed much to the

17 See the diplomatic and nuanced remarks in Koenen (2004), a speech delivered during the General Assembly of the AIP gathered in Helsinki on 7 August 2004. Louise Youtie’s own work on the Michigan Medical Codex was eventually published in book form as Youtie (1996). Thanks to Jennifer Sheridan Moss for drawing our attention to the Youties.
19 For the British scene, Lonsdale (1989) and Wilcox (1996) have also influenced us considerably. Todd (1987) has provided orientation in North American literary history.
public understanding of the ancient world, such as Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope (1776–1839), the British adventurer who visited ancient Palmyra (Tadmor) in the Syrian desert. Her self-identification with Zenobia, Palmyrene queen in the third century CE, did much to promote interest both in ancient women and in the eastern Roman empire; Grace Macurdy, the subject of the chapter in this volume and of a forthcoming biography, both by the late Barbara McManus, was fascinated by Zenobia. But our point is, rather, that women’s contribution specifically as scholars, to academic classical studies, has almost completely fallen off the radar.

There are a few specialist exceptions. They include a seminal collection of profiles of six North American women classicists edited by William Calder and our contributor Judy Hallett, and Jeffrey Murray’s excellent examination of the women who taught and took the arduous classical course at Huguenot College, Wellington, in the Western Cape of South Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Chris Stray has recently thrown unprecedented light on the experience of nineteenth-century British women in relation to Higher Education, especially at Oxford and Cambridge, and Edith Hall has published a study of the several classically educated women involved in the early days of the UK Independent Labour Party. A handful of women classicists, such as Madame Dacier in early seventeenth-century France, were so famous in their own day as cultural icons and celebrities that they have individually been the subjects of a biography or two, or even a novel; the celebrated Spanish author Carolina Coronado wrote a fictionalized life of Portuguese Renaissance sensation Luisa Sigea, discussed in our volume in Frade’s chapter, in the mid-nineteenth century, while the seventeenth-century famed polyglot Anna Maria van Schurman, discussed in our volume in Wyles’ chapter, has recently inspired a novel by Brigitte Hermann.

A few women discussed in this collection are already familiar from more general studies on female access to education. The one who has

21 McManus (2016).
23 Stray (2013); Hall (2015).
24 On Dacier see Malcovati (1952), Farnham (1976), and Itti (2012).
25 Coronado (1854) and Hermann (2003).
26 See, for example, Timmermans (2005) or the studies of women’s writing in discrete historical periods by Summit (2000), Salzmann (2006), and Staves (2006).
attracted an unrivalled amount of attention is the prodigious late Victorian/Edwardian Cambridge ‘ritualist’ Jane Ellen Harrison; on top of an outstanding intellect and a cogent writing style, Harrison possessed a phenomenal talent for self-publicity, expressed, for example, in publishing an autobiographical study of her student days. This has undoubtedly contributed to her continuing fame: she has been the subject of several biographies, including one, appropriately, by the most celebrated female classicist in Britain today. In this book we have avoided replicating this sometimes hagiographic material, and instead commissioned an article from Liz Gloyn on some of the other extraordinary women classicists at Newnham College, Cambridge in its early days.

The need for our volume at both undergraduate and graduate level became clear through direct experience. In 2011, Rosie Wyles taught an undergraduate course on ‘Female Classicists from the Renaissance to 20th century’ at the University of Nottingham, and found that a book offering a thematic overview of the issues involved in the subject, let alone basic biographical details or specific case studies, was lacking. We await eagerly Brill’s Biographical Dictionary of Women Classicists, edited by Judith Hallett and Graham Whitaker, both of whom were present at our conference. But Ward W. Briggs’ Biographical Dictionary of North American Classicists (1994) and Robert B. Todd’s Dictionary of British Classicists (2004) are indicative of the state of play in the field: they have only a very limited number of women amongst their entries and are therefore unable to offer a sense of the network of support or role models which defined each woman’s experience. The form of these books draws attention to another limitation of the existing scholarship in this area: the tendency to consider countries in isolation when, of course, networks of communication between women crossed land and sea and established influences between countries. By contrast, the field of archaeology is twenty years ahead of classical philology in

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27 Harrison (1925).
29 With the exception of the excellent study by Winterer (2007), although her primary focus is the US.
30 Female scholarly networks have been investigated more generally by van Dijk et al. (2004) and Campbell and Larsen (2009) and also, specifically in the case of Anna Maria van Schurman, by de Baar (2004).
recognizing the value of contextualizing individual women’s experiences through collected studies.31

Equally, in her research on Mme Dacier, Wyles found that a volume to help contextualize Dacier’s experience and accomplishments within the history of women’s classical scholarship simply did not exist.32 Who were her forerunners, peers, and descendants? Similarly, two years before our conference was arranged, Hall became aware of the large number of significant women classicists who had taught or studied at London’s original Higher Education establishment for women, Bedford College (founded in 1849, long before any women’s college at Oxford or Cambridge, and where George Eliot probably learned her Greek),33 and at Royal Holloway (founded in 1886). The two institutions merged in 1985. But in 2011, the very future of the Classics Department came under threat from a new Principal, and excavating and publicizing the foremothers who had taught and studied Latin and Greek at these institutions became part of the campaign which successfully saved the Classics Department at Royal Holloway.34

Out of the Bedford and Royal Holloway archives leapt Anna Swanwick (1813–1899), writer, social reformer, and brilliant Hellenist. Besides Goethe and Schiller, she translated the complete Aeschylus. She was a pillar of Bedford and supporter of the Higher Education of women and the poor. She signed John Stuart Mill’s parliamentary petition for a woman’s right to vote (1865) and made her first political speech, on women’s suffrage, at the age of 60.35 Sarah Parker Remond (1826–1894), on the other hand, was an American abolitionist. She studied Latin at Bedford College with enthusiasm, having earlier in life been forced by racists out of her Salem school. She became a prominent anti-slavery lecturer in the US and Britain during the American Civil War and fundraised for freed black Americans after it.36 Hall also came to

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32 This research was undertaken as Leverhulme Early Career Research fellow at University of Nottingham (2009–2011); see also Wyles (forthcoming).
33 On Bedford see Tuke (1939), Crook (2001), and Brown (2011).
35 Swanwick (1873); Bruce (1903).
36 There is a short film about Remond made by Justine McConnell and Henry Stead on the ‘Classics and Class’ website, available to view online at http://www.classicsandclass.info/tag/sarah-parker-remond/
appreciate Dorothy Tarrant (1885–1973), the first woman to hold a university chair in Greek in the UK; she edited the Platonic *Hippias Major*, taught at Bedford College for four decades, and regularly lectured on classical subjects to women’s groups and at Holloway women’s prison. Hall’s research interest in the area and awareness of the need for this volume in fact goes even further back, to research into Lucy Hutchinson and Elizabeth Carter’s translations (discussed in this volume by Hall and Wallace in chapters 6 and 7), presented in the form of a much earlier version of the chapter she offers here. It was first delivered more than a quarter of a century ago at (what in hindsight was) a path-breaking Oxford University interdisciplinary Women’s Studies seminar organized by Roman historian Barbara Levick and Hellenist Richard Hawley, in the spring of 1990.

In one sense our volume, although virtually without precedent in Classics, is part of a longstanding literary genre. The first known use of the word ‘foremother’ occurs in a context which celebrates the social contribution made by educated women as a collective, Thomas Bentley’s *Monument of Matrons* (1582). This is the earliest printed collection of English women’s writings, which coincided with the emergence of the public image of Elizabeth I as perpetual virgin; it contains prayers and devotional works by the Queen and other contemporary women, conceived as fulfilsments of the sayings or deeds of prominent Old Testament heroines—Judith, Esther, and Deborah. Bentley envisages both his contributors and his female readers using the book as ‘a glasse of the holie liues of their foremothers’. The *topos* of the catalogue of illustrious ladies is of course much older even than this: lists of heroines of myth and history who did their peoples service, besides having ancient roots in Hesiod’s *Catalogue of Women*, Plutarch’s *On the Virtues of Women*, and Valerius Maximus’ *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, were resoundingly established by Giovanni Boccaccio’s *De mulieribus claris* (1374). Some of the women in Christine de Pizan’s *Book of the City of Ladies* (c.1405) are renowned for learning as well as piety and patriotism, and by the time that the English Puritan scholar Bathsua Makin put her extraordinarily detailed roll-call of educated women together in the mid-seventeenth century (see pp. 110–11), women were supporting their own demands for

37 Tarrant (1928).
38 See the insightful discussion of King (2005).
39 Bentley (1582) ‘Preface’.
classical education by citing the examples of scores of known names of learned females. They traced their cultural ancestresses back to Hortensia, the mother of the Gracchi, and to Hypatia of Alexandria; the path forward led through the Byzantine Anna Comnena, the medieval Hildegard von Bingen, and the Renaissance Marguerite de Navarre and Elizabeth I to their perceived Early Modern descendants, van Schurman and Dacier. Closely allied to this tradition, and an important strand in the history of female classical scholarship, is the strong relationship between advanced classical learning by women and their advocacy of women’s rights. An outstanding example of a classical scholar and voice for women is Birgitte Thott (1610–1662), who produced the first complete Danish translation of a classical text (Seneca’s *Philosophus*) in 1658 [FIG. 1.1]; another, of course, is van Schurman (discussed in Wyles’ chapter).

In writing about a favourite foremother or group of foremothers, we are also, as we discovered in the course of our research, following in what amounts to a minor tradition of women classicists investigating their predecessors. Female classicists have had their own communities, and been partly responsible for constructing their own matrilineal family trees. These can take a pedagogical form. Rosie Wyles’ doctorate on Euripides was supervised by Edith Hall, who learned her Greek metre from Laetitia Parker, who was supervised by A.M. Dale. Matrilineal consciousness can also be manifested in translation and research. Betty Radice pointed in her translation of Terence that Madame Dacier had translated him too (see Fowler’s chapter, p. 357). The great Italian scholar Enrica Malcovati published an important biography of Dacier as well as a study of the reception of Sappho in Latin authors. Several female classicists studied earlier women in specific national traditions, for example Carolina Michaelis de Vasconcellos (1851–1925). Although German by birth, she was the first woman to teach Classics in any Portuguese university, and published a ground-breaking study of the classically educated women in Portugal during the Renaissance.

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40 See further in this volume pp. 61–102.
41 On Thott and other learned Scandinavian women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Alenius (1991).
42 Malcovati (1952) and (1966).
43 Discussed in Frade’s chapter, p. 53. We would like to thank Fábio Cairoli for drawing our attention to Carolina Michaelis de Vasconcellos’ own achievements as a classicist as well as intellectual historian.
contributors have chosen the woman or women to feature in their chapters for different reasons including but not limited to shared nationality: these reasons include an interest in the reception of a particular ancient author (so Hall on Fielding’s Xenophon and Fabre-Serris on Sappho), a specialist knowledge of a particular chronological period (so McCallum-Barry on the Renaissance and Wallace on the eighteenth century), social or institutional context (Ronnick on African American women classicists shortly after Abolition, Hallett on Yale, Fowler on publishing history), a perceived personal intellectual debt (McManus on Macurdy, Parker on Dale), or unique access to archival material (Braginskaya on Freidenberg). As editors we have asked all the contributors for basic biographical data about their subjects, an estimation of their scholarly achievements and a consideration of how they managed, or failed to manage, the relationship between their personal/domestic and their intellectual/professional lives. But beyond these basic constituents, we have
allowed our contributors an unusually free hand in choosing what to include in what are in most cases deeply felt personal assessments of their subjects.

The volume’s earliest study begins in the mid-fifteenth century and the final chapter draws it to a close with the analysis of Jacqueline de Romilly (1913–2010). The women discussed were all born before the outbreak of World War I, and are all dead. Requirements of space necessitated these somewhat arbitrary cut-off dates, but they have not been unproblematic. They meant, for example, that we could not include the resilient and brilliant Iza Bieżuńska-Malowist (1917–1995) of the Warsaw Institute of History, and a world-leader on the topics of ancient women and slaves; she was especially interested in the evidence for these ancient oppressed groups in the papyri of Ptolemaic Egypt.44

We decided for the purposes of the volume to narrow the definition of ‘classical scholar’ (the term we used for the conference) to ‘philologist’, meaning scholars whose training and main focus addressed the languages and literatures of the ancient ‘classical’ Greeks and Romans. Our decision to focus on philology was made partly in recognition of the advances already made in the field of the history of women in archaeology (see above). But we were also alive to the fact that the field of philology has, since the Renaissance, often offered the first point of contact for women with Classics, despite being the most challenging, in comparison with history, art, or archaeology, in terms of establishing a career.45

The boundaries of this category are, however, not easily maintained; some of our philologically trained women did produce, amongst others, specialized publications in what might now be categorized as ‘Ancient History’ (Macurdy) or ‘Ancient Philosophy’ (Fielding, Carter, Freeman) or Theology (van Schurman). The history of women specialists in ancient philosophy, mostly omitted here, is extremely rich and fascinating and

44 Her very survival of the Nazi occupation of Poland was astonishing: born into a Jewish family, she lost her parents and twenty-one other members of her immediate family. She also ran great personal risks, working for Zegota (the code name of the underground organization Rada Pomocy Zydom, or Council for Aid to Jews). Several of her works made an impact far beyond Poland through being published in or translated into French and Italian. In English, see Bieżuńska-Malowist (1965), her account of the study of the ancient world in post-war Poland.

45 We are grateful to Chris Stray for pointing this out.
certainly needs scholarly attention: Clémence Ramnoux (1905–1997), for example, wrote several important studies of the Pre-Socratics, taught at the University of Algiers between 1958 and 1963, and then helped to found the University of Nanterre alongside Paul Ricoeur and Jean-François Lyotard. We have also excluded the poet, journalist, translator, and playwright Helen Waddell (1889–1965), because, although she was a peerless Latinist, and her translations were influential, the Latin verse that most interested her was medieval rather than classical.

There are several other august figures in the intellectual domain broadly defined as ‘Classics’ whom we have omitted, albeit with great reluctance. The reason is that in a field as open and inherently interdisciplinary—or transdisciplinary—as the study of people who spoke Greek and Latin in the ancient world, it is inevitable that some famous names are primarily associated with fields other than languages and literature, for example with ancient art and archaeology, even though their impact was profound on philological studies as well. One is the great Margarete Bieber (1879–1978), forced as a Jew to move from Giessen University to Barnard College, New York, in 1934. Her archaeological work, amongst other things, changed how we understand the performance of ancient theatre scripts. Lilly Ross Taylor (1886–1969), the fourth female Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, devoted most of her career to building the prestigious department of Classics at Bryn Mawr, where she supervised other outstanding women (including the Silver Latinist who arrived from Switzerland, Berthe Marie Marti (1904–1995)). Although Taylor was Professor of Latin, and her books read by everyone interested in Roman culture, her research interests were profoundly historical in their focus on Roman religion and politics. Much the same applies to her close friend and Bryn Mawr colleague Agnes Kirsopp Michels (1909–1993). Another scholar who certainly deserved her own chapter is Margherita Guarducci.

46 Thanks to Charles Delattre for information on Ramnoux, whose books include important studies of Heraclitus (1959) and Parmenides (1979). For a short biography, see Delholme and Sinapi (n.d.).

47 Thanks to Vera Binder for rightly insisting that we honour Bieber in this Introduction. There is a full bibliography of her works in Bonfante and Winkes (1969). Further information about her can be found in Bonfante and Recke (1981), Harrison (1978), and Obermayer (2014).


49 See Linderski (1997).
(1902–1999), who made epigraphy and archaeology her speciality, but whose publications had an impact across the entire discipline of Classics. There is a long list of other significant women classicists born before de Romilly of whom we have been unable to include any extended discussion, but who we hope will become the subjects of future research: see the ‘Appendix’, pp. 23–8.

Some themes emerge time and again, such as the importance of letter-writing between women scholars, and the question of which ancient authors seem by some unconscious consensus to have been perceived as more or less suitable for women to attempt to study; amongst the Greek historians, for example, at least until the daring de Romilly, the ‘accessible’ Xenophon and ‘chatty’ Herodotus feature much more regularly in connection with the work of female scholars than do the ‘rigorous’ and ‘austere’ Thucydides and Polybius. Another recurrent topic is the boredom of academically inclined girls and women, driven to prop up Classics books on stoves and ironing boards. Ronnick’s chapter describes Charlotte Hawkins Brown (1883–1961), the granddaughter of slaves, spotted while pushing a pram when she was working as a babysitter; with the other hand she was holding open her Latin book to read the Aeneid. But besides the African American classicists whom Ronnick discusses, and the exceptional Grace Macurdy, an impoverished carpenter’s daughter, most of the women featured in this book were middle-class or above. A personal fortune has always allowed women the freedom to throw themselves into intense study, as in the case of Ada Adler, discussed in the essay by Roth. Elizabeth Carter set out with determination to acquire the independence that would allow her to buy her own house and live the life of a full-time ‘Bluestocking’ without domestic responsibilities, as Wallace’s chapter reveals. But many of our subjects found themselves teaching Classics or publishing translations because, although nominally middle-class, they desperately needed the money—Bathsua Makin and Sarah Fielding in particular.

Many of our scholars were born into intellectual Jewish or Protestant families with advanced views on female education. Several Hellenists were

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50 On this we have learned much from Campbell and Larsen (2009).
51 See Hall (forthcoming a) and (forthcoming b) and e.g. the edition of Herodotus book VII by Agnata Butler, neé Ramsay (1892).
52 See Ronnick’s chapter in this volume, p. 182.
actually, like Hall, the daughters of protestant priests. Many had brothers with whom they were educated, or whose education they somehow succeeded in ‘overhearing’ sufficiently to absorb. Just as our volume contains just one essay by a man, Roland Mayer (who has always fostered the careers of women), so the names of certain individual men recur as loyal friends and supporters of women. They include the American Tenney Frank, George Warr, Professor at King’s College London, who campaigned tirelessly for women’s access to Higher Education, and the Australian who made his home in Britain, Gilbert Murray. Some women classical scholars seem to have chosen or been forced to tolerate personal isolation, neither marrying nor having children; in the case of some of the ‘spinsters’ in this volume, however, remaining single seems to have been a deliberate choice, happily taken, whether because they were self-aware lesbians or simply did not want to give up their freedom to take up the limiting roles of wife and mother. Others had numerous children, in whom they appear to have delighted even while complaining about the drudgery of childcare and endless hours away from their books.

Whether these female scholars married or remained single, they were equally faced with the task of ‘negotiating’ their gender in managing perceptions, and often judgements, of their scholarly activities. Modesty, and the acknowledgement of female inferiority, is a recurrent rhetorical *topos*, crossing centuries and countries, in the classical scholarship and translations produced by these women. Assertions of femininity are also a leitmotif running through the academic lives of many of them; they are used by the female classicists themselves in the complex strategies by which they justified their position as well as by their male supporters and detractors. Such assertions attempt to ‘normalize’ these female philologists; notorious examples are Samuel Johnson’s claim that Elizabeth Carter was able to make plum pudding as well as translate Epictetus.

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53 Tenney Frank (1876–1939) taught at Bryn Mawr between 1904 and 1919, and remained a loyal supporter of the women scholars there throughout his life. See Taylor (1939). One of his many protégées was Evelyn Holst Clift, author of an important book on Latin pseudepigrapha (1945).
55 Murray was a strong supporter of women’s suffrage and of classics at Somerville College, Oxford. He promoted the work of Somervillians including Homeric archaeologist Hilda Lorimer and ancient historian Isobel Henderson. Thanks to Luke Pitcher for information on these women.
(see Wallace’s chapter, p. 150) and Saint-Simon’s double-edged comment that Anne Dacier was perfectly capable of conversing, like an ordinary woman, about fashion and hair styles (see Wyles’ chapter, p. 75, n.73). Belonging to the same category are the press photographs taken to record the event of Jacqueline de Romilly (then David) winning first prize for Latin translation and second prize for Greek in the national competition (Concours général), aged 17 (see Webb’s chapter). The potential threat posed by her astounding success was, arguably, mediated by these glamorous press photographs; see FIG. 19.1. De Romilly herself would choose to assert her femininity on her prestigious election to the Académie Française by requesting a modification of the traditional (male) uniform—replacing the trousers with a skirt and the sword with a handbag; see further Webb’s chapter, p. 378. As with almost all these assertions of femininity, the gesture remains insistently ambiguous. In fact, the analytical challenge presented by these assertions exemplifies the complexity of the subject as a whole.

Before the later nineteenth century, women had virtually no access to Classics teaching or careers as institutionalized in schools and universities. Learned women who spout classical quotations are regularly mocked in popular eighteenth-century literature, as they were in Juvenal’s misogynist sixth Satire, prompting Samuel Richardson’s friend Anne Donnellan to ask him indignantly, ‘Must we suppose that if a woman knows a little Greek and Latin she must be a drunkard, and virago?’ The exception who proves the rule is the prodigious Clotilde Tambroni (1758–1817), who achieved institutional recognition long before women in most parts of the world could even attend university, in 1806 being appointed to the Chair of Greek Language and Literature at Bologna. In her long and eloquent inaugural address, which suggests her interest lay in ancient philosophy and science, she calls attention to the unique honour she has been paid as a woman in being institutionally recognized by a university. On the first page, she cites Hypatia of Alexandria as her

56 The press interest was apparently headed up by Pierre Lazareff, journalist and later film producer, on whom see Delassein (2009). The photograph published in Paris Soir (Sunday 6 July 1930) demonstrates the feminizing glamour of these shots even more clearly, since it shows de Romilly posed lounging (almost lying) on a wall.

57 See p. 106.
own ancestral heroine.\textsuperscript{58} She even composed verse in Greek, which was generally believed to be beyond the capacity of even the most erudite lady \textsuperscript{59}

But when our narrative arrives at the mid-nineteenth century, the importance of institutions dedicated to women’s education becomes overwhelmingly obvious, especially in the case of the African American women scholars discussed by Ronnick. They of course faced double the obstacles, placed in their path by both their race and their gender. Once women’s colleges were established, however, the battle was far from over; women scholars were everywhere ridiculed in the cartoon press. See, for example, this sketch by William Hanks, published under the pseudonym Fig. 1.2 Etching of Clotilde Tambroni, dated to first half of the 19th century. Designed by Lodovico Aureli, etched by Angiolini. Courtesy of the Biblioteca comunale dell’Archiginnasio, Bologna.

\textsuperscript{58} Tambroni (1806) 1. Many thanks to Henry Stead for helping us track this text down.  
\textsuperscript{59} See Cavallari Cantalamessa (1907), Tosi (1988), Tosi (2011), and Tambroni (1806). Thanks to Enrico Emanuele Prodi for help here.
Madge Wildfire, in the magazine of Glasgow University. It provides its male readership with an illustrated guide to the women to pursue and avoid at Queen Margaret College for Women at the moment the institutions merged in 1891. The pretty one has a book labelled ‘Music’ and is sketching. The ugly one has books labelled ‘Plato’, ‘Aristotle’, and ‘Sophocles’ [FIG. 1.3]. Gloyn shows in detail how difficult it was, moreover, for women dons at Cambridge to wrest the more prestigious teaching from the hands of the men. But in the early days of women’s Higher Education in Classics, and the emergence of a class of professional women scholars after the social upheavals and consequent opportunities for women caused by World War I, a crucial role emerged for networks between colleges where women could study Classics, revealed not only in the essays by Ronnick and Gloyn, but those by Hallett, McManus, Mayer, and Parker.

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60 For context see Eschbach (1993).
Achieving a tenured post at a university, or having a thesis accepted for publication, has never been the final obstacle faced by women classicists. They have suffered routinely not only at the hands of prejudiced, misogynist and/or priapic males but all too often from being undermined by other women, envious of their achievements. Some have been prepared to use most unsisterly means to impede their rivals’ careers (see especially the feud which Abby Leach ran against Grace Macurdy at Vassar College, analysed in the chapter by McManus). Women classicists’ performance has always been subjected to especially intense scrutiny, which has meant that they have had to be twice or three times as good at what they do as their male equivalents, just to win equal rewards. Patriarchal societies suffer from a mass delusion that information imparted by women is unreliable—the delusion which philosopher Miranda Fricker calls ‘epistemic injustice’ against women.61 Doubting women’s authority remains an international menace. At its most extreme, under Sharia law, women’s evidence is officially worth half or quarter of a man’s, if admissible at all. At the other end of the spectrum, it has merely impeded women’s progress in professions where custody of the truth is central—the church, the law, and undoubtedly academia.

When publications by women are reviewed, especially if they have dared to encroach on such traditionally ‘rigorous’ territory as textual criticism, metre or ancient science, the vocabulary used, at least by some men, has often been demonstrably different from that applied to books by men. Take the review by ‘heavyweight’ Hellenist Friedrich Solmsen of Kathleen Freeman’s Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers (see Irwin’s chapter in this volume), which sounded the first notes of warning that someone without a Y chromosome had dared to essay the fiendishly problematic fragments of early Greek philosophy. Solmsen grudgingly admits that the Ancilla will have ‘a certain usefulness’ and concludes that it is ‘clear, straightforward, and also—generally—accurate’. But in between, his vocabulary suggests that it is completely inadequate. Freeman’s translations are ‘dangerous’, ‘misleading’, ‘stultified’, ‘over-emphatic’, ‘vague’, and ‘inappropriate’.62 The critical analysis of the use of language relative to gender in reviews of classical scholarship would be a most fruitful direction

62 Solmsen (1950).
in which to take future research into the historical experience of women in our discipline.

One of the reasons why Freeman was often denigrated by men at the centre of the Classics power networks, in terms of money, influence over appointments and so on, was that she was not only skilled at communicating with the public, but felt it was her duty, as a scholar, to do so. This conviction was shared by Betty Radice, whose towering achievements in publishing are assessed here by Rowena Fowler. It underpinned the work of Edith Hamilton, as Hallett explains in chapter 11, and of Simone Weil, about whom Barbara Gold writes in chapter 19. We have included Weil, even though neither she nor her contemporaries would have defined her as a ‘classical scholar’, because her essay on the Iliad has had such a lasting impact on that epic’s interpretation both in and beyond the academy.

Many of the women discussed in this volume have shared these women’s talents for writing for the public. Paradoxically, the person who did most to promote the study of ancient Greek drama in English-speaking countries knew scarcely a word of Greek herself. Charlotte Ramsay Lennox, like Elizabeth Carter, was a member of Samuel Johnson’s circle. She was much admired by distinguished male contemporaries: Garrick produced her plays, Reynolds painted her portrait, and Fielding and Richardson both admired her novels. She was not popular amongst the other women in the coterie, probably because Johnson seems to have regarded her as by far the most intellectually gifted.63 She is best known for her novels, but she also played the leading role in the multi-authored English translation of the single most influential work on Greek drama in the eighteenth century, Pierre Brumoy’s three-volume Le Théâtre des Grecs (Paris 1730).

Brumoy (1668–1742), from Rouen, was a Jesuit Humanist. His magnum opus on Greek drama excels not only in terms of the quality of his translations from the Greek, but the acuity of his critical insights. If it was Lennox herself who first conceived the plan to translate it into English, then this is an index of her grasp of the innovative publications issuing from France during the Enlightenment, as well as her sense of the yawning

63 After dining with Elizabeth Carter, Fanny Burney, and Hannah More on 14 March 1784, Johnson announced that ‘Three such women are not to be found; I know not where I could find a fourth, except Mrs Lennox, who is superior to them all’ (Boswell (1791) vol. 2, 75).
gap in the market for an authoritative English-language study of ancient Greek drama.64 Her translation appeared as The Greek Theatre of Father Brumoy, Translated by Mrs Charlotte Lennox, in 1759. It contains translations of several ancient Greek dramas by the tragedians and Aristophanes, and plot summaries of all of them. At this time most of Aeschylus, Euripides, and Aristophanes remained untranslated into English altogether; of the four great classical Athenian playwrights, only Sophocles had ever appeared in complete English translation. The Brumoy/Lennox translation was therefore an exceptionally important publication in the history of accessibility of ancient drama in the English language.65 Its popularity almost certainly hastened the provision of translations of the complete plays of both Aeschylus and Sophocles in the 1770s, and of most of Aristophanes over the ensuing decades.66

Lennox herself translated several of the plays, synopses, and almost all the commentary from Brumoy’s French. But she was assisted by several friends whom she approached to take responsibility for parts of the work. These collaborators included the fifth Earl of Cork and Orrery, Gregory Sharpe (a good Hellenist who used his Greek as well as his French to produce the translation of Aristophanes’ Frogs), and Samuel Johnson, who translated the chapter on Greek comedy. As Small says, that Lennox could summon such distinguished accomplices shows that she enjoyed not only fame but also ‘a solid literary respectability and approbation’.67 Among the others, however, was a mysterious, extremely competent, and anonymous ‘young gentleman’, who was responsible for Aristophanes’ Birds and Peace. We may even be dealing with a concealed female classicist here; Schellenberg suggests that ‘he’ was actually Mrs Sarah Scott the novelist, Charlotte Lennox’s close colleague at the time. The two women were both impoverished, and members of extended networks of women forced to earn their living by their pens.68

Yet Lennox was acutely aware of the chasm between her intellectual potential and the literary arena in which, as a woman, she had been
confined. Arabella, the heroine of her most famous novel *The Female Quixote*, has had her brains addled by reading too many French romances. But she is also disputatious. She argues with Mr Selvin about the springs at Thermopylae and holds philosophical discussions. Lennox therefore both personifies and also, by her life’s work, implicitly undermines the eighteenth century’s polar thinking on gender and genre explored further in the chapter by Hall in this volume. This ideology decreed that women could only understand fiction and that only men could understand the Classics.

Our volume seeks to challenge such constructs, by revealing them to be exactly that—constructs. It unearths the empirical counter-evidence for female achievements in a dazzling range of philological areas. It is, for example, irrefutable (though easily overlooked) that some of the first complete vernacular translations of classical texts were made by women. These hard-won and important contributions, against the odds of prejudice, educational disadvantage, and limited institutional support, deserve to be celebrated not only as achievements in themselves but for what we might learn from them about the operation of history and the making of the historical record. The excavation of a selection of female classical scholars whose contribution to the classical tradition and whose reputation has fallen, unfairly, into obscurity, is intended as a starting-point and invitation to others to develop the re-telling of that history. We hope that this volume will offer a framework for future research in this area, a few leads for which are offered in the Appendix. Over a century and a half after Princess Ida’s exhortation, it’s time to begin unsealing the fountain of knowledge about the history of women classicists.

**Appendix**

The women classicists discussed in our volume worked in Italy, England, France, Germany, Holland, Portugal, Denmark, Russia, and the United

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69 Lennox (1752) 265–6; see Hamilton (2011) 111. The influence on Lennox of Mary Astell’s *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694, 1697), on which see further Hall’s chapter, p. 116, has been proposed by Hamilton (2011) 127 n.53.

70 Lumley (on whom see McCallum’s chapter); Thott (see above), and Dacier (on whom see the chapters by Fabre-Serris and Wyles) constitute just a few examples.
States. We regret not having included essays devoted to two scholars in particular. One is Marie Delcourt (1891–1979), the Belgian philologist, and passionate feminist, who gained her PhD at Liège in 1919, and became the first woman to lecture in ancient languages there. A specialist in ancient religion and Greek tragedy, she edited Euripides and published prolifically, as well as being an expert on cookery and Thomas More.\(^{71}\) The other is Mary Estelle White (1908–1977), Toronto professor, a pillar of Canadian classics, and editor of the premiere Canadian Classics journal *The Phoenix*.\(^{72}\)

There have been many whom we would like to celebrate because they were so important to their pupils and students, but who published little or nothing: two examples here will suffice. Ethel Mary Steuart (1875–1960) was headmistress of Bootle High School for Girls and later lectured in Latin at both University College, Cardiff and Edinburgh. She led a long, full and fascinating life, conducting research in Paris and Rome. But she did publish just one slender tome which no specialist in Republican Latin can even now avoid consulting, her exceptionally detailed commentary on Ennius’ *Annales* (1925). The Aristotelian expert Edith Farr Ridington (1912–1991) worked all her life in the shadow of her husband Bill, a professor of Classics at the University of Western Maryland; she was given an adjunct professorship and raised their four children. But she published some insightful reviews of children’s books using classical literature, tested on her own infants, which still make interesting reading today.\(^{73}\)

These women are hardly the only ones whom it seems invidious to have omitted from extended consideration. With the help of a transnational classics community who replied to us after we posted a request in 2015 on the Facebook group ‘Classics International’, we have been able to identify a sizeable number of other foremothers, each of whom deserves scholarly attention. We simply supply the names and basic information here in the hope of encouraging further research by those best placed linguistically, institutionally, and in terms of access to archives to carry it out.

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\(^{71}\) Thanks to Gabriel Nocchi for information on Delcourt. For further bibliography see Delforge, Destatte, and Libon (2000) vol. 1, 437.


\(^{73}\) Ridington (1963) and (1965); see further Hall (forthcoming c).
There were many distinguished women classicists who worked, often in difficult circumstances, to keep the study of Latin and Greek alive in universities of the Soviet bloc. Ruska Gandeva (1911–2001), lecturer at Sofia University, and subsequently appointed the first female professor of Classics in Bulgaria, published books on Latin poetry, some of which were translated into German. She also co-authored the first concise Latin grammar written in Bulgarian.\textsuperscript{74} The most famous Georgian woman classicist was Nino Matiashvili, born in 1907, a favourite pupil of the prominent Georgian scholar Grigol Tsereteli and notable Russian classicist Sergey Sobolevsky. She became the first female lecturer in Ancient Greek and Latin at Tbilisi State University.\textsuperscript{75} In Poland, Leokadia Malunowiczówna (1910–1980) was a renowned specialist in early Christian antiquity; Zofia Abramowiczówna (1906–1988), a Hellenist known for her translations from Greek and Latin, was most famous for her Greek-Polish Dictionary. Daniela Gromska (1889–1983) translated Aristotle. Janina Niemirskas-Pliszczyńska (1904–1982) was an authority on Pausanias and Plutarch, and Lidia Winniczuk (1904–1993) published numerous academic and popular books on antiquity.\textsuperscript{76}

At Tartu State University in Estonia, Lydia Pintman (1896–1951) was Senior Lecturer in Latin in the Classical Philology Department, while Lalla Gross (1912–2008) taught Latin and Greek there for forty years to hundreds of students of philology, history, medicine, and pharmaceutical science. She also held classes of Ancient Greek for those interested. She published several Latin language textbooks and was one of the compilers of the 1986 standard Latin-Estonian dictionary (\textit{Ladina-eestisõnaraamat = Glossarium Latino-Estonicum}).\textsuperscript{77} Translation has often been an activity where women have been able to exercise their classical accomplishments when neither institutional employment nor access to advanced research resources has been available: Maria Grabar-Passek (1893–1975), the

\textsuperscript{74} We owe the information about Gandeva to Dimitar Dragnev. Gandeva’s influential book on Horace, for example, received a German translation (Gandeva (1992)).

\textsuperscript{75} Thanks to Irine Darchia for details about Matiashvili. We are also grateful to her for details about Tinatin Kaukhchishvili (1919–2011), who studied philology at Tbilisi State University (TSU) and was appointed Professor of Classics there in 1968. Her publications included important work on Greek inscriptions in Georgia. Though Kaukhchishvili was born just after our cut-off date (before the outbreak of World War I), we offer this lead to those whose studies may extend beyond this.

\textsuperscript{76} Thanks to Aleksandra Kłeczar for supplying these details.

\textsuperscript{77} Thanks to Ivo Volt for this information.
daughter of the rector of Tartu University, Evgeny V. Passek, was a significant ‘freelance’ literary figure, who published novels, columns and theatre criticism as well as specialist studies of ancient epistolography and translations of Plato and Isocrates.  

Anica Savić Rebac (1894–1953), a Serb from Novi Sad in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was a child prodigy who translated Pindar at the age of ten. She was regarded by her Vienna Professor Ludwig Radermacher as his ‘best student ever’. She was unable to receive her PhD at Vienna because of the war and registered instead at the University of Belgrade, which awarded the degree with the highest distinction. But she was never allowed to teach there until after World War II, spending her earlier career as a school teacher after her marriage to a Muslim shocked her family’s elite social circles. The couple were forced to move to Skopje. Her academic interests included modern as well as ancient literature, philosophy and myth, especially aesthetics, tragedy, Herodotus, and Plato. She also translated Lucretius.

Romania has its distinguished classical foremother, Maria Marinescu-Himu (1907–1995), although she was born to a Greek mother and a father with both Greek and Romanian blood. She graduated in Classics from Bucharest University, and after three years as a librarian began teaching in both local schools and the university until 1972. She moved to Athens in 1978. Her publications include translations into Romanian of Xenophon and Pausanias, and a study of early Greek philosophy, as well as numerous works on medieval and modern Greek literature.

German-speaking scholars represent a most unfortunate lacuna in our volume, caused partly by the sudden and in one case very late withdrawal from our project, for personal reasons, of two separate scholars who had agreed to contribute. While Hilary Brown has brilliantly explored the activities of Luise Gottsched, Fräulein von Erath, and Ernestine Christine Reiske, as eighteenth-century female translators into German of classical texts, much work still remains to be done on nineteenth- and
twentieth-century female classical scholars in Germany.\textsuperscript{81} Too late we discovered Emilie Boer (1894–1980),\textsuperscript{82} a classicist who specialized in the history of astronomy, especially Claudius Ptolemy. Trained in Heidelberg, in the GDR she was appointed to a fellowship at the Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin. The Austrian scholar Gertrud Herzog (1894–1953) studied Classical Philology, German, and philosophy in Vienna and Berlin, attending lectures and seminars by, amongst other famous figures, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Ludwig Radermacher. In 1917 she passed the \textit{Lehramtsprüfung} and worked as a teacher in a girls’ high school. But she continued to conduct research, authoring many articles for the \textit{Realenzyklopädie}, and in 1932 passing her \textit{Habilitation}, the first woman to do so in Classical Philology at Vienna University. As a Jew, married to a non-Jewish critic of the Nazi regime, she lost her directorship of the girls’ school and fled in 1939. Although they returned after the war, and she was awarded a non-stipendiary Associate Professorship at the university, her career never recovered. Her publications included editions of Greek and Latin texts as well as several monographs. One was a study of ancient Greek religion; the last, poignantly, was a significant work on women in Greco-Roman antiquity, published after her death, in 1954.\textsuperscript{83}

Post-Renaissance Italian women deserve a whole chapter, indeed a whole book, to themselves. Enrica Malcovati (1894–1990) graduated from the University of Pavia in 1917, and taught for many years at her own High School in that town, before being appointed to the Chair of Latin at Cagliari in 1940 and subsequently a Chair at Pavia. She was Dean of Faculty and Rector of the college for women. Although specializing in Republican and Augustan Roman literature, and best known for her edition of the fragments of the Roman orators (first published in 1930), her vast output included studies of Greek oratory as well.\textsuperscript{84} Luigia Achillea Stélla (1904–1998), University Professor at Trieste from 1936,
published significant books on Homer, the Palatine Anthology, and Aeschylus.85

Women have certainly made their mark in papyrology, especially in Italy and the US; Trieste-born and Jewish, Medea Norsa (1877–1952) was a phenomenally talented papyrologist and palaeographer, trained in Vienna and Florence; despite becoming director of l’Istituto Papirologico, she struggled to make a reputation separate from that of her male mentor and collaborator Girolamo Vitelli, and was never appointed to a university chair. La Papirologia (1988) by Orsolina Montevecchi (1911–2009) is a canonical textbook.86 The Belgian Claire Préaux (1904–1979) was a professor at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and a world-renowned authority on ostraca and Hellenistic papyri. Her 1959 study of the status of women in Hellenistic Egypt remains fundamental in the field.

85 Thanks to Gennaro Tedeschi for further information on Stélla.
86 We owe gratitude here to Jennifer Sheridan Moss and Silvia Barbantani. On Norsa see the Introduction to Capasso (1993) and the biography by Criscuolo (2004) on the Women in Old World Archaeology website hosted by Brown University; on Montevecchi see further Pizzolato (2009).
2

Learned Women of the Renaissance and Early Modern Period in Italy and England

The Relevance of their Scholarship

Carmel McCallum-Barry

The revival of interest in classical learning in the late fourteenth and fifteenth century and the increased activity in education and scholarship made the efforts of learned women more visible. I propose to look at some women who were part of this activity in fifteenth-century Italy and some English women who received their classical education in the sixteenth century. Not much time separates them, social attitudes to women and learning in both countries were similar, and yet different patterns emerge in what they wanted and were able to achieve.

The city states of Northern Italy were the centres of work on the classical authors and powerhouses of humanistic learning and teaching where scholars developed a system of education to transmit the culture of the ancient world to that of the Renaissance.¹ Italian women therefore were among the first to have access to the new learning while the women of England and Northern Europe had to wait a little longer. In Italy the

¹ The word *umanista* in Italian academic jargon described a teacher or student of classical literature and culture, in these pages the words humanist and classicist are used interchangeably.
social status of women had changed during the fifteenth century and we see greater acceptance of their social equality with men; the respect and admiration given to the dynamic female personalities of the time provide evidence of this. However this favourable situation only obtained in the higher levels of society, for in both Italy and in England social background was a major factor in enabling a classical education for women. The women discussed here belonged to privileged sections of society, to families who moved in circles of power and influence; family support played a key role in their achievements, many were taught by their fathers and (or) tutored along with their brothers.

Three Italian women who were active from the mid- to late-fifteenth century must represent the many who, in the intellectual sphere, were able to do the same work as male scholars. Schools run by famous humanists in the Italian cities educated the children of rulers and nobles in Latin and Greek literature, so that these women were able to further their studies outside of the family circle. Their writing shows familiarity with a wide range of ancient works, not just with the most popular authors such as Cicero, Livy, and Plato, but also with Greek dramatists and Hesiod. Like their male counterparts they were trained in the rhetoric necessary for public speaking, many of them delivered Latin speeches in public and conducted debates in Latin in their correspondence with other scholars. Command of Latin oratorical and epistolary style were key accomplishments and demanded knowledge of the works of Plato and especially Cicero, whose style in his rhetorical and philosophical works was a pattern for anyone aiming for recognition in learned circles. Letter writing was a fundamental part of literary output in the Renaissance, letters were circulated and commented on within the community of learning so they served as a way of bringing one’s work to public attention.

The earliest of these women, Isotta Nogarola (1418–66), was taught with her sisters by a pupil of the humanist educator Guarino, who had founded the famous school at the court of Ferrara. When Isotta was eighteen a friend sent some of the sisters’ Latin writings, letters in Cicero-nian style, to Guarino. These and other early letters show Isotta’s familiarity with a wide range of authors; they include references to or quotations from Cicero’s De Amicitia, De Officiis, Brutus and Pro Roscio.\(^2\) She had

also read improving Greek biography (Plutarch and Diogenes Laertius), along with some lighter material by Petronius and Aulus Gellius. In letters to some of his male correspondents Guarino expressed enthusiasm for the virgin sisters’ eloquence and Latin style and Isotta was encouraged by hearing of his praise to write directly to the great man.\(^3\) It is a conventionally modest letter in which she apologizes for daring, as a young female, to write to him ‘transgressing the rules on keeping silence which are especially imposed on women’;\(^4\) with a reference to Sophocles ‘silence adorns women’ she displays both her learning and her modesty.\(^5\) Guarino did not reply and she wrote again, reproachfully and emotionally, saying she had been scorned, especially by women, for her presumption in publicly addressing him. This time he did reply (publicly), speaking of her outstanding talents and learning and his belief she had manliness of spirit (\textit{virili animo}) with which she should overcome her woman’s nature.\(^6\)

This public exchange of letters established her in scholarly circles but clearly assessment of a woman skilled in learning was difficult; Guarino praised her intellect by typing her as a man, and other favourable reactions to her scholarly achievements have a similar tone. They are attempting to combat the more common view that a woman could not be a scholar in public view and also a moral person; it was unnatural and therefore unchaste. An extreme example of this attitude appeared in the following year (1438), when an anonymous pamphlet accused her of incest with her brother; ‘a fluent woman is never chaste’.\(^7\) Isotta seems to have been strongly affected by such hostility and, perhaps because of it, her family soon moved to Venice. They returned to Verona in 1441 where she lived in her mother’s house, continuing her work as a humanist writer and thinker. In giving up the accepted woman’s life and by living as a virginal, scholarly recluse, she avoided accusations of immorality. It is clear the life of scholarship was more important to her than marriage. We get some indications of what she studied from a letter that her brother wrote, asking the Venetian scholar Lauro Quirini for advice on reading for his sister as an advanced student in dialectic and philosophy. Quirini suggested that she read Boethius’s commentaries on Aristotle as

\(^5\) Sophocles \textit{Ajax} 293. 
\(^6\) Latin text and translation in Grafton and Jardine (1986) 52. 
\(^7\) King (1978) 809.
well as Averroes, Avicenna, and Thomas Aquinas; she should also study the Roman historians, and of course Cicero. This was a reading list that took her scholarship seriously.8

In the following years Isotta produced works in the principal genres favoured by humanists; letterbooks, dialogue, oration, and funeral consolation. Her knowledge of ancient authors is evident from allusions in her later works too, with quotations from Euripides, Hesiod, Plutarch, Virgil, Juvenal, as well as the Church Fathers. Living quietly in her mother’s house, removed from the public arena, enabled her to immerse herself in study, which in turn seemed to give her a certain confidence. In 1450 she travelled to Rome with a delegation from Verona and delivered an oration before Pope Nicolas V; she also delivered two orations to the new Bishop of Verona in 1453. Ironically or perhaps not, once she was in retreat from the world she earned recognition and praise as a paragon of saintly learning. Many famous men came to visit her in her ‘book lined cell’; she exchanged advice on books and manuscripts with her correspondents.9 Her best-known work (1451/3?) is a debate conducted in letters with her long-standing friend and correspondent, Ludovico Foscarini, a Venetian nobleman and politician, on whether Adam or Eve was most to blame for original sin (De pari aut impari Evae atque Adae peccato).10 In it she argues that Eve was less to blame than Adam because she was weak by nature; woman was created by God as ignorant and inconstant. Adam was created with more rationality so he deserved more blame. By acquiescing in the standard view of women, Isotta appears to lose the debate, as Foscarini insists that Eve’s sin of pride was the greater, but nevertheless Isotta ‘displays her formidable intellect in the course of the dialogue in such a way that she, though a woman appears in no way inferior’.11 Her intellect and wide learning in philosophy and oratory were admired by other humanists both male and female.

A similar pattern unfolds in the early career of Cassandra Fedele (1470–1558), who, like Isotta Nogarola, came to notice in her late teens. Born in Venice, she was taught Latin and Greek by her father and studied philosophy and dialectic with the classical scholar Gasparino Borro.

8 We have only Quirini’s letter to Isotta, referring to her brother’s request, the date is uncertain; Nogarola (1886) v.2. 53 and (2004) 107–13.
At sixteen she became part of a scholarly group at the University of Padua which included many noted humanists. Exchanges and debates with these men must have given her confidence for her first public display, when she delivered an oration for her cousin’s baccalaureate ceremony at the University in 1487. It was widely praised, and printed three times over the next two years, in Nuremburg as well as in Italy. No doubt because of this reception she was invited soon after to give another public oration before the Doge and Senate of Venice. Like Nogarola she gained attention through her connection with a famous male scholar, the Florentine Angelo Poliziano, friend and courtier of Lorenzo de’ Medici. Recognition by him would mean admission to the learned circles of Florence, so she sent a letter praising his achievements and displaying her own learning and Latin expertise. Poliziano replied with his own praise of her learning, opening with lines from Virgil on the girl warrior Camilla and professing himself amazed that such work as hers could come from a woman, ‘no, not from a woman but from a girl and a virgin’. He compared her to other famous females of antiquity famed in philosophy, poetry, and eloquence (the Muses, Sappho, the daughter of Hortensius, the mother of the Gracchi), concluding: ‘now we know, assuredly that [your] sex has not by its nature been condemned to slowness and stupidity.’

Poliziano visited Fedele’s home in Venice in 1490/91 and wrote to his patron Lorenzo praising her learning as well as her modesty and beauty; his attention ensured her admission to the circles of learned men in Florence around the Medici court and she went on to correspond with them on humanist topics of concern. A later letter to Poliziano was not answered, and like Nogarola she wrote again, reproachfully; he apologized for not replying, claiming that he was so overwhelmed by her learning that he was unable to put it in words. His solution was to take her letters to another learned young woman, Alessandra Scala, daughter of the chancellor of Florence. She read them aloud to the humanist circle

13 The Oratio was also published in Modena 1487, Venice 1488, and Nuremberg 1489.
16 nec eum sexum a natura tarditatis aut hebetudinis damnatum; Jardine (1985) 804–5.
17 Correspondence in Fedele (2000) 90–3; Poliziano (1915) 284–304.
there. Fedele tried to achieve the same sort of career that male humanists enjoyed in the courts of their wealthy patrons as advisors and educators; she wrote to royal rulers in Italy, Hungary, and France seeking employment as a literary member of the courts, but though the correspondence was cordial no post was offered. She exchanged letters with Queen Isabella of Spain who urged Fedele to join her court, but she did not accept the invitation. It seems that her family were unwilling to let her leave Italy after the French invasion of 1494.

Manuscripts of her orations and Latin letters were widely known in humanist Italy; they were printed in the next century and these are her only surviving works. Cassandra Fedele married a physician in 1499, and the only writings we have from the time of their marriage are two letters, presumably to him as they address a physician (unnamed) in intimate terms. After her husband died in 1521 she struggled financially and was unable to find any employment, until 1547 when the Pope appointed her prioress of an orphanage in Venice. The last mention of her in public is when she once more displayed her expertise in Cicero-nian eloquence by giving an oration before the Doge and Senate on the arrival of the Queen of Poland in Venice in 1556. She died two years later, aged eighty-eight, and was honoured with a public funeral.

Alessandra Scala, who read Fedele’s letters to the cultivated circles of Florence, had studied both with the Greek scholars in exile who were teaching at the University of Florence and later with Poliziano; on account of her father’s position, she was a part of the Florentine humanist circle. She is famous chiefly for playing the part of Electra in Sophocles’ play, done in Greek, at her father’s house. Her performance inspired an epigram from Poliziano and a letter from him to Fedele describing the occasion: ‘she took the part of Electra, virgin of virgins, and performed with such talent, art and grace… her gestures… so appropriate to the argument, covering the range of the various feelings…’ At the same time she performed humbly and modestly, with eyes kept on the ground, not at all theatrically, in a way that learned and moral men would approve. It is hard to visualize this achievement, but it meant that her virginal modesty, beauty, and purity were preserved; her Greek grammar and

pronunciation were not mentioned. A few of her Latin letters and orations survive, together with an epigram in Greek to Poliziano. Alessandra’s letter to Cassandra Fedele asking advice on whether she should marry received a non-committal answer, but despite the lack of encouragement she did marry in 1494, the Greek poet Michele Marullo. When he died six years later she gave up her studies and entered a convent.22

Looking at the experiences of these three women in fifteenth-century Italy, the importance of social background is obvious, since their families moved in circles where there were few obstacles for young girls in learning the ancient languages and studying with important classical scholars. Education was intensive and they were able to achieve much while they were young; they were stars in their teens. Lisa Jardine assesses their accomplishments as in every way similar to those of (average) contemporary male humanists; they could translate, write in different genres, produce orations, and engage in rhetorical debates.23 Through learned correspondence they became able to be part of the scholarly community and undertake research activities, seeking out and exchanging manuscripts and discussing texts. But they could not use their learning in the way that men did. It was implicit in the programme of Italian humanism that study of the ancient classics of ethics, philosophy, and oratory equipped the student with the virtue (or excellence) necessary for a successful public life; this virtue was essentially male, that of a warrior, a ruler, a public orator. A woman’s virtue was to be modest and chaste and when adult to be married and excel in domestic duties. Women therefore could not take part in public life, and putting oneself in the public eye meant being condemned as immoral. While they were unmarried and young, chaste, and guarded in their family household, the women were able to be part of scholarly circles, but rarely when they were adult. The choices then were marriage, learned seclusion or derision. So for most, their education in classical learning was an accomplishment like fine needlework or playing the lute, something to keep a young girl occupied.

Their male humanist supporters tried valiantly to emphasize that their learning accomplishments were matched by modesty, chastity, and

womanly virtue; because the women could not be discussed seriously in the same civic contexts as men, a list of exemplary women of antiquity became a standard topic in their praise. On paper these women fulfilled the ideals of classical humanism, but being recognized as equal to males made them transgressive on a social level. Although the public, civic arena was closed to them, the fact that the women discussed here pressed their case with the famous male scholars indicates that they did want to be professional scholars in the same way as men; Isotta Nogarola’s inclinations steered her towards philosophy and dialectic, Cassandra Fedele aimed at the typical humanist occupations of education and speech writing.

The new learning spread north of the Alps from around 1450 with some adaptation to local tastes and social conditions. In northern Europe, religious practices and beliefs also had a renaissance, and this affected humanistic studies. Typical of the new approach to religion was an emphasis on personal piety and finding one’s own way to lead a moral life, without formal religious rituals. Study of the Bible was an important part of the concern to find one’s own salvation and scholars extended the corpus of Greek and Latin texts to include later works, in particular the early Church Fathers and biblical commentators such as St John Chrysostom, St. Jerome, and St. Cyprian; humanism became Christian humanism. So for the English women we look at here, their experience in classical learning differed in some respects from that of their Italian counterparts. Society in England was very different from the sophisticated culture of the north Italian city states, the religious outlook was dissimilar, and education for women, even for those of good family, had not moved forward as it had in Italy. It was generally considered a waste of time since women were weak, vain, empty-headed, and needed to be kept busy. Their training was essentially for domestic duties. Not

24 They are compared with famous women of antiquity, both virgin and married; with Camilla and Penethesila as well as Penelope and the mother of the Gracchi. See Poliziano’s list in Fedele (1636) 155–6 and (2000), 90–1; Guarino (1915–19) 292–309 on Isotta Nogarola; Grafton and Jardine (1986) 35, n.15.
25 Juan Vives presented his work on the instruction of girls and women to Queen Catherine as a guide to bringing up her daughter Mary Tudor. In it he says that, ‘...woman is a weak creature and of uncertain judgement and is easily deceived.’ ‘...women become addicted to vice through reading’ i.e. reading romances; Vives (1996) 41 and 51. Richard Hynde, introducing Margaret More’s translation of the Precatio Dominica, repeats the standard view; ‘while they be sewing or spinning with their fingers (women) may cast
until the early years of the sixteenth century do we hear of young women being educated in Latin and Greek. As in Italy, they were women of high social status whose fathers played a major role in their education, and they too lived in a society where a woman’s chastity and modesty were essential achievements rather than learning.

The religious climate in sixteenth-century Europe influenced the subjects of classical scholarship for most men and had a considerable effect on the kind of work that could be produced by women for the public domain. We do not find these English women writing and delivering public orations or conducting debates on philosophical topics. The works that survive to us are mostly religious in tone and in a second-hand mode; it was acceptable for women to translate meditations on religious texts and commentaries on the Bible made by learned men, but not to write such things themselves. Translations therefore form the bulk of the surviving work of women classicists of the Tudor period.

Humanism in England was fostered by Henry VIII, and at the forefront of humanist activities was Thomas More, his friend, courtier, and later Chancellor [FIG. 2.1]. More was also a close friend of the celebrated Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus, who frequently stayed at his house and the two men collaborated on several works. More was linked in other ways to European humanism, through Englishmen who had studied in Italy, and he learned Greek from Thomas Linacre who had studied with Poliziano in Florence. In his progressive, humanist family, education was of prime importance and More maintained a household school in which his own children and those of relatives and friends were taught Latin, Greek, Rhetoric, Logic, Mathematics, Philosophy, Astronomy, and Theology. The star of the school was his eldest daughter, Margaret (1504–44), whose wide learning in Latin and Greek was acknowledged by some of the best scholars in Europe, such as Juan Vives (tutor to Princess, later Queen, Mary), and, of course, by Erasmus.

and compass many peevish fantasies in their minds’; M. More (1526) a4r. spelling modernized). Erasmus’ comments on the excellent More girls (see note 28) shows the behaviour usually expected from young women.

26 Subjects studied: More (1947), letter 63 to W. Gonell (a tutor in More’s household), 101, and 106–8 to his ‘School’ (toti scholae suae), which as well as his own children included those of friends and relatives. Also see Stapleton (1928) 98–111.

27 Vives (1996) 39 says of the More sisters that ‘their father... also took pains that they should be very learned: this way they would be more truly and steadfastly chaste’.
Fig. 2.1 Thomas More and family, with Margaret seated on the floor second from the right, print by Christian von Mechel, 1787, after Hans Holbein the Younger's compositional sketch for his now lost painting. Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2016.
Their father encouraged Margaret and her sisters, in 1521, to write Latin letters to Erasmus, who thereafter frequently praised the accomplishments of the More girls in his correspondence with humanist friends in Europe. More also made sure that their Latin writings were seen by eminent men in England, showing them to the Bishop of Exeter and Reginald (later Cardinal) Pole; Margaret and her sister even debated in Latin in front of Henry VIII. More’s presentation of his daughters was more than a proud father showing off his children’s accomplishments and seems to have been part of a concerted programme to promote the status of humanist learning and education. Many humanists were supporters of women’s education and were anxious to stress that women could be both good and learned. More and Erasmus, while trying to promote the status of humanism as a whole were also working to change the attitudes of people of northern Europe towards the education of women which lagged far behind the situation we saw in Italy. To this end, the connections between learning and virtue continued to be asserted. A letter from Erasmus to Guillaume Budé demonstrates these concerns, ‘It was not always believed that letters are of value to the virtue of young women. I myself once held this opinion but More completely converted me... There is nothing that more occupies the mind of a young girl than study... this protects the mind from dangerous idleness.’

It has been noted how in his letters Erasmus is careful to construct himself as unworldly and studious, while at the same time strictly supervising the letters’ publication as part of a humanist advertising campaign. He and his friend More are doing something similar here to prove that a woman can be virtuous as well as learned.

This does not detract from Margaret More’s considerable accomplishments, and she played an important part in the campaign to show that women could achieve much the same as men. In 1521 she married

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28 To Budé, in 1521 he describes the scene in the school; ‘You never see the girls idle or busied with the trifles that women enjoy; they have a Livy in their hands’; CWE vol. 8, 294–6, Ep. 1233. All references to Erasmus’ letters are to the standard translation offered by CWE; the Latin text for the letters can be accessed in Erasmus (1906–58) in which the letter numeration is the same as CWE. According to More’s biographer, Erasmus called the school the ‘Platonic Academy of the Christian Religion’, which sums up the ambitions of Christian humanist activists. Stapleton (1928), 96. See also Erasmus to Ulrich Hutten; CWE vol. 7, 15–25, Ep. 999, for a portrait of More’s household.
29 Erasmus to Bude; CWE vol. 8, 2946, Ep. 1233.
William Roper and much of her learned work was done after her marriage. However, it continued to be the case that even if a woman was able to produce a work that displayed expertise in classical learning, it was necessary to insist that she was too modest to make it public. Before the birth of her first child in 1523, her father wrote to Margaret praising her love of virtue as well as of literature and art; saying that her studies are enough to content her and she does not seek public praise, ‘you regard us—you your husband and myself—as a sufficiently large circle of readers for all that you write’. The letter depicts his learned daughter conforming to the traditional views of a modest and virtuous woman, a good wife and daughter, and a wonderful advertisement for female learning.

Her father was often abroad on the King’s business, and they wrote frequently to each other in Latin; she also wrote Greek and Latin verse and Latin speeches, besides translating Latin works into English. But most of these proofs of her classical learning have disappeared, because until recently the works of her father were more prized and published; their Latin styles were similar and it may well be that some of her work was attributed to him. Only a few letters remain, together with a translation of the *Precatio Dominica*, a devotional work by Erasmus on the Lord’s Prayer published in 1523 (soon after the letter by More, mentioned earlier, which implied that her works would not be published).

Her translation was remarkable for several other reasons. The first edition appeared only a year after Erasmus’ own work, and was one of the first translations into English by any sixteenth-century humanist. Tyndale had translated Erasmus’ *Handbook of a Christian Knight* in 1522 but English prose was not fully developed as a literary vehicle; Margaret More was therefore at the forefront with work that ‘places her well ahead of her time’. Her translation was acknowledged as a work of major importance in making Erasmus’ view of devotional piety available to the public who knew no Latin and were eager for such material; two further editions came very quickly. The skill and merits of her translation were widely acknowledged then and continue to be studied and approved today; it was not only done by a woman but done very well. She also had a scholarly eye for the manuscript text; we learn from

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32. M. More (1526, 2nd ed.).
More’s biographers that she had helped Erasmus with a textual emendation for a meaningless passage in the letters of St. Cyprian by suggesting reading *nervos* for *nisi vos*.

Thomas More resigned as Chancellor in 1532 as he refused to agree to Henry’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon and the resulting break from the papacy. He was accused of treason, imprisoned in the Tower of London, and executed there in 1535. Margaret visited and wrote to him frequently when he was in the Tower and we have a letter from her to her stepsister Alice Alington belonging to this period. It appears to repeat a conversation Margaret had with her father in which she asked him to consider all the reasons why he should take the oath of loyalty to Henry, while he explains why he will not. It is set in a dialogue form with an argument modelled on Plato’s *Crito*, where Crito visits Socrates in prison and enumerates reasons why Socrates should compromise with the state of Athens in order to save his life. Form and conclusion mirror Socrates’ decision to abide by his own principles and face death. Since 1557 the authorship of this letter has been questioned, some believing that More himself composed it, others that Margaret did and others that they collaborated on the work as they often had done before. It does not matter because, whatever the truth, it demonstrates that the More family, male and female, were all expected to be familiar with the dialogues of Plato.

The education given to More’s daughters was unusual at the time. It was not common even for girls of high rank to learn Latin and Greek until Katherine Parr, the last wife of Henry VIII (married in 1543), reorganized the education for children in the royal household. Katherine’s patronage created a scholarly circle which provided tutors for the children of the royal family and the court, so the future queens of England, Mary and Elizabeth, were trained in the same way as their brother Edward (Edward VI, 1547–53). The royal example was followed by the noble families at court, so that educating girls came into fashion. Roger Ascham was one of the tutors at court; in a letter to the German

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34 Roper and Harpsfield (1963) 98–9 and Stapleton (1928) 113. Stapleton, writing in 1588, says he was told this by John Clements, a Greek scholar and husband of Margaret Giggs, More’s foster daughter.

35 T. More (1947) 206; Margaret’s letters were bound in with her father’s.

humanist Johannes Sturm, he named Lady Jane Grey as one of the two most learned ladies in England; she had learned Latin and Greek from the age of seven and also studied Hebrew in order to read the Bible. As for Elizabeth, even when she was Queen she continued with her classical studies, and was able to deliver *ex tempore* speeches in Latin. Ascham reported too that she read ‘more Greek everyday than some prebendary of this Church doth read Latin in a week’. 

Ascham’s second learned lady was not of the royal family but did move in court circles. She was Mildred Cooke (1526–89), eldest of the four daughters of Anthony Cooke, tutor to Edward VI. All of the girls were trained in Greek and Latin and all made good marriages to men of influence at court, especially Mildred, who married William Cecil, later Lord Burghley, Elizabeth’s secretary and chief advisor. The Queen could read, translate, and publish what she chose, but the Reformation had closed off a great deal of literature for other women and limited what they were able to circulate publicly. So the Cooke sisters, like most women in Protestant Tudor England, exercised their abilities mainly on religious works and in particular on translations.

Mildred was interested in the early Church Fathers. She translated a sermon by St. Basil and extracts from St. John Chrysostom. Her sister Anne translated Latin sermons by the Italian Calvinist Ochino and other religious material including the official text justifying the Church of England, *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae*. Personal piety and involvement in the politics of strengthening the Church of England account in part for their choice of work, for they were strongly Protestant, but it is clear that women were kept from producing any original work where they might express their own opinions. For the Cookes and for others, translation of religious or moralizing material was an approved and non-threatening outlet for their learning, good enough for a woman. Even as translators women had to take care to stay within their accepted role

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37 Ascham (1570) 37 and (1989) 166. 38 Ascham (1570) 67–8. 39 The others were Anne, Elizabeth, and Katherine. 40 Bowden (2005) 55–6 with n.10. The piece of Chrysostom is now lost but the MS of her St. Basil translation is in the British Library, Royal MS 17.B.xviii. Bowden’s account of her library shows that Greek works predominate. 41 Cooke Bacon (1564) A1r–R6r. 42 Women were patronized even as patrons. John Florio dedicated his translation of Montaigne to the Duchess of Bedford and her mother as ‘... (this) defective edition (since all translations are reputed femalls) delivered at second hand’; Florio (1603).
and be modest and apologetic about their work Anne Cooke’s translation of the *Apologia* was crucial in disseminating the principal tenets of the Protestant religion to the majority of the population who had no Latin. Like Margaret More’s translation of Erasmus, it was important and well done; but Matthew Parker (Archbishop of Canterbury), in his preface to her work, insists that she was too modest to think of publishing it but left it to his judgment.43

We get a better notion of the Cookes’ wider familiarity with Latin and Greek from their letters. Elizabeth quotes Virgil, *Aeneid* 1. 149–50 on *sedatio* when she writes to her brother-in-law Cecil to warn about slanders against him.44 Anne writes in Latin to her son asking him to testify for the reformed religion, but turns to Greek to make rude comments about an archbishop because she expects the messenger to open the letter. Other letters show the same practice. Latin is used to convey personal opinions and Greek for anything subversive.45 Training in verse composition was an integral part of learning Greek and Latin, and the writing of epigrams and epitaphs was an approved creative activity for women probably because they were personal and limited in length. In a short Greek poem, Mildred describes the taming of wild nature in a garden using phrases from Hesiod’s *Works and Days* as her starting-point.46 Elizabeth was praised for her epitaphs in Latin, Greek, and English.47 Katherine, meanwhile, wrote a Latin epitaph for herself, with Greek verse added by her sister Elizabeth.

To modern thinking, these women were intellectually confined in a stifling religious straitjacket and had to use their learning in a subdued and marginalized way, as translators of works by male authors. However, translation could be a sort of weapon, a stealthy way in which learned women could influence religious thinking. Since they could within limits decide the content that those without training in classical languages could read, what they chose to translate and make accessible was their contribution to debate.

43 Cooke Bacon (1564) Preface, π3r and π3v.
47 The few preserved lines of the sisters’ poetry with their MS numbers are collected in Stevenson (2005) 449–54.
An exception to the limited avenues of expression open to women described earlier is a translation of a Greek tragedy by a young noblewoman, Lady Jane Lumley (1537–78). She was born Fitzalan, daughter of the Earl of Arundel, a successful and astute politician. Although a Catholic, he served on the Council of Edward VI, then with Mary and also under Elizabeth I, and his daughter was taught Latin and Greek like the daughters of the royal family.48 She married Baron Lumley,49 a college friend of her brother; the couple went on to collect the largest private library in England at the time. They also made translations together. Her translation of Euripides’ *Iphigeneia at Aulis* was made ca. 1553 and was probably the first version of Euripides in English.50 *Iphigenia at Aulis* was the second play of Euripides that Erasmus had translated into Latin in 1506 after *Hecuba* (1504), and it seems probable that Lumley relied on his *Iphigenia* for her own work.

As often in Euripides’ plays, the themes of sacrifice, politics, and marriage as political process form a subtext to the surface narrative; Iphigenia gives her life as a sacrifice to the goddess Artemis for the good of the state (Greece) and for the honour of her father, Agamemnon. The newly married Lady Lumley clearly found these themes congenial and significant, and she dedicated her translation, *The Tragedie of Iphigenia*, to her father. Her engagement with the play is even more complex if we consider the political situation in the year(s) during which her translation was made.

Edward VI died on 6 July 1553, having named Lady Jane Grey as his successor. She reigned for nine days, with Protestant support, until Edward’s Catholic sister Mary was declared queen on 19 July; Jane Grey was imprisoned and executed in February 1554. Lady Lumley was Catholic, so to translate a pagan Greek play amid such religious and political upheaval was a serious undertaking; a further complication arises since, although Lumley’s family were opponents of Jane Grey’s faction, the two

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48 As was her younger sister, Mary, who made translations of *sententiae* from Greek and Latin as gifts for her father. See Hodgson-Wright (2004a).
49 Hodgson-Wright (2004b): ‘probably by 1550 and certainly before 1553’. This is as accurate as one can be, it is not possible to determine exactly the dates of her marriage or translation work.
young women were first cousins. Some commentators see Lumley identifying herself as Iphigenia (since the equation of marriage and death is made explicitly by Iphigenia and is a commonplace in Greek tragedy); but the sacrificial victim could also be seen as Jane Grey. Whatever the interpretation, it remains that the conjunction of marriage and politics was as important for Lumley as it was for Euripides; the female role in Tudor England too was to help advance the family interest in so far as possible.

Reading, translation, and recitation of plays was part of humanist education in Latin and Greek, a way of instilling grammar and pronunciation, but it was normally done with the aim of maximum precision, as an exercise. Lumley’s translation is unusual and has justifiably been called an adaptation rather than translation; she omits the choruses, which clearly didn’t suit current tastes, and converts the text into prose, not verse. Other modifications are made to suit the social and moral proprieties of the time; scenes that diminish the heroic dignity of the noble leaders are toned down, and interchanges between characters are more decorous.

The striking way in which she replaces pagan with Christian piety gives a multi-layered interpretation. For Christians, of course, the story of a brave virgin martyr would be familiar from the history of the early church, as would the divine substitution of animal for innocent child. These aspects of Iphigenia’s story made Euripides’ other play about her,

51 Both women were called Jane after Henry VIII’s third wife, Jane Seymour, who was Queen when they were born.
52 Very soon after her execution in 1554 she became a type of Protestant martyr; the account of her life and death in Foxe’s Actes and Monuments (1563) was widely read and her portrayal in The Famous History of Thomas Wyatt by Dekker and Webster (1607) contributed to her fame as an idealized young victim: Levin (1985) 92 and 97; Straznicky (2009) 250.
53 Greene (1941) 537–47. Crane (1944) 223–8 focuses mainly on her ‘mistranslations’.
54 Similarly Erasmus, in the prefaces for the Aldine edition of Hecuba and Iphigenia (1507), says that he has translated Iphigenia more freely than Hecuba and would have preferred to omit the choruses and insert some improving sayings ‘rather than to waste effort on ... ’melodious trilles’; CWE vol.1, 133 Ep. 208.
55 Omitted passages include: Clytemnestra’s refusal to obey her husband’s instructions (IA 739–41); Agamemnon’s misogynistic remarks (IA 749–50); the comic misunderstandings between her and Achilles (IA 832–6); and the reference to Agamemnon as killer of Clytemnestra’s child by her first husband (IA 1150–53).
56 From the biblical stories of Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 22. 1–13) and Jephthah and his daughter (Judges 11.30–39).
**Iphigenia in Tauris**, equally attractive to Roman Catholics on the Continent earlier in the sixteenth century. But Lumley’s small changes to Euripides’ account of the sacrifice at Aulis are significant; in Euripides’ play a messenger tells how the goddess Artemis saved Iphigenia leaving a deer as a substitute victim (feminine participle, *aspairousa*, IA 1586). Lumley not only changes the gender but adds colouring, making it a white hart, symbol of Christ who shed his blood for others.

Her version is too creative to be called a ‘translation’ or perhaps even ‘adaptation’; although a tone of Christian piety has been given to the play, it still is very different from women’s writing we have seen so far. The play was not published, and it has been suggested that it was intended for private performance. Women did not write for the public stage until the middle of the next century, but they were known as patrons and authors of privately performed plays which were a traditional source of entertainment at court and in aristocratic households; their content often alluded in a veiled way to current events and personalities. Later in the century more plays on ancient themes by the Countess of Pembroke and Elizabeth Cary are also closely related to their family and political affairs. Private drama was one of the ways in which women were able to participate in mainstream culture and political circles without transgressing social rules, and although Lumley’s treatment integrates *Iphigenia* into the contemporary religious and behavioural environment, it also places the story firmly in the context of her own life and noble family ambitions.

The circumstances under which Italian and English women gained their classical education were quite similar. They were all from a privileged social class and had strong family encouragement and support in their studies. All struggled against the general belief that women given access to the same education as men were immodest and unchaste, a

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58 It is part of ‘recent rediscoveries’; Purkiss (1998) xliv. It was first edited in 1909 from a MS (Royal 15A.IX) in The Malone Society Series, edited by H.H. Child (London) and not since; a new edition by M.Straznicky is promised soon.
59 Straznicky (2009) 247–50. Her discussion refers to a manuscript volume, but it survives in ‘a commonplace book or rough copy book’ (Greene (1941) 539), so its intended purpose is not clear.
60 Purkiss (1998) xvi.
61 It is noteworthy too that several of them are the most visible part of a family learned circle, with other ‘well learned’ sisters, who are only mentioned here.
belief much more widespread than it appears in this limited discussion. The differences lie in the detail. Italian women were able to join the circles of learned scholars and use their rhetorical training in public orations, but on marriage tended to fade from the scene, whereas English women continued their studies after marriage. Although more limited in the texts on which they worked, English women nevertheless had some notable achievements. Margaret More’s translation from Erasmus set a high standard at the beginning of prose writing in English; Anne Cooke made the official translation of the Church of England’s manifesto; Lady Lumley’s Iphigenia was the first version in English of a Greek tragedy. These women were also much closer than any of the Italian woman to the political and religious activities of the day; they were part of their family involvement, and their writing reflects this.

Little survives to us of the scholarship of these Early Modern classicists, and apart from important translations mentioned earlier, we know of them mainly from their own correspondence and from letters about them. Letter writing was the way to ‘publish’ oneself and classical training gave these women and their supporters the tools with which to do it. It is essential also to remember that neither the Italian or English women would have been able to achieve what they did without support from their families and wider scholarly circles; encouragement and praise from sympathetic male humanists actively pushed forward the cause of women’s education in Latin and Greek.
Luisa Sigea and the Role of D. Maria, Infanta of Portugal, in Female Scholarship

Sofia Frade

Luisa Sigea [FIG. 3.1] is a very peculiar and particular case of feminine scholarship for both Portugal and Spain. Not only were women scholars a rare feature in the Iberian Peninsula in the sixteenth century, but women who actually wrote texts in Latin or about classical matters, rather than reading and discussing them, were exceptional. Her education and her role at the Portuguese court of the Portuguese Infanta (princess) D. Maria (i.e. Maria of Portugal, Duchess of Viseu) were fundamental to enabling her unique position in the Iberian literary context.²

The education of women in Portugal and Spain in the sixteenth century was never public; women were educated, if at all, in private.³

1 ‘Here lies Sigea. These words suffice. Anyone who does not know the rest is a bumpkin and does not concern himself with culture’.

2 The most recent monograph on Sigea is Thiemann (2006), although it is heavily dependent upon important earlier contributions including Allut (1862), Ribeiro (1880), Vasconcellos (1902), and Ramalho (1969–1970).

3 See de Leão (1610) 151: ‘E se em todas artes e disciplinas se não acham grande número de molheres científicas (...) é por a honestidade e a vergonha que as enfrea e as encolhe,”
During most of the Renaissance, aristocratic women in Portugal were not expected to leave their houses except to attend Church or religious festivities. The women in the royal family and higher aristocracy usually principally em Portugal onde as mulheres se não mostram em público. ‘And if in all arts and subjects one cannot find a great number of women scholars, it is because honesty and shyness stops them, especially in Portugal where women do not show themselves in public.’

4 de Leão (1610) 138: ‘...muito é para celebrar o grande recolhimento e honestidade das donzelas, e o encerramento em que se criam, que se nam é para ir às igrejas (onde ainda vão poucas vezes as nobres por o antigo costume do reino) a nenhūa parte outra vão: e ainda a essas igrejas assi levão os mantos derrubados sobre os olhos, que de ninguem podem ser vistas que rostos que têm.’ ‘...the seclusion and honesty of young women is cause for celebration, and the closed quarters in which they grow up so that, unless they are going to Church (where noble women go rarely, as is the custom of the kingdom), they go nowhere, and even at Church they go with veils covering their eyes so that nobody can see them and what kind of face they have.’
had private sessions arranged with one tutor (or several) in order to learn, at any rate, Latin. Perhaps the greatest example of this is that of Isabella I of Spain, known as ‘la Católica’, whose own education had been supervised by her mother (also named Isabella), the grand-daughter of John I of Portugal; a pious and studious young woman, Isabella I set about learning Latin and is said to have achieved fluency in just one year. She became an ardent advocate of education for girls as well as boys, founded a palace school at the Castilian court, and made sure that her own daughters learned Latin.5

Even so, such education rarely led to any significant literary production, except for some Latin correspondence. Most of the Latin literature produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by women was closely linked to monastic life.6 In monasteries women could afford a certain degree of independence and had the means to educate themselves.7 The literature they produced in this context is normally of religious content, Latin being the official religious language in Catholic countries. Otherwise, most of the literary production in the Iberian Peninsula, whether the work of men or of women, was written in the vernacular. Writing in Latin was a mark of special status and prestige in intellectual and spiritual terms, marking these women off from the everyday, practical concerns of working people.

A major exception to this rule was the case of Sigea. As stated already, two factors make her a unique case: her upbringing by her father, Diego Sigeo, and her integration in the court of the Infanta D. Maria. Born around 1520 in Tarracón, Spain,8 Luisa Sigea was the youngest of four children (two boys and two girls) born to Francisca Velasco, a Spanish noblewoman, and Diogo Sigeo. Diogo was a Frenchman who moved to

5 For an accessible account of Isabella’s life and education, see Rubin (1991).
6 Some of the women of the Iberian peninsula who wrote Latin in religious contexts are discussed in Stevenson (2005) 216–23. The scale and importance of women’s scholarly and spiritual lives in connection with the monasteries in Portuguese society, an importance which extended beyond the Renaissance into the sixteenth century, has only recently begun to attract the attention it deserves. See Bellini (2005).
7 Miguel-Prendes (1999) 457: ‘Active learning and writing, beyond the few precepts and rules on how to live endorsed by Vives, were considered unwomanly; they were tolerated only when women renounced what identified them as women, marriage and childbearing, and gave themselves to the asexual or celibate life of monastic retreat.’
8 The exact date is disputed, though she must have been born before 1522, when her father fled from Spain to Portugal.
Spain as a boy and was educated there at Alacalá University, learning Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He was forced to move to Portugal in 1522 on account of his connections with the failed attempt at revolution in Castile, the 'Revolt of the Comuneros' led by Juan de Padilla. Once in Portugal, Diogo became tutor to the children in the royal house of the Duke of Bragança. Having achieved a stable position in the court, he summoned his family to join him in Portugal in around 1536.

From this moment, when Luisa moved to Portugal, she was educated by her father, along with her sister Ângela and their brothers Diogo and António. This education makes the Sigea girls a very special case, since women were excluded from Universities in Portugal and Spain, as in all of Europe. In Iberia, the very few women with a strong classical education were normally connected with religious centres and monasteries. Therefore, the secular education of both Luisa and her sister make them unique and proved invaluable to both of them. Their father probably saw this education as the only way to ensure that his daughters could make a decent living (which they could never achieve solely through marriage, being from a relatively poor family with a questionable reputation since they had fled Spain under a cloud). In fact, the social status the sisters achieved later in life can be directly related to their unique education (they probably not only had learning opportunities, but these opportunities were equal to their brothers. They therefore obtained an education normally reserved for boys and never accessible to women).

Ângela was well known for her musical skills, certainly invaluable for a woman making her way in a Renaissance court. Luisa was particularly famous for knowing Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldean, and Arabic as well as some modern languages; the Latin and Greek she learned with her father, and we have references to her asking for an Arabic teacher. She

9 Vasaeus (1552) ch. 9, describes Diogo Sigeu as one of the greatest humanists in Portugal, and as holding an important position in regard to the royal family. He was certainly himself an excellent Latinist, since he published a Latin grammar in 1560, 'le fruit de son enseignement à la Court' ('the fruit of his teaching at the court') according to Matos (1952) 112.


11 Miguel-Prendes (1999) 449: 'A classical education was the only wealth he could bequeath his children, and he passed it on not only to his two sons, but to his two daughters as well.'

12 Rada (1994) 341.
was also fluent in Portuguese, Castilian, French, and Italian. She was not shy of such knowledge, having written a letter to the Pope in no fewer than the five ancient languages cited earlier.\(^\text{13}\)

In addition to her very unusual education, Luisa also had a unique chance of making a career as a scholar thanks to the existence of an intellectual circle around the Infanta Maria, where we find the names of most Portuguese women writers of the time.\(^\text{14}\) Maria was born in 1521, to the King, Manuel I of Portugal, and his third wife, the Arch-Duchess Eleanor of Austria. Maria’s father died only six months after her birth. Her mother remarried and left the kingdom for France three years later; she was forced to leave her daughter behind. Therefore, from the age of four, the Infanta was left with only her eldest brother, the new King João (John) III. She was the heiress to a large part of her father’s fortune and, later, her mother’s. This enormous combined fortune was one of the main reasons why she was not allowed to leave the country, despite her mother’s attempts to take her.\(^\text{15}\) It was also, later, one of the main reasons why (despite being one of the most eligible princesses in the European Royal Houses and having been considered as a potential bride by almost

\(^{13}\) Letter 3 Sauvage and Bourdon (1970) 83. Vasaeus (1552) ch. 9: ‘Ut omnes alia Latinis litteris tincatas silentio praeteream, dabat Hispania Aloisiam Sigeam Toletanam, sed in aula Lusitana per multus annos educatam: quinque linguarum adeo peritam, ut non immerito Paulus tertius, Pontifex Maximus, litteras illius ad se scriptas Latine, Graece, Hebraice, Syriace, atque Arabice laudatibus sit prosecutus, admiratus tam multiplicem ingeni fructum, et donum tam multiplicis linguarum scientiae, in viris quoque rarum, nedum in foeminis: sic enim sonant verba Diplomatis. Debetur haec laus optimo patri et viro doctissimo Didaco Sigaeo. Nec in ea solum hanc operam possuit, sed alteram quoque filiam Angelam, Graece, Latineque, pro aetate et sexu non mediocriter eruditam, tam exacta Musices scientia curavit perdocendam, ut vel cum praestantissimis hujus artis professoribus contendere posse putem.’

‘Even disregarding all other things written in Latin, Hispania will produce Luisa Sigea, from Toledo, but educated for many years in Portugal: she was so skillful in five languages that not without merit, the pope Paul III read her letters in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac and Arab, praising the fruit of her multiple ingenuity, and the gift of the knowledge of multiple languages, already so rare in men and even more so in women: as says the document. This praise is due to her excellent and very learned father, Diogo Sigeo. He did not only work with her, but also with her other daughter Angela, educated in Latin and Greek, well above her age and gender, and so flawless in the arts of Music that I believe she could rival the best teachers of this art.’

\(^{14}\) See the important autobiographical study by Vasconcellos (1902).

\(^{15}\) I draw biographical information about the Infanta Maria from Vasconcellos (1902), who reassessed the early sources including Pacheco (1675). See also Serrão (1954).
all of them, including the English king Henry VIII) she never married.\textsuperscript{16} Known as ‘the eternal bride’, from 1537 onwards the Infanta Maria established a court for herself and lived as a great Renaissance princess. Here the Infanta surrounded herself with all sorts of humanists, writers, and artists. As a court headed by a woman, it was particularly appealing to women scholars and gave them a chance to be paid for their services. Sigea taught Latin to the Infanta and was paid 16,000 reis per year, an amount superior to that received by other chambermaids. At court Luisa had access to the royal library and could dedicate herself to her literary pursuits.\textsuperscript{17}

The Infanta Maria was always present at royal functions and played an important role in the royal family. For example, she was the only sibling of the King to go with the royal couple and heir on their important visit to Coimbra in 1550, when the King bestowed the royal palace of this city on the University.\textsuperscript{18} After the death of her brother, in 1558, she intensified her role as patron of the arts and made full use of iconography linking her with the House of Avis.\textsuperscript{19} These facts challenge the impression given by the biographers of the Infanta, especially Friar Miguel Pacheco’s 1675 \textit{Life},\textsuperscript{20} which represented her house as a chaste, modest, almost convent-like court. This idea has been challenged since the publication of Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcellos’ work \textit{Infanta D. Maria de Portugal (1521–1577) e as suas Damas}, in 1902. Most recently, it has been accepted that the Infanta played a fundamental role in the politics of the country as well as in promoting various kinds of art.\textsuperscript{21}

Both Ângela and Sigea were to become part of this important cultural milieu. Sigea’s most famous works were produced during the years she spent at the court of the Queen of Portugal and later at the house of the Infanta. Her most relevant literary works are \textit{Syntra}, a Latin poem dedicated to the Infanta, published in France by her father in 1566, and \textit{Duarum Virginum Colloquium de vita aulica et privata} (Dialogue between

\textsuperscript{16} She was actually married to the future Filipe II of Spain, but the marriage was annulled within twenty-four hours of being celebrated, when Filipe’s father, Charles V, learned that Mary Tudor had become a widow.

\textsuperscript{17} Anastácio (2011) 569–72.

\textsuperscript{18} Pinto (1998) 31.

\textsuperscript{19} Anastácio (2011) 569. For a full discussion of the Infanta’s support of the arts, see Pinto (1998).

\textsuperscript{20} Pacheco (1675); this problematic text is discussed in detail in Peixoto (2010).

\textsuperscript{21} See, for example, Pinto (1998).
two Virgins on Court Life and Private Life), a bucolic dialogue filled with classical *topoi*, published in 1562, in France, by the intervention of the French ambassador in Portugal.22 Along with these works, we have a substantial collection of letters, including those sent to the Pope Paul III.23

*Syntra* is an elegy with 54 elegiac couplets, dedicated to the Infanta on the occasion of her marriage to Philip I of Portugal (later Philip II of Spain). The poem evokes the forest of Syntra, near Lisbon. The poet encounters a nymph who has emerged from a lake to prophesy the marriage of Luisa’s mistress to a noble man who will rule the world with his sceptre. The visionary nymph concludes with an instruction to Luisa:

> Vade ergo, & timidae referas, quae diximus, ore<br>  Fatidico, ut laetos exigat illa dies.<br> Nec sis sollicita, aut metuas praedicere fata:<br>  Succedent votis ordine cuncta tuis.24

> ‘So go and with prophetic mouth report to that timid one<br>  What we have uttered, so that she may enjoy her happy days<br>  Nor should you be anxious, or fear to predict what is fated.<br>  Everything will happen, in order, according to your prayers.’

The poem is artful and elegant, involving some complicated play on direct speech within direct speech as Sigea/the authorial voice quotes the nymph quoting Jupiter as he delivers the prediction. The text is learned, displaying many allusions to canonical classical texts by famous authors including Ovid, Virgil, and even Homer.25 Stevenson has suggested that it also echoes two famous ancient poems by women, Sappho’s Greek hymn to Aphrodite (number 1 in all editions of Sappho), quoted in Dionysius of Halicarnassus’ *On Literary Composition* 23, and Sulpicia’s Latin *Satire*.26 Despite the nymph’s predictions, the marriage was not consummated in the end, but the text apparently benefitted Luisa’s career at court, guaranteeing her a fairly good position.

22 Nicot, the French ambassador in Portugal, was in fact a friend of Sigea’s father, Diogo; see Matos (1952) 109.
23 Sigea’s Latin letters are collected in Corbalán (2007).
24 The text is reproduced from Sigea (1566). The same text, with accompanying English translation and detailed discussion, is more easily accessible in Stevenson (2005) 214–15. There is a variant text in manuscript 338 in the Toledo Public Library.
26 Sappho’s ode to Aphrodite had begun to circulate widely in Humanist circles after Robert Estienne’s Greek edition of Dionysius, published in 1546 (on which see further the chapter by Fabre-Serris on p. 83). On Sulpicia see the comprehensive study of Skoje (2002).
**Luisa Sigia and the Role of D. Maria in Female Scholarship**

*Duarum Virginum Colloquium de vita aulica et privata* is a dialogue text, very similar in form to the typical Renaissance dialogues by and in imitation of the style of Erasmus. It is a complicated, skilfully written, and fascinating work. Dedicated to the Infanta, it thanks her for allowing the author time to write it and for allowing her to use the library. This has allowed the authoress to improve her knowledge of literature (a knowledge which is displayed in dense and erudite allusion to classical and patristic authors). The three-day dialogue takes place, in a conventional *locus amoenus*, between two women, Blesilla and Flaminia. They debate whether it is better to live in court or in a private home, a favourite Humanist theme. A short excerpt from one of Blesilla’s speeches will give a flavour of the text and its allusiveness.27

Faciam libenter quod iubes; non enim me paenitebit unquam exantlati laboris in hoc conflict, cum, teste Seneca, ‘generosos animos labor nutriat.’ Se denim hodie non licebit ulterius progradi; cadunt enim e montibus umbrae, ut ait Mantuanus Tytirus... Eamus igitur nunc, et Musicias demus aliquantisper operam dum crepusculum est, ad levandos illic animos ubu aquae susurrus et avicularum canthus vocibus nostris atque organis consonant.

I shall do your bidding with pleasure. It will never be a trial for me to pour out my efforts in this debate; for, as Seneca says, ‘Labour nourishes noble souls.’ But at this hour, today is not the time to continue; the shadows are falling from the mountain, as the Mantuan’s Tityrus says. Let us depart, then, and give our attention to the musicians for a time while it is twilight, and ease our souls there where the murmur of the water and the songs of the birds will accompany our voices and our instruments.

The immediate reception of this text was positive and enthusiastic, but it soon lapsed into obscurity and remained almost entirely neglected until the second half of the twentieth century. Although it was published in Spain in 1903 by Manuel Serrano y Sanz, a critical edition and translation (in French) did not appear until 1970.30

The younger interlocutor, Flaminia, is a courtier and defends the life at court as the best option for a woman, while the older one, Blesilla, is a nun and defends a life of isolated quietude and reflection. This discussion is used as a context in which to contemplate other important political topics such as the nature of power, the ideal prince, and his relation with

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his people, and is thus a perfect example of a conventional confluence of different humanistic traditions: dialogue form, serious socio-political topics, and a huge number of quotations (Latin, Greek, biblical, and patristic) to show the author’s erudition and her capacity to work within the tradition in order to support two different positions.\textsuperscript{31} There is nothing out of the ordinary in this text, except for the single fact that it was written by a woman in a time and place where this generic form of literary argumentation usually belonged exclusively to male authors.

Modern scholars have assessed Sigea’s achievement in radically different ways. Miguel-Prendes criticizes the text for being basically a translation of other texts; for her, Sigea is a learned but derivative figure.\textsuperscript{32} But Nascimento admires the manner in which the dialogue crystallizes the central issues in its discussion of what an ideal life should be.\textsuperscript{33} Inês Rada has pointed out, rather, the elements of autobiography and self-representation, where the text highlights the education of Luisa Sigea and places her in the ranks of the great humanists.\textsuperscript{34}

In the end, despite Blesilla’s advice, Flaminia decides to stay at court.\textsuperscript{35} George argues that the difference between the use of general, universalizing affirmations and more contextually specific ones (what the Roman orator

\textsuperscript{31} Tocco (1992) 117.
\textsuperscript{32} Miguel-Prendes (1999) 452–3, argues that the basis for the construction of this dialogue is the texts recommended in the Renaissance to educate women. She goes on to suggest (455–6): ‘Luisa Sigea, as a woman and a woman in court, writes within linguistic and social structures that do not permit her to transcend her role. First of all, she confines herself to translation, one of the fields allowed to women writers, and she excels in it as an accomplished student. . . But she stops short when it comes to imitating or recreating the models that she so expertly translates, to speaking in her own voice.’

\textsuperscript{33} Nascimento (1995) 290. 34 Rada (1994) 349.
\textsuperscript{35} Ramalho (1969–1970) 407: ‘Esta atitude crítica aberta ao procedimento dos principes, ao seu egoísmo, tirania e ingratiadão não a conseguem disfarçar as citações bíblicas, patrísticas ou pagãs, sobretudo as duas primeiras, com que tenta escusar-se a incisiva Blesila, tão franca quanto imprudente. Com efeito, embora Flaminía seja criação da humanista, não menos que Blesila, e Flaminía exalte a realça e a vida na corte, Blesila está mais de acordo com o que as cartas de Sigeia nos revelam, e representa certamente a sua verdadeira forma de pensar. Não surpreende por isso, que os principes não fossem generosos com Luísa Sigeia, quando esta abandonou o seu serviço.’ ‘this disapproving attitude towards the behaviour of the princes, their selfishness, tyranny and ingratitude are not disguised by the biblical, patristic and pagan quotes, mainly the first two, with which the cutting Blesila tries to guard herself, as honest as imprudente as she is. Indeed, even though Flaminia is a creation of the artist as much as Blesila, and Flaminia praises the royalty and the life at court, Blesila is more in tune with what Sigea’s letters tell us, and certainly represents her way of thinking. It is, therefore, not a surprise that the princes were not generous with Luisa Sigea, once she left their service.’
Quintilian called questions *infinitae* and *finitae*, respectively) can be used to show that Luisa Sigea’s own ideas are more aligned to those of Flaminia than Blesilla.36 Indeed, some scholars have seen the conclusion of the dialogue as a direct expression of Sigea’s own vexations at a time when she was apparently frustrated by her lack of success at court, and thinking about retiring from the Infanta’s service to a private existence in a remote countryside village, there to marry an impoverished nobleman.37 Certainly, Sigea wrote a revealing letter in Latin to her brother-in-law, Alfonso de Cuevas, complaining that after thirteen years’ hard labour at the court, she had in the end not even been awarded her promised salary (see further on p. 58).38

Sigea’s other letters cover a variety of themes and are critical to understanding her life; they are fundamental to painting a picture of her as a humanist writer. In her letters, which include a selection addressed to some of the most significant figures in European politics at the time, we can find a wide range of quotations from Homer and Aristotle, Pliny, Plato, Xenocrates, and Seneca. This epistolary corpus, along with her other writings, offers the potential to be a fundamental source of information on the classical texts available in Portugal at the time. The establishment of the sources of Renaissance authors, both writing in Latin or in the vernacular, is a very problematic question, and little work has been done in relation to writers working within Renaissance Portugal.39 We have scant information about the library of the Infanta or indeed other Portuguese libraries at the time; we also need to be careful to distinguish between quotations which were taken from books of excerpts and those which were taken from the full original texts. A thorough investigation into literary resources available to Renaissance writers, and the identification of sources used in specific works, are both fundamental to any serious research on the culture of this era. Since at least some of the most prominent figures of the Portuguese Renaissance were in one way or another linked to D. Maria, the close analysis of Sigea’s literary culture would not only tell us more about her own reading

36 See George (2000).
38 Allut (1862) 11–12.
39 The seminal work on the idiosyncratic nature of the Portuguese Renaissance remains Cerejeira (1917); for more recent attempts to refresh the discussion, see e.g. Klucas (1981) and Klucas (1992).
habits and experience, but offer fundamental insights into the broader literary and intellectual culture and outputs of this period.

In September 1552 Luisa Sigea married Francisco de Cuevas, a nobleman from Burgos, Spain. They had only one child, a daughter named Juana de Cuevas Sigea. Shortly after her marriage, Luisa left the court to live in Burgos. By that time, the rest of her family seems to have been established in Torres Novas, Portugal, where Ángela was married to a local nobleman. In 1558, Luisa and her husband went to Valladolid to work for Maria of Habsburg, the daughter of Philip I of Spain—her husband as a secretary, she as a Latinist. But this position lasted for only a few months since Queen Maria died shortly afterwards.

Luisa spent the rest of her days trying to go back to court, but was never given a position at any court again. She died on 13 October 1560. The latter years and end of her life are not very well understood, but from her letters she seems to have experienced great difficulty in adapting to existence away from court, despite all her criticisms of the way of life there. She also seems to have resented that, despite her unique scholarly characteristics, she never seemed to go as far in life as other women of a more noble birth. Yet this response was to deny the realities of the relationship between birth-status and education at the time. It was the lack of opportunity caused by her insufficiently high birth—the doors that were always going to be closed to only a minor aristocrat and an immigrant—that motivated her father to ensure that she had a way to support herself by offering her such an exceptional education.

Sigea was by far the best and most renowned woman scholar of her age. In her later years she resented being insufficiently recognized and not being awarded the status and respect she felt she deserved, probably because after marriage she was kept away from opportunities appropriate to a scholar. Yet her role at court must have been highly valued by the Infanta since her daughter, Juana Sigea, was provisioned in D. Maria’s will with an annuity of 12,000 reis.40 There can be little doubt that the Infanta prized the scholarly output of the learned women with whom she liked to surround herself. Indeed, in Portugal, almost all the Latin texts produced during this period which are associated with women’s names are also associated with Infanta Maria’s household: Joanna Vaz and

Públia Hortênsia de Castro being the main names along with Sigea. Vaz was a maid of honour in attendance upon Queen Catherine of Portugal; she is said to have played a key role in court events and to have written fluent Latin.41 Públia Hortênsia de Castro’s parents had named her very obviously after the famous daughter of the consul Quintus Hortensius Hortalus, who had delivered an effective oration to the Triumvirs in 42 BC, pleading for the repeal of a tax imposed on prosperous Roman women. This ancient Hortensia had studied Greek as well as Latin literature, especially the orators (see Appian, *Civil Wars* 4.32–4; Valerius Maximus, *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium libri* 8.3.3). The name selected for the Portuguese Públia Hortênsia suggests that she was destined from birth to an exceptional education including Greek and Latin.42 She certainly engaged with great argumentative skill and polish in a public disputation on Aristotle at the age of just seventeen, eluding the attempts of her clever male interlocutors to trip her up.43

A few well-educated Portuguese princesses are documented later in the sixteenth century; Sigea’s reputation may have been instrumental in leading their parents to encourage their studies.44 Yet the only Latin texts by women which were actually *published* during the sixteenth century (and whose authorship is therefore beyond dispute) are those of Sigea.45 Sigea was not alone as an educated woman, but as a celebrity intellectual and published Humanist, she was a major exception for her times. Although sixteenth-century Portugal and Spain were politically unified, and their royal houses much intermarried, the two cultures remained distinct, and the Portuguese were always assiduous in affirming their separate identity. Arriving as a foreigner (half-French, half-Spanish) from a non-Portuguese background, and as a member of only a relatively minor aristocratic family with possible revolutionary tendencies, she nevertheless succeeded in making a living for herself thanks to her exceptional education.

Yet it can scarcely be stressed enough that there is still much to be researched and discovered about Sigea and her context beyond her gender and social status. An important area of future study would be

41 Vasconcellos (1902) 36–7. 42 dos Anjos (1626) 402.
43 Vasconcello (1593) n.p., quoted in Serrano y Sanz (1903) vol. 1, 247–8.
44 See Stevenson (2005) 216; dos Anjos (1626) 243–5; della Chiesa (1620) 122.
the comprehensive examination of her sources and quotations in order
to ascertain what kind of library was available to her. Are her quotations
from the original texts or from the widely distributed books of quotations
and anthologies so popular during the Renaissance? Are her quotations
in Greek an indication that Homer and other ancient texts were already
available in their original Greek versions in Portugal at the time? Maybe
the study of this (until recently) almost neglected woman scholar could
open an extraordinary door to the understanding of the Renaissance and
Humanism in Portugal.46

46 I would like to thank Dr Vanda Anastácio for guiding me through the waters of
women writers in Portugal during the Renaissance and for stressing that the outputs of
Luisa Sigea would have been impossible without the Infanta D. Maria of Portugal and her
patronage towards women.
4

Ménage’s Learned Ladies

Anne Dacier (1647–1720) and Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678)

Rosie Wyles

In 1690, the French scholar Gilles Ménage (1613–1692) published the first edition of his Historia Mulierum Philosopharum (The History of Women Philosophers), in which he collected information about over sixty-five female philosophers from antiquity. In the pages of this catalogue, he also singled out two outstandingly learned women of his own day: Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–78) and Anne Dacier (née Le Fèvre, 1647–1720), calling them both ‘doctissima’ (very learned). Ménage’s praise links these seventeenth-century women and implies parity, yet a closer examination of their career trajectories reveals crucial differences between them. While they shared high levels of ability in Greek and Latin, they exploited this knowledge for distinct purposes: Anna Maria van Schurman used her learning to write a Latin treatise advocating the education of women, but Dacier’s primary concern was to champion ancient literature through its translation and defence. The significance of Ménage’s work in shaping perceptions of Dacier as a classicist has not yet received the attention it deserves, yet Ménage is

1 I would like to thank the Leverhulme Trust for their generous funding of the research informing this chapter, Edith Hall (who first introduced me to Dacier), and Judith Mossman; any errors remain my own. I learned much from Ineke Sluiter’s presentation of the life and work of van Schurman at the 2013 conference which gave rise to this book.


3 Ménage (1690b) 5, 62–3, and 123. All translations my own unless otherwise stated.
arguably responsible for politicizing (in respect of gender) Dacier’s achievements in classical learning and securing her status in the discourse on female empowerment. In the following, a summary of the careers of van Schurman and Dacier is offered, before turning to a consideration of the purpose of Ménage’s Historia Mulierum Philosopharum and its implications for our understanding of these two female scholars. This chapter highlights the historical importance of female engagement in classical learning within the broader debate about women’s education (in the seventeenth century and subsequently).

While this study sheds light on the individual historical significance of these female scholars, it also offers a more widely applicable lesson about the nature, danger, and influence, of the biographical sources informing studies of women’s contribution to the history of classical scholarship.

Anna Maria van Schurman was born in Cologne in 1607, but spent most of her life in Utrecht (after her family fled there on religious grounds). She, like Anne Dacier, had a Protestant upbringing and had gained an excellent education from her father (Frederik van Schurman). He had apparently noticed her abilities when he was educating her brothers; a recurrent motif in accounts justifying the advanced education of women. She learnt Latin and Greek, and her distinction led her to be invited to write a Latin poem for the opening of the University of Utrecht in 1634. She studied at this university, and was the first woman to do so, though she had to be hidden behind a screen. Here she came under the influence of her mentor Gisbertus Voetius, lecturer in Oriental languages and leading Dutch Reformed theologian, and began to study other ancient languages (Hebrew, Arabic, Chaldee, Syriac, and Ethiopian) which secured

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4 Ménage’s praise of Dacier in this work is discussed only briefly in the major modern treatments of her life and works: Farnham (1976) 46 and 124, and Itti (2012) 176.

5 The classical learning of van Schurman and Dacier is examined in relation to that debate (rather than assessed for its potential contribution to the history of classical scholarship; for wider-reaching studies of these female scholars, see (on van Schurman) de Baar et al. (1996); and (on Dacier) Farnham (1976) and Itti (2012).

6 Bulckaert (1997) 197; and Irwin (1980) 69. A similar story is told about Dacier (see her obituary: Journal des Savants 38 (1720) 593) and appears again recorded in nineteenth-century America about Louisa McCord (1810–1879); see Winterer (2007) 177.


8 Irwin (1980) 70. This motif appears in an earlier account of a learned lady: Novella, the fourteenth-century lawyer in Bologna, apparently lectured on behalf of her father from behind a curtain; Ménage (1692) 493–4 and Zedler (1984), 22–3.
her reputation as a polyglot.\textsuperscript{9} She was also a talented artist as her surviving self-portraits show; see, for example, FIG. 4.1.\textsuperscript{10} She used her knowledge to engage in philosophy and religious contemplation, and published a short theological treatise, ‘De vitae termino’ (‘On the end of life’), in 1639. She had an extensive network of correspondents (both male and female), and it was through her exchange of letters with the

\textsuperscript{9} There is some dispute over the number of languages she actually knew; see Irwin (1980) 70.

\textsuperscript{10} On her art see van der Stighelen (1996).
French theologian André Rivet that she developed her thoughts on the question of female education.\textsuperscript{11} With the encouragement of a Dutch doctor and advocate for female equality, Johan van Beverwijck, she would publish this exchange of letters alongside her Latin treatise on the issue, written in the form of a \textit{quaestio} (which presents the argument syllogistically), in 1641.\textsuperscript{12} She used her classical learning to support the argument of her treatise, including references to Livy, Pliny, Plutarch, Plato, and Aristotle.\textsuperscript{13} Sections of her correspondence with Rivet were published in French in 1646 and the complete treatise was published in English in 1659.\textsuperscript{14} In the letters and treatise, van Schurman maintained the position that women should be allowed to study (provided that they had the leisure to do so) and that this was beneficial to them. She herself was from a wealthy family and never married, giving her the freedom for academic pursuits, although she still had to negotiate and justify this activity through the requisite appeal to modesty (another recurrent motif in the history of female intellectual engagement).\textsuperscript{15} At the same time, she actively encouraged her female correspondents to study, recommending particular topics (including ancient history), in her letters to them.\textsuperscript{16} She also championed the ancients, to some extent, through her advocacy of Aristotle’s philosophy.\textsuperscript{17} Later in life, after joining the religious community of Jean de Labadie in 1669, van Schurman renounced her earlier works (including her treatise on women) and became involved in


\textsuperscript{12} For a detailed discussion of the argument presented in this treatise see van Eck (1996); Bulckaert (1997); and for an analysis of its philosophy see Dykeman (2009).

\textsuperscript{13} van Schurman (1641) 11, 28–9, 35.

\textsuperscript{14} van Schurman (1646) and de Baar (2004) 108.

\textsuperscript{15} On van Schurman’s wealth, see de Baar (2004) 110. On the general necessity of female modesty in publications see van Dijk (1988) 198 and Timmermans (2005) 48 and 113. In van Schurman’s case, van Beverwijck played an important role in facilitating male approval for the publication of her treatise by emphasizing (in his foreword to the reader) her reluctance to publish it; van Schurman (1641) 3–7, and de Baar (2004) 112. The importance of female modesty, and other conventional virtues, had already been impressed upon van Schurman in her correspondence with Rivet (precisely when she was questioning the limitations imposed on her gender) through his recommendation that she should reread Vives’ work on female education; see Vives (1524) and Bulckaert (1997) 204.


\textsuperscript{17} de Baar (2004) 120, and van Schurman (1652) 266–9.
religious disputes, which affected her reputation in her final years and subsequently.  

A few years after the first publication of van Schurman’s treatise on women, Anne Dacier (née Le Fèvre) was born (either 1645 or 1647) [FIG 4.2]. Her father, Tanneguy Le Fèvre, famous humanist scholar and Professor at the Protestant Academy of Saumur (from 1649), gave her an excellent education (including Greek and Latin). In 1662, she


19 Itti (2012) 17 has 1645, while Farnham makes a case for 1647; Farnham (1976) 191–3. Anne Le Fèvre gained the name Dacier at her second marriage in 1683; for ease of reference, however, I refer to her as Dacier throughout this chapter.

20 *Journal des Savants* 38 (1720) 593.
married a local printer, Jean Lesnier, but after the death of their son in 1669, she returned to her parents’ home. Only a few years after this, in 1672, her father died and she moved to Paris where, with the help of her father’s friend Pierre Daniel Huet, she began her career by publishing editions of classical authors for the series being produced for the Dauphin. She was financially dependent on the living she gained from her publications. She independently published an edition of Callimachus, followed by annotated French translations of: Sappho and Anacreon (1675), Plautus (1683), Aristophanes (1684), Terence (1688), and Homer’s *Iliad* (1711) and *Odyssey* (1716). She married André Dacier, a former pupil of her father, in 1683 and together they abjured their Protestant faith in 1685 (converting to Catholicism, just a month before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes). As well as producing the works already listed, Dacier collaborated with her husband on an annotated translation of Marcus Aurelius’ *Meditations* (1691) and on a selection from Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives* (1694). Towards the end of her career, she also produced two works defending ancient authors in the *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* (the cultural debate over the relative standing of ancient and modern works). At the same time as being a scholar, Dacier was a mother and drew attention to this dual status by the inclusion of a lament for her daughter (who died aged eighteen) in the preface to her translation of the *Iliad*.

21 Farnham (1976) 42.  
22 She produced editions of the following ancient authors: Florus (1674), Dares and Dictys (1680), Aurelius Victor (1681), and Eutropius (1683). For full details of this series and Dacier’s contribution to it, see Volpilhac-Augé (2000), *passim*.  
23 On Dacier, see Farnham (1976) 14.  
24 On the circumstances of their adjuration see Itti (2012) 143–64.  
25 Dacier & Dacier (1691) and (1694); Dacier (1714) and (1716).  
26 On lament: Dacier (1711) preface, lxxi–lxxii, and Farnham (1976) 143. The Daciers had three children: Anne Marie, Jean André, and Henriette Suzanne. Only the eldest outlived her parents. There is some debate over whether Anne Marie’s birth pre-dated the Daciers’ marriage; Farnham attributes the earlier dating to rumours (Farnham (1976) 24) whereas Itti places the date of birth in 1677 or the beginning of 1678 (Itti (2012) 340–1).  
27 On Jaquotot, see Lajoix (2006); on this specific image (used as one of the interchangeable porcelain miniatures for the King’s snuffbox) see Lajoix (2006) 128. Jaquotot’s miniature, though nominally (according to the inscription on its back) inspired by a portrait by R. de Piles, shows a very close resemblance to the portrait of Dacier attributed to Netscher (now in Chateau Brissac, Loire; see Itti (2012), cover and 234.) The case is strengthened by another of Jaquotot’s miniatures being inspired by a portrait attributed to Netscher; see Lajoix (2006) 159 (image no. 230).
Gilles Ménage, erudite scholar and friend of Anne Dacier’s father, gravitated towards intellectually engaged women throughout his career.28 He actively sought them out through his attendance at literary salons and would be immortalized as the academic associate of ‘learned ladies’ through Molière’s comic caricature of him in the figure of the pedant Vadius in *Les Femmes savantes* (*Those Learned Ladies*) in 1672.29 While Ménage’s *Historia Mulierum Philosopharum* (*The History of Women Philosophers*) must have partly been inspired by his commentary on Diogenes Laertius’ *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (1664), his involvement with female thinkers of his day is of equal importance to understanding the motivation and meaning of his work.30 His circle of female acquaintances included Marie Le Jars de Gournay (1565–1645), author of *Égalité des hommes et des femmes* (*The Equality of Men and Women*, 1622) and one of the most famous ‘feminist’ voices of the seventeenth century.31 He associated with Madeleine de Scudéry (1607–1701), who used her writing of fiction, and particularly the figure of Sappho, to make a case for the rights of women.32 He also honoured Queen Christina of Sweden, a controversial public figure of the period, by a book dedication in 1650 and prestigious reception in 1656.33 Ménage’s association with women who were intellectual, independent, and vocal about women’s capabilities, offers a background context for his *Historia Mulierum Philosopharum* and shows his real-life engagement in an ideal which he promotes through that work.

His agenda in producing this publication, I suggest, extended beyond defending women from the injustice of the claim that there were never any, or were only very few, female philosophers.34 In fact, the form of the

28 Tutoring Madame de Sévigné and Madaemoiselle La Vergne (who later became the author Madame de LaFayette) at the beginning of his career seems to have proved a formative experience; Zedler (1984) viii. On his friendship with Tanneguy Le Fèvre, see Itti (2012) 15.
30 Zedler (1984) ix–xiv: for details of female associates. The commentary was published again in Amsterdam in 1692, in an edition which also included Ménage’s *Historia Mulierum Philosopharum*; see Maber (2005) 22–32.
32 Conley (2011) 3.7. See also DeJean (1997) 96–110.
33 Zedler (1984) xi. On Queen Christina see also the chapter by Hall, p. 123.
34 Henry Wettstein (who edited the 1692 edition of the work) suggests that this was Ménage’s intention in producing it and that in doing so he had not only deserved the thanks
work itself implies something more. Although Ménage explicitly models his history as a companion piece to Diogenes’ biography of male philosophers, it can also be understood through the lens of the Renaissance genre of the ‘gynaeceum’. This term denoted a published catalogue of women who were famed for their virtue, for their intellectual contributions, and/or their artistic achievements. The seminal exemplar for this genre is Giovanni Boccaccio’s De Mulieribus claris (On Famous Women); it was written c.1360 but continued to exert a major influence in the seventeenth century. Importantly, de Gournay’s 1634 reprint of her treatise on the equality of the sexes included a catalogue of famous and courageous ancient women, modelled on Plutarch’s Mulierum Virtutes (Concerning the Virtues of Women). Other women had also produced such catalogues in France; including Jacquette Guillaume’s provocatively titled work (1665) asserting the superiority of women. Men had also used the ‘gynaeceum’ genre to fight for women. Johan van Beverwijck’s Dutch treatise, published in 1639, offers a striking example of this; in its pages, he praised Anna Maria van Schurman as the most outstanding of all learned women. The use of such catalogues in the querelle des femmes (the debate about the position and education of women) has implications for the reception of Ménage’s work, inviting consideration of its potential contribution to that debate. This reading seems even more persuasive after the amendment to the 1692 Amsterdam edition to include a reference to Christine de Pizan, the fourteenth century female writer and defender of women, and a passage from her City of Women. Ménage’s reference to a woman whose work played a pivotal role in
beginning the debate over the education of women signals the alignment of his own catalogue.

Ménage’s publication is particularly significant within this tradition since its intended readership was male. His work is written in Latin and includes quotations from Greek which means that while it may seem to be ‘designed to please the women of the seventeenth century’, in fact the majority of them would not have been able to read it. The impression that the work is really written to impress a circle of male scholars is confirmed by Ménage’s numerous references to manuscripts and works held in the King’s library (to which women were not allowed access). These references point to one of Ménage’s purposes in producing this work: it was an exercise through which he could demonstrate his own vast learning. Yet he also uses this publication to explore the issue of learned women. The treatment of Dacier in the work is key to signposting this agenda. Ménage frames his discussion with praise of Dacier: in the preface calling her the most learned of all women, past or present (‘feminarum quot sunt, quot fuere, doctissima’), and referring to her as the most learned, most eloquent, and most articulate of women (‘mulierum doctissima, eloquentissima, disertissima’) at the end of his catalogue. He dedicates this work to her, in keeping (as he says) with his ancient model. Yet he goes further than Diogenes, as he mentions that he has already (in the same year) dedicated his treatise on Terence’s Self-Torturer to her. The additional dedication of his Historia is, he says, intended to ensure that he offers a sufficient manifestation of his esteem (observatio) for her. In the earlier work, however, he had already demonstrated how highly he valued her scholarly opinion through his claim (in its Avertissement) that,

41 The quotation comes from Zedler (1984) vii; she does not, I think, put enough emphasis on the implications of the intended readership being male. Only exceptionally well-educated woman, such as Dacier, could read Latin and Greek in this period.
42 See Ménage (1690b) 65, 71, 95, 107, 110, 116, and 122; and (in the English translation) Zedler (1984) 35, 41, 52, 56, 57, 60, and 62. Dacier was able to consult a manuscript of Terence in the King’s Library but it is clear from her description of this experience that a special exception was made for her, see Dacier’s preface to her Terence (1688).
43 To offer just one instructive example: he takes pleasure in emphasizing that both the learned Didymus and Lactantius had made the mistake of thinking that there had only ever been one woman engaged in philosophy, (thus making his own achievement all the greater); Ménage (1690b) preface.
44 Ménage (1690b) 5 and 123. Ménage (1690b) 5.
45 Ménage (1690b) 5.
46 This comment: Ménage (1690b) 5. His work on Terence: Ménage (1690a).
if she were not persuaded by his argument (about unity of time in the play), then he would change his own view.\(^{48}\) From this it is clear that he not only considered her a worthy opponent in this literary quarrel, but also one whose good opinion, and intellectual agreement, he valued.\(^{49}\) Through this allusion, Ménage transforms his praise of Dacier in the *Historia*'s preface from an empty compliment, politicizing it instead through alerting the reader to his own acceptance (in practice) of her as equal to a male scholar.\(^{50}\) His acceptance of her within their (male) circle is given further emphasis by his decision to address her directly in Latin, drawing attention to her capabilities in front of potential male detractors.\(^{51}\) The two Latin poems (appended to the catalogue) claim Dacier’s equality with her father Tanneguy Le Fèvre and her husband André Dacier, and so reinforce this point further.\(^{52}\)

It should already be clear that Ménage did more through this work than simply honour Dacier. He uses it to offer his support to her career both by emphasizing her equality and also by establishing ancient authority for her status as female scholar.\(^{53}\) As part of this strategy, Ménage sets up his category of ancient women in such a way as to ensure that they are free of contemporary prejudice against categories of intellectual women in his own society; that is, the *précieuses* (portrayed as pretentiously learned, yet actually foolish, women) or female novelists.\(^{54}\) He does this by excluding

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\(^{48}\) Dacier had translated a selection of Terence’s plays in 1688 and held a different view from Ménage on the issue of the time-scale for the action in Terence’s *Self-Torturer*; Zedler (1984) xiii, Farnham (1976), 122–3, and Itti (2012) 175.

\(^{49}\) Farnham makes the astute observation that this is the first of Dacier’s literary quarrels before her later, more famous, entanglement with Houdar de la Motte over Homer; Farnham (1976) 121. It is striking that while Ménage tolerated Dacier’s strongly held views on this issue, other contemporaries would not be so indulgent when it came to her strident defence of the ancients; van Dijk (1988) 189–225.

\(^{50}\) In fact in this dispute over Terence she literally took the place of a male scholar: d’Aubignac who had disputed the issue with Ménage from 1640–76; see Farnham (1976) 122. On the use of exaggerated language in such dedications, see Itti (2012) 176.

\(^{51}\) Dacier herself acknowledges in the preface to her *Callimachus* (1674) that there were those who wondered why Tanneguy Le Fèvre had educated her to such a degree (on which see p. 74). Presumably, even sixteen years later, there were still those who found her status and activities disturbing.

\(^{52}\) Ménage (1690b) 125–30; Zedler (1984) xiii and xxv.

\(^{53}\) Even if she was well established by this point, her position always rested on male approval and if the tide turned (as it did after her dispute with La Motte) then she could become the subject of ridicule in an instant; van Dijk (1988) 189–225.

\(^{54}\) Molière had ridiculed the *précieuses* and Ménage’s work seems to offer a deliberate counterpoint to this (perhaps his own representation by Molière as a pedant also motivated
women ‘who have pursued such pleasant studies as rhetoric, poetry, history, mythology, or the elegances of letter-writing’, and cataloguing those who have engaged in the ‘stricter discipline of philosophy’.\textsuperscript{55} The ancient women in his catalogue are relatives, friends, or disciples of recognized philosophers; and so are presented as moving freely within the circle of male philosophers (which is essential to the ideal he promotes, see p. 72).\textsuperscript{56} Dacier is presented as a contemporary ‘female philosopher’ of the type described from antiquity and in keeping with the notion of progress typical to the period, she is proclaimed the most erudite and eloquent of them all.\textsuperscript{57} This establishes Dacier’s activities as comparable to, and therefore legitimized by, the intellectual engagement of women from antiquity.

The \textit{Historia Mulierum Philosopharum}, however, is not written for Dacier’s sake alone. References to other contemporary, or at least more modern than ancient, women in his work, show that Ménage is arguing for the acceptance of a whole category of women rather than one exception.\textsuperscript{58} When he quotes from Christine de Pizan, he treats her as an authoritative source on the fourteenth-century lawyer in Bologna, Novella.\textsuperscript{59} He therefore puts into practice the ideal that he quietly advocates through this work; that is, working alongside, and benefitting from, female intellectuals. He adds force to his argument by listing other men who have mentioned de Pizan with respect and thus implicitly

this response). On Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux’s attack on novelists, and specifically Scudéry, see DeJean (1991), 159–201. Ménage’s publication needs to be considered in the context of this debate (between Huet and Boileau) about women’s place in the republic of letters.

\textsuperscript{55} Ménage (1690b) preface; translation: Zedler (1984) 3.

\textsuperscript{56} Zedler (1984) xvii.

\textsuperscript{57} Ménage (1690b) 123. On progress see DeJean (1997) 18–20. He fits her into this category by mentioning her work on Marcus Aurelius (Ménage (1690b) 124, and Dacier & Dacier (1691)) and also by emphasizing her status as daughter of a scholar and wife of another, through the poems (already mentioned) and by referring to her as Anna Fabra Daceria (Anne Le Fèvre-Dacier). On the question of whether Dacier was largely responsible for the content of Dacier & Dacier (1691) see Itti (2012) 200–3.

\textsuperscript{58} Even if the scope of Dacier’s career as a classicist makes her unique (on which see van Dijk (1988) 194; see also Timmermans (2005) 131–2), there are examples of other women who were learned enough to produce translations from Latin; such as, for example, Mademoiselle de Castille, Elisabeth Sophie Chéron, Mademoiselle Ramiez, and Madame de Roque-Montrousse (for details see the Appendix in DeJean (1991) 202–21).

appeals to his contemporaries to do the same. Similarly, in the case of his reference to Anna Maria van Schurman, he notes that Claude Saumaise had spoken of this ‘doctissima puella’ (very learned girl) in the dedicatory letter to his Observation on Athenian Law (1645), and so this adds another example of a respected male scholar’s esteem for a contemporary female intellectual. The historical range of these references suggests that rather than being an exception, Dacier is part of a category reaching back through the centuries. Ménage constructs his argument from the dialectic created by interweaving the past and present: in amongst his world of past female philosophers mixing in male circles, are examples of other learned women, historical and contemporary, whose contributions (Ménage implies) should be treated as welcome in the contemporary scholarly world as those of female philosophers were in the past. This enables him to construct, on paper at least, an ideal world in which women and men could work in harmony in a shared intellectual enterprise.

The publication context for Ménage’s work, especially in the Amsterdam 1692 edition (in which it was published alongside his comments on Diogenes Laertius’ Lives of the Philosophers), reinforced Ménage’s authority as a scholar, which perhaps resulted in it carrying more weight with its male readership. On the other hand, its translation into English in 1702 and French in 1758 (and again in 1762) enabled it to reach a

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60 They are: Marot, Du Verdier, and Jean Mabillon; see Ménage (1692) 494 and Zedler (1984) 23 with 72 n.51.
61 She had died by the time Ménage wrote his work but was alive when Saumaise first made the reference in 1645. Saumaise (1645), unnumbered. Ménage (1690b) 62–3 and Zedler (1984) 29 with 74, n.21. In his treatise, he praises Anna Maria van Schurman (alluding to her rather than naming her) by comparing her to Hippia (by which Ménage suggests he meant the ancient female philosopher Hypatia) and claiming that she is just as accomplished. Saumaise had long known van Schurman as his correspondence with Rivet reveals; see Leroy, Bots & Peters (1987) 56, 117, 119, 126, 132, 135, 137, 161–2.
62 Despite this agenda, Ménage does not omit material which reflects poorly on women and he refers to stereotypical negative female characteristics. This is the result, I suggest, of an inclusive approach to the ancient sources rather than ‘chauvinism’ as such (cf. Zedler (1984) xix) and in some cases, stereotypes are used to make a positive argument in praise of women. In any case, Ménage is not alone in this practice; even the anonymous (1683) Wonders of the Female World (which has a discourse on the superiority of women over men appended to it) includes pejorative content.
63 Other men at the time also advocated this ideal; see Haase-Dubosc (2004) 59 and DeJean (1991) 171.
wider vernacular readership, including women; this, I suggest, would be critical to facilitating Dacier’s metamorphosis into a gender icon. The potential impact of Ménage’s work on contemporary perceptions of Dacier was far more dramatic than for van Schurman. Both already had a well-established reputation as outstandingly learned women and therefore Ménage’s praise of them as ‘doctissima’ (very learned) is unremarkable; his association of Dacier with a ‘pro-women’ agenda, however, is far more significant.

His work placed Dacier in the company of other learned women (Christine de Pizan and Anna Maria van Schurman) who had been actively involved in the debate about female education. After this, Dacier would appear, just as van Schurman did, as an exemplum in tracts (through the following centuries) arguing in favour of female education. The most striking of these, perhaps, is Dacier’s appearance in the ‘Wonder Women of History’ feature of Wonder Woman in 1951; she is included because of her intellectual achievements as well as her ‘will power to overcome prejudice against women pursuing the arts’. This will power, however, though manifest in Dacier’s success as a classicist, had not led her to try to argue for other women to enjoy the same education as she had. From this point of view, van Schurman was a far more obvious candidate for the role of exemplum in these tracts since she had placed herself at the centre of an international network of women (such as Marie Le Jars de Gournay, Bathhsua Makin, and Birgitte Thott) who were actively thinking and writing about female education (a debate intrinsically linked with access to Latin and Greek).

Dacier and van Schurman appear as exempla in the same publication in Germany: Der vernünftigen Tadierinenn, Dacier in 1725/1726, and van Schurman in 1726/1727; on which see Brown (2006) and Baar and Rang (1996) 8 respectively. Further examples for Dacier include: Nouvelles Littéraires (1715), France, 98–101; The Ladies Journal (1727), Dublin, 17–21; Woman not inferior to Man pamphlet by ‘Sophia’ (1739), London; Magazin für Frauenzimmer (1784), Germany; Ladies Repository (1841), Cincinnati, 50–3; see also Winterer (2007) 147 on references to Dacier in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries in America.

Wonder Woman, Issue 48 (July/August 1951), the quotation comes from the conclusion to her two-page story. On the ‘Wonder Women of History’ feature, see Lepore (2014) 120–5.

de Baar (2004). She was associated with them, even if her views differed; on her differences from de Gournay (for example), see Larsen (2008) 110–11. On de Gournay and Makin in general, see Pal (2012) 78–109 and 177–205 respectively, in addition to Hall’s chapter in this volume.
Dacier, by contrast, shows some ambivalence towards her position as a female scholar. We gain glimpses of her awareness of the issue, and her challenge to it, but these do not culminate in a treatise equivalent to van Schurman’s. It seems that earlier in her career, however, Dacier had been willing to be more outspoken on the issue. In her Latin preface to her edition of Callimachus, in amongst the requisite expressions of modesty (which she employs throughout her works) and claims of filial duty, Dacier makes a bold claim about her education and career:\textsuperscript{68}

It remains for me to respond to certain old men, who, as I have heard, cannot have their fill of wondering why the famous Tanneguy Le Fèvre advised his daughter to engage in scholarship, and did not raise her instead to card the wool of the house. Indeed those people, incurring a charge of folly, could easily see that he has acted with such judgement that, of course, finally appears a woman to charge them with stupidity and sloth.\textsuperscript{69}

This type of explicit and inflammatory comment, however, does not appear in Dacier’s works once she is writing in the vernacular. Occasional hints of engagement with the issue of gender appear in the paratext to her translations; for example, at the end of her note about Andromache being sent back to her loom by Hector in \textit{Iliad} 6, she says: ‘I am rather afraid that many people, reading this work and find it far

\textsuperscript{68} Dacier’s use of the modesty trope to mediate potential outrage at her intrusion into the male domain through her extensive intellectual activities is neatly exemplified in her words about gaining special permission to consult a manuscript of Terence in the King’s Library. In the preface to her \textit{Terence} (1688) she explains: ‘I was very reluctant to go there; it seemed to me that the manuscripts were very far above someone of my gender, and that it was usurping the rights of male scholars to have even the thought of consulting them.’ (’J’avais beaucoup de répugnance à en venir là; il me sembloit que les Manuscrits estoient si fort au dessus d’une personne de mon sexe, que c’estoit usurper les droits des Savans que d’avoir seulement la pensée dé les consulter.’) Farnham takes this comment at face value (Farnham (1976) 121) but given Dacier’s willingness to challenge the views of male scholars in her commentaries; it seems far more likely that she knowingly adopts this stance to reassure her contemporaries (offering a comforting demonstration of her conformity to gender conventions). On Dacier’s deliberate use of modesty, in the preface to her \textit{Odyssey}, as part of her strategy to salvage her reputation after being outspoken in her defence of Homer see van Dijk (1988) 216–17. The modesty trope also forms an important part of memorialist rhetoric (in which modesty is used to make her extraordinary achievements acceptable) after her death; see Itti (2012) 313.

\textsuperscript{69} Unpaginated preface to Dacier’s (then Le Fèvre) edition of Callimachus (1674): ‘Restat ut quibusdam senes capitibus respondeam, quae, ut audi, satis mirari non possunt cur Tanaquillus ille Faber filiam litteris admovendam censuerit, neque illam potius domi pensa carpentem aluerit. Nae illa μωρίου εφλοκάνοντα σώματα facile videre poterant, hoc illum eo animo egisse, silicet ut esset aliquando quae eis socordiam & ignaviun exprobaret.’
above my capacity, will send me back to my distaff and spindles. Yet she broaches the issue with such lightness of touch and self-assured wit that her comment could easily be dismissed. Similarly, the anecdote about her response (quoting Sophocles’ *Ajax* 293: ‘Silence is the proper ornament for a woman’) to a visiting German Baron’s request to write a few words in his journal, seems equally ambivalent. She uses her classical learning (quoting Sophocles) to draw attention to the paradox of her educated status in the face of gender expectations and perceptions of female virtue, but does not push the point further. At the same time, her use of wit diffuses the possible danger of the challenge and so limits its impact. Finally, while her professed desire to share ancient literature with a female readership, through her translations, could be interpreted as an act of solidarity, in fact, it seems more likely to have been motivated by her career ambitions. The difference in Dacier’s intention in translating is highlighted by a comparison with Birgitte Thott (1610–62), who produced the first complete translation of a classical author in Danish (*Seneca’s Philosophus* (1658)) and who intended her work to be read by women; Thott combined her classical erudition and translation with a

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70 Dacier (1711) *ad loc.* on *Iliad* 6. 490: ‘J’ay bien peur que beaucoup de gens, en lisent cet ouvrage, & le trouvant fort au-dessus de mes forces, ne me renvoient aussi à mon quenoüille & à mes fuseaux.’

71 Reported in Brumoy (1730) Vol. 2, 236. It reached an English audience through the translation of Brumoy by Charlotte Lennox (on which see the Introduction to this volume, p. 21) and Aikin (1802), s.v. Dacier, Anne Le Frevre, 275–6.

72 Silence remained, along with obedience and chastity, a conventional feminine ideal; see Larsen (2008) 106. The continuing influence of Juan Luis Vives’ work can be seen in the exchange between Rivet and van Schurman; see Vives (1524) and Bulckaert (1997) 204.

73 Dacier acknowledged her wish to please female readers in the preface to her first vernacular translation (Le Fèvre, 1681). This revealed her ambition in hoping to influence the arbiters of taste in her society; see Timmermans (2005), 152–76 and Bastin-Hammou (2010), 92. Her ambivalence towards learned women is revealed in her comment (in the same preface) about Mlle de Scudéry’s incorrect dating of Sappho and Anacreon; the intended tone is ambiguous. She is more explicit in her criticism in the preface to her *Iliad*; here her comments are interpreted by Farnham to be an unambiguous ‘passage at arms’ (see Farnham (1976) 157–8). In private correspondence, however, Dacier expresses her admiration for de Scudéry, in a letter from Castres in July 1685 (see Rathery and Boutron (1873) 472) which suggests a potential division between her persona as a female scholar and persona as a female member of society. This division is certainly suggested by her contemporary Louis de Rouvray, Duke of Saint-Simon (court writer and historian for Louis XIV), who says that when Dacier left study behind, she became an ordinary ‘femme d’esprit’ (woman of sparkling wit), capable of discussing hairstyles, fashion and all other such trifles of conversation; Saint-Simon (1928) 76.
role as an active champion of women’s rights.\textsuperscript{74} By contrast, the association of Dacier’s career as a classicist with the debate about female education appears to owe more to the actions of others than to Dacier’s own agenda or intentions. Ménage’s work plays a pivotal role in this, but also the paraphrasing, in French, of her gender comment in the Callimachus preface (quoted on p. 74) in her obituary would have been instrumental in shaping the way in which she, and her work, was remembered.\textsuperscript{75}

The comparison of van Schurman and Dacier, invited by Ménage’s work, is instructive both to understanding the nature of their individual engagement with classical learning and also to highlighting broader issues with studies of this sort.\textsuperscript{76} Both women’s experiences share motifs with other learned women explored in this volume: they owed their exceptional education to their fathers and later opportunities resulted from the support of male advocates (above all, Beverwijck for van Schurman and Huet for Dacier).\textsuperscript{77} They both enjoyed fame for their learning, bringing glory to their countries and becoming, in effect, tourist attractions.\textsuperscript{78} At the same time, their demonstration of advanced levels of education (symbolized by a fluent knowledge of Greek and Latin) sparked slander: van Schurman gained a reputation for madness (exhibited by eating spiders) and both she and Dacier were accused of immorality.\textsuperscript{79}

On the other hand, Carol Pal’s description of learned women in the seventeenth century as an ‘eclectic assemblage’, pursuing individual goals, is particularly pertinent to the case of van Schurman and Dacier.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{74} Thott, like van Schurman, came from a wealthy family, see de Baar (2004) 129.
\textsuperscript{75}\textit{Journal des Savants} 38 (1720) 594.
\textsuperscript{76} Itti takes up this comparison at the beginning of her study of Dacier, but dismisses it before exploring all its implications; Itti (2012) 11–12.
\textsuperscript{77} On Beverwijck’s role see de Baar (2004) 112; on Huet see Farnham (1976) 50.
\textsuperscript{78} van Schurman, like Elizabeth Carter after her (the ‘star of England’), was named the ‘star of Utrecht’ and became a ‘tourist attraction’, see Irwin (1980) 68. The anecdote about the German baron visiting Dacier is indicative of her status as ‘tourist attraction’ within her lifetime (Brumoy (1730) Vol. 2, 236, and Aikin (1802) 275–6), while the inclusion of her tomb in Paris guidebooks ensured the continuation of this fame after her death; see Farnham (1976) 19. Ménage’s claim that she was well known across Europe (Ménage (1690a) preface) offers further evidence for this; Farnham (1976) 122 and Itti (2012) 175.
\textsuperscript{79} de Baar and Rang (1996) 7, on spiders; Pal (2012) 241, on rumours about van Schurman’s relationship with Labadie; and Farnham (1976) 24 on rumours of Dacier’s moral laxity (breakdown of her first marriage and having a child before second marriage). Earlier women suffer a similar experience, see ch. 2.
\textsuperscript{80} Pal (2012) 1–2.
Both women were highly educated in classics but what this meant to each of them, and the purpose of that knowledge, was markedly different. This case study reveals the limitations of what laudatory praise of learned women can really tell us about them and also points to the dangers of such allusions (as they invite assumptions about uniformity of achievement and/or purpose).\textsuperscript{81} It has also drawn attention to the phenomenon of appropriation of the symbolic meaning of classical learning in the cultural reception of women classicists.\textsuperscript{82} The appropriation of Dacier’s classical engagement for a ‘feminist’ cause, already demonstrated in a published letter of her contemporary Madame de Lambert (1647–1733), was, I would suggest, catalysed by Ménage’s work.\textsuperscript{83} Dacier’s publications, however, suggest that she would value her contribution to the history of classical scholarship far above her place in the history of female empowerment.\textsuperscript{84} The conflict between Dacier’s intentions and her society’s are neatly encapsulated in the detail of her burying her outspoken comment on gender in a Latin preface, only for it, after her death, to be paraphrased in the vernacular and released to shape her public image.\textsuperscript{85}

What did engaging in classics mean for a woman in the seventeenth century? In part, it depended on her individual experience and intentions, but perhaps even more importantly (in Dacier’s case at least) it was determined by what her society chose to make it mean.\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{81} Alenius (2012) unpaginated, makes this point about gynaeceae.

\textsuperscript{82} de Baar and Rang (1996). There is a danger of working backwards from what a classicist, and his/her work, has come to mean in trying to assess what it meant at the time (either to the person themselves or their contemporaries).

\textsuperscript{83} The letter, addressed to ‘R. P. B*** Jesuit’ discusses the dispute between Dacier and De La Motte about Homer (1714–16); De Lambert (1747) 381.

\textsuperscript{84} The prefaces to her translations demonstrate her commitment to enabling access to ancient authors (with the purpose of facilitating greater appreciation of them); her comment in the unpaginated preface to her translation of Plautus (1683) offers an indicative example: ‘My aim is not simply to translate the words, I want to try to reveal all the finer points of these excellent original texts, showing their art, explaining the management of the plays’ parts, and facilitating their imitation.’ (‘Mon but n’est pas d’en traduire simplement les mots, je veux tâcher de découvrir toutes les finesse de ces excellens Originaux, en montrer l’art, en expliquer la conduite, & en faciliter l’imitation.’) See also Farnham (1976) 14.

\textsuperscript{85} See p. 76 and n.75.

\textsuperscript{86} That is not say that Dacier’s contributions to the classical tradition were totally eclipsed but simply to emphasize that the ‘feminist’ strand to the reception of her career does not seem to have been intended by her.
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Anne Dacier (1681), Renée Vivien (1903),
or What Does it Mean for a Woman to Translate Sappho?

Jacqueline Fabre-Serris

The first vernacular French translation of Sappho in France dates from 1681: its author was a woman, Anne Le Fèvre, better known under her married name, Madame Dacier. Her translation of Sappho was coupled with that of Anacreon and was based on the 1660 publication of these two poets by her father, Tanneguy Le Fèvre (who published under the Latin name of Tanaquil(lus) Faber). The collection contained only two odes and two funerary epigrams, which at that time were attributed to the ancient poetess. It took a little more than 200 years to see a translation of several other fragments by Sappho published in France. The author was again a woman. In 1903, Pauline Tarn, publishing under the name of Renée Vivien (the pseudonym which she used for three collections of poems), produced a translation of the Greek poetess from the edition of Henry Thornton Wharton. Printed in 1885 in London, this edition was established from the German edition of Theodor Bergk (Leipzig, 1880). The collection put together by Renée Vivien and entitled Sapho, traduction nouvelle avec le texte grec (Sapho: a new translation with the Greek text) did not include the fragments discovered in the Oxyrhynchus papyrus that Theodore Reinach had introduced a year before in an article in the
Revue des Études Grecques. Renée Vivien added some of them in a second edition published in 1909 (the year of her death) under the title Sapho et huit Poétesses grecques (Sapho and Eight Greek poetesses). The edition published in 1903 was the first book to make available in France almost the complete known works of the author whom Vivien calls ‘Psappha’ in her preface. Vivien’s two onomastic choices, ‘Sapho’ and ‘Psappha’, indicate what she aimed at offering to the French public. The French spelling is ‘Sappho’ or ‘Sapho’ but in her own poems the poetess uses her own Aeolic dialectal form of the name: ‘Psappa’. So Vivien is making it clear that she intends to offer a translation which is as faithful as possible to the Greek originals.

In this chapter I will conduct a sequential and comparative study of the undertakings of Dacier and Vivien, two women separated by two centuries, and I will try to show that the illustrious and respected female philologist of the Early Modern and Early Enlightenment period, and the scandalous ‘decadent’ writer who spans fin-de-siècle and early Modernist periods, were closer in their approach than one might think at first glance.

Before engaging in this study, I will start by underlining a point in common between these two women, which is not without relation to their choice to translate Sappho. Each of them demonstrated a sexual freedom which was quite remarkable for their time, and was linked, in both cases, with the experience of passionate love. I do not need to go into detail about Renée Vivien, who was publicly open about her lesbianism. It was one of her lovers, Natalie Barney, who procured the Wharton edition for her [FIG. 5.1]. For Renée Vivien, to translate Sappho was clearly a way of agitating for a kind of life that the latter symbolized, as a poetess loving women and surrounded by them. Anne Le Fèvre was more discreet, but arguably showed a freedom in her sex life in her youth that was unusual in that century, even if it is less surprising from the daughter of a Huguenot scholar, Tanneguy Le Fèvre, who was himself criticized and condemned by the Church for his daring and his intellectual liberty.

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1 See Reinach (1902).
2 Psappha is one of the names transmitted from the manuscripts, for example fr. 1.20 in Campbell (1990).
3 See further the study by Goujon (1986).
4 See further Jay (1988).
5 Ribard (2008).
Married at the age of seventeen in 1664 to a publisher from Saumur, a friend of her father named Jean Lesnier, who was eight years her elder, Anne had a son, who was born and died a few days later in 1669. In the same year 1669, André Dacier, then nineteen years old, came to Saumur to study with Tanneguy Le Fèvre, who was a highly renowned philologist. In 1672, after the death of his master, André left Saumur for Paris. Anne followed him. She had had an affair with him and had given birth

6 All the following details about the life of Anne Dacier are from Santangelo (1984) 33–96. There is some controversy over some of the details of Anne’s life. Santangelo proposes 1647 as the date for Anne’s birth. Itti argues for a different date of birth (1645) and also explores the issue of the breakdown of her marriage to Lesnier and the malicious stories about it that arose after Anne’s death (including the one about illegitimacy of the child); Itti (2012) 57–9.
to a girl whom Jean Lesnier refused to recognize legally, and who was later recognized by André.

Jean Lesnier died in 1675. Anne and André lived together in Paris or in Castres, and got married in 1683. The Daciers converted to Catholicism in 1685, just before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, with an almost immediate financial benefit: they were given two pensions. It is no coincidence that an anonymous pamphlet was issued in 1723 with a title that pinpointed two areas of Anne Dacier’s life that she would probably have preferred to leave in the dark: Mémoire sur le Mariage de Mademoiselle Le Fevre avec M. Dacier et sur la réunion de l’un et de l’autre à l’Eglise catholique (Essay on the Marriage of Mlle Le Fevre to M. Dacier and on their admission to the Catholic Church). Here is an extract, linking her life to her study (leading up to this passage the author has noted a serious omission in the eulogy for Anne Dacier, namely the failure to mention her first marriage to Jean Lesnier):

Il est vrai qu’il auroit mal figuré dans un Eloge, n’y pouvant entrer d’ailleurs sans porter avec lui une circonstance honteuse de la conduite de son Epouse qui l’avait abandonné pour suivre M. Dacier, et en qui la médisance a dit qu’elle avoit trouvé un certain Mérite qu’elle aimoit et dont elle accusoit l’autre de manquer. Cela a fait dire à quelques personnes instruites du fait dont il s’agit, que Mad. Dacier ne s’étoit pas échauée gratis pour justifier la conduite d’Helene, puisqu’en y travaillant, elle composit un remede paliatif pour se l’appliquer à elle-même.

It is true that he [Lesnier] would have come across badly in the eulogy, as he could not figure [in it] without carrying with him the shameful circumstances of the misconduct of his spouse who had left him to follow Monsieur Dacier, in whom malicious gossip said she had found some merit that she loved and that she accused the former of lacking. That prompted some people, who were in the

7 Tanneguy Le Fèvre brokered the marriage of Anne with Lesnier. It is rather unlikely that he did not become aware of the beginnings of love between his two students. We do not know how he reacted to this situation; in any case, he continued to give lessons to Anne and André. He had, himself, conducted a love affair with a woman of Saumur, Mlle Liger, despite being married; Santangelo (1984) 43.

8 Castres is a commune in southern France in the former province of Languedoc where André’s family lived.

9 It is possible that this decision was also, or mainly, taken under political pressure: the name of an individual named La Fèvre was mentioned, without any further precision, in two letters from Louvois, Minister of War, to La Reynie, Lieutenant General of Police, in the context of the Affaire des poisons. This was a major murder scandal in the French court over the years 1677–1682, involving allegations of witchcraft and child abuse, in which a part of the aristocracy was compromised, and which led to more than thirty convictions and executions. See further Somerset (2003).
know, to say that it was not for nothing that Madame Dacier was interested in justifying the conduct of Helen, as when working on it, she was composing a palliative remedy that she could apply to herself.\(^{10}\)

The author of the pamphlet names Helen as of particular interest to Dacier (given the similarity of their behaviour); he could also have referred to Sappho.

**Anne Le Fèvre**

I will now undertake the study of the edition of Sappho by Anne Le Fèvre which was published in 1681 prior to her marriage and conversion. She had learned Greek and Latin from her father, who was Professor of the Academy of Saumur. Founded by Philippe Duplessis-Mornay, Governor of the city, this Academy was mainly dedicated to the study of ancient languages, philosophy, and theology, and was, in the words of Voltaire, ‘l’Athènes du protestantisme’ (‘the Athens of Protestantism’).\(^{11}\) According to a letter written to Daniel Huet on 20 May 1671, Tanneguy Le Fèvre started to give lessons to his daughter when she was twenty years old.\(^{12}\) Her first biographer Pierre-Jean Burette, however, relates that her education began ten years before, when she was ten or eleven years old.\(^{13}\) According to his anecdotal version of events, Tanneguy Le Fèvre used to give grammar lessons to his young son in a room where his daughter was engaged in needlework. Several times when her father asked his son some difficult questions, Anne drew attention to herself by suggesting the correct answers to her brother, who was hesitating. However it came to be, Tanneguy Le Fèvre, who published in 1672 a *Méthode pour commencer les humanités grecques et latines* (Method for beginning Greek and Latin), allowed his daughter to attend his courses and she proved to be so gifted that in a few years she became his assistant.

\(^{10}\) *Mémoire sur le Mariage de Mademoiselle Le Fèvre avec M. Dacier et sur la réunion de l’un et de l’autre à l’Église catholique*, in BF, 1, 1723, 33. All translations are the author’s own. This text is quoted by Santangelo (1984) 52 n.56.

\(^{11}\) See Foulon (1993) 358.


\(^{13}\) Burette (undated), 1.
The education she received from one of the most famous Hellenists of her time was therefore extremely unusual for a woman. When Bossuet (appointed tutor to the Dauphin in 1670) decided, with Pierre-Daniel Huet and the Duke of Montausier (himself Governor of the Dauphin), to launch a collection of classical texts for the benefit of his pupil, thanks to Huet, a friend of her father, Anne was called to participate for a fee in the undertaking. She started by editing Florus in 1674 and over the following years produced Delphin editions of Dictys and Dares (1680), Aurelius Victor (1681), and Eutropius (1683). Her translation of Anacreon and Sappho, entitled Les poésies d’Anacréon et de Sapho traduites de Grec en François, avec des remarques par Mademoiselle Le Fèvre, appeared in 1681.

Anne Le Fèvre used her father’s edition of 1660, Anacreontis et Sapphonis carmina notas et animadversiones additit Tanaquillus Faber, which was accompanied by a Latin translation. It was however less extensive in its coverage of the available fragments of Sappho than the then canonical, second expanded 1566 edition of Henri Estienne’s collection of the fragments of nine ancient lyric poets, Carminum poetarum nouem, lyricae poeseōs princip[um] fragmenta: Alcaeii, Anacreontis, Sapphus, Bacchylidis, Stesichori, Simonidis, Ibyci, Alcmanis, Pindari: nonnulla etiam aliorum, published in Geneva. The reason for her choice was probably that many scholars at that time cared little for fragments. This aversion to incomplete texts persisted amongst French philologists through the centuries that followed and explains why the only poems of Sappho well known in France, before Renée Vivien’s work, were the two odes and the two epigrams that were translated by Anne Le Fèvre. The Greek texts of these two odes (as printed by Anne) together with her translation of them are quoted in full here for ease of reference and to clarify my argument.

14 For full details of this series and Dacier’s contribution to it, see Volpilhac-Auger (2000) passim.
15 There was a second edition with the title Les poésies d’Anacréon et de Sapho, traduites en François, avec des remarques par Madame Dacier. Nouvelle édition, augmentée des Notes Latines de Mr Le Fèvre et de la Traduction en vers François de Mr de la Fosse, Amsterdam, chez la Veuve de Paul Marret, MDCCXVI.
16 For a detailed discussion of the early printed editions of Sappho, see DeJean (1989) 29–33.
17 See Campbell (1990) 52–5 and 78–81 for the standard Greek text and accurate English translations of both these odes. Translations from Dacier (1699) 253–5 and 259.
Sappho Fragment 1 'Ode to Aphrodite'

Ποικιλόθρον’ ἀθάνατ’ Ἀφροδίτα,
Παί Δίας, δολοπλόκε, λάσσωμι σε
Μή μ’ ἀταισι μηδ’ ἀνίαια δάμνα,
Πότνια, θυμᾶν’

Αλλὰ τὰ ἐδώ, ἀντετα κατ’ ἐρωτα,
Τάς ἔμας αὐδᾶς ἄει, ἄς πολλὰκ’
Εἰλος: πατρὸς δὲ δόμων λυποῦσα
Χρύσεως, ἤλθες,

Αρμ’ ὑποξέξασα: καλοὶ δὲ σ’ ἄγον
Ωκέες σφηνοί, πτέρυγας μελαίνῳ
Πυκνὰ διένοτες ἀπ’ οὐράν αἰθέρος διὰ μέσον.

Αἶψα δ’ ἐξίκουντο τὸ δ’, ὅ μάκαιρα,
Μειδίασα’ ἀθανάτῳ προσώπῳ,
Ἡρ’ ὀτὶ δ’ ἦν τὸ πέπονθα, κ’ ὀτὶ
Δόφρῳ καλοὶμ.

Κ’ ὀτὶ γ’ ἐμῳ μάλις’ ἐθέλῳ γενέσθαι
Μανόλα θυμώ’ τίνα δ’ αὕτε πειθώ,
Καὶ σαγηνοῦσιν φιλότητα τις σ’, ὅ
Σαφροῖ, ἄδικείς;

Καὶ γὰρ αἴ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει:
Αἴ δὲ δώρα μὴ δέχετ’ ἀλλὰ δώσει:
Αἴ δὲ μὴ φιλεῖ, ταχέως φιλησει
Κ’ ὀτὶ κελεύῃς.

Εἴλθε μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλέπαν δὲ λύσο
Ἐκ μερμνᾶν, ὅσα δὲ μοι τελέσσαι
Θυμός ἱμείρε, τέλεσσον’, σὺ δ’ ἄλτα
Σύμμαχος ἔσσο.

HYMNE A VENUS

Grande & immortelle Venus, qui avez des Temples dans tous les lieux du monde,
ville de Jupiter, qui prenez tant de plaisir à tromper les Amans, je vous prie
d’accabler point mon coeur de peines & d’ennuis. Mais, si jamais vous m’avez été
favorable, venez aujourd’hui à mon secours, & daignez écouter mes prières,
comme autrefois, lorsque vous voulûtes bien quitter la demeure de vôtre pere
pour venir ici. Vous étiez montée sur un char que de légers passereaux tiroient
avec rapidité, par le milieu de l’air. Ils s’en retournèrent si-tôt qu’ils vous eurent
amenée, & alors, charmante Déesse, vous voulûtes bien me demander avec un
visage riant, quel eût le sujet de mes plaintes, & pourquoi je vous avois invoquée.
Vous me demandâtes aussi ce que mon coeur souhaitoit avec le plus de passion,
quel jeune homme je desirois d’engager & de mettre dans mes filets. Qui est celui, me dites-vous, qui est celuy qui te méprise, Sapho? Ha, s’il te fuit maintenant, dans peu il ne pourra vivre loin de toi, & s’il refuse tes présens, le temps viendra qu’il t’en fera à son tour. Si-tôt que l’indifference, au premier jour il brûlera d’amour & se soumettra à tes loix. Aujourd’hui donc, grande Déesse, venez encore, je vous prie, me secourir, & me tirer des cruelles inquietudes qui me devorent. Faites que tous les desirs de mon coeur soient accomplis, & veuillez m’accorder vôtre protection.

Sappho Fragment 31

Φαίνεται μοι κείνος ἵσος θεοίσιν
Εμμεν’ ἀνήρ, ὡστὶς ἔναντίν τοι
Πίνακε, καὶ πλασίων ἀδύ φωνοῦ-
σας ὕπακοδεῖ
Καὶ γελώσας ἰμερένει τό μοι τάν
Καρδιὰν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόασει,
Ως ἵδον σε, βρόγγον ἐμοι γὰρ ἀνδας
Οὐδὲν ἐδ’ ὣκει,
Αλλὰ καμμεν γλώσσα’ ἐγ’, ἀν δὲ λεπτὸν
Αὐτικά χρῶ πιρ ὑποδηψακεν,
Ομμάτεσαι δ’ οὐδὲν ὄρημι, βομβεύ-
σαν δ’ ἀκοαῖ μοι
Κάδ’ ὅρους ψυχρὸς χέεται, τρόμος δὲ
Πᾶσαν αἰρεῖς χλωροτέρῃ δὲ ποίας
Ἐμμίτεθαι δ’ ὀλιγόν δέοισα
φαίνομαι ἀπνοες.

A SON AMIE

Celui qui est toujours près de vous, & qui a le bonheur de vous entendre parler & de vous voir rire d’une maniere si agréable, est assûrément aussi heureux que les Dieux. C’est ce ris & ce parler qui mettent le trouble dans mon coeur; car si-tôt que je vous vois, la parole me manque, je deviens immobile, & un feu subtil se glisse dans mes veines; mes yeux se couvrent d’épais nuages, je n’entends qu’un bruit confus, une sueur froide coule de tout mon corps, je tremble, je deviens pâle, je suis sans poulx & sans mouvement, enfin il semble que je n’ai plus qu’un moment à vivre.

Anne’s interpretation of the gender alignment in the ‘Ode to Aphrodite’, expressed in her unambiguous translation, was made possible by her acceptance of her father’s text for line 24. Standard modern editions of Fragment 1 print a feminine participle ἐθέλοισα (‘she is willing’) in line 24, so that lines 23–4 (αἰ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλοισα) can be
translated as: ‘and if she does not love, soon she shall love, even against her will’. The inclusion of this feminine participle in the Greek text of modern editions makes the female gender of Sappho’s infatuation irrefutably clear. Tanneguy Le Fèvre had adopted Estienne’s reading of the Greek text for line 24: instead of the female participle, he prints the second person singular of the Greek verb κελεύω (‘I command’), which produces a translation along the lines of ‘he’ll do whatever you say’. Anne’s translation for these lines reflects this choice: ‘il brûlera d’amour & se soumettra à tes loix’ (‘he’ll burn with love and submit to your laws’). Estienne’s Greek allowed (that was the aim) a heterosexual reading of the text and, in fact, Dacier’s translation makes this interpretation of the poem even clearer through her translation of the gender ambiguous τίνα (‘whom’) in line 18 of the Greek as ‘young man’ (‘jeune homme’).

The second ode, to which Anne Le Fèvre gave the title A son amie (‘To his/her female friend’, Fragment 31 in modern editions), however, left no doubt about the object of Sappho’s love. French readers, however, also knew the famous poem by Catullus which this ode had inspired, Carmen 51, ille mi par esse videtur, ‘He seems to me to be equal to the gods’, whose author was a man and which was then referring to heterosexual relationships. By choosing to translate Anacreon and Sappho into French, instead of presenting them with a Latin translation, as her father did, Anne Le Fèvre was seeking to introduce these two authors to a larger audience. That is indeed what she says in her preface to Anacreon, specifying that she is particularly thinking about women: ‘En traduisant Anacréon en nôtre langue j’ay voulu donner aux Dames le plaisir de lire le plus poly & le plus galand Poëte Grec que nous ayons’ (‘By translating Anacreon into our language, I wanted to give ladies the pleasure of reading the most urbane and gallant Greek poet that we have.’) One can suppose that was also the case for Sappho, since Anne so closely associated the two poets, as her father had before her.

The preface to the text by Sappho is a fine example of the erudite work accomplished by Anne Le Fèvre. The first part is dedicated to the life of

18 Campbell (1990) 55.
20 Accessible, for example, through the editions of Muret (1554) and (1558).
21 Le Fèvre (1681) preface.
Sappho. Anne Le Fèvre gives the name of her father (Scamandronymus), of her mother (Cleis), the time when she lived (c.600 BC), her social standing, and the name of her husband, ‘un des plus riches de l’île d’Andros, nommé Cercala’ (‘one of the richest men on the island of Andros, named Cercala’). She also gives the name of her daughter (Cleis, like her grandmother), those of her three brothers (Larichus, Eurigius, Charaxus), and mentions the love affair of her brother Charaxus with an Egyptian courtesan (called Doricha or Rhodope). This biographical note also aims to defend the moral reputation of Sappho, but without being explicit about the misconduct of which the poetess was accused; this is a clever tactic, since not naming it gives less weight to what is alleged. It is after speaking about Sappho’s marriage and giving her daughter’s name that Anne Le Fèvre indicates, without going into detail, Sappho’s irregular lifestyle choice: ‘Elle demeura veuve fort jeune, & si l’on en croit la plupart des Anciens, qui ont écrit sa vie, elle ne vécut pas d’une manière fort régulière après la mort de son mari’ (‘She remained a widow from a youthful age, and, if one believes most of the Ancients, who wrote about her life, she did not live a very settled life after the death of her husband’).  

Anne Le Fèvre comes back to this subject after a long digression about Sappho’s brothers and in particular about Charaxus, whom Sappho criticized for being in love with a courtesan. Anne uses it as an argument to claim that ‘il ne faut pas ajouter foy à tout ce que l’on trouve écrit contre elle’ (‘One should not give weight to everything that has been written against her’). She adds that ‘L’envie a fait écrire les calomnies dont on a tâché de la noircir’ (‘Envy prompted people to write the slander that has been used to smear her’), without specifying what kind of slanders. Instead, she attributes their origin to the superiority of Sappho’s poetic talent: ‘(elle) surpassait en sçavoir, non seulement toutes les femmes, quoi que de son temps il y en eût en Grece d’extrêmement scavantes, mais elle estoit même fort au dessus des plus excellens Poètes’ (‘She surpassed in her knowledge, not only all women, even if in her time there were some very learned ones in Greece, but . . . was also far superior to the most excellent [male] poets’). This is what earned her the enmity of those ‘dont les vers auroient esté trouvez incomparables, si Sapho n’en

22 Le Fèvre (1681) 390.  
23 Le Fèvre (1681) 393.  
24 Le Fèvre (1681) 394.  
25 Le Fèvre (1681) 393–4.
’était jamais fait’ (‘whose verses would have been found peerless, if Sappho had never written any’). Anne Le Fèvre adds a little later:

Au reste quoy que je sois persuadée qu’il y a eu beaucoup de médisance dans tout ce que l’on a dit contre Sapho, je ne crois pas pourtant qu’elle ait esté d’une sagesse exemplaire. Elle ne fut pas exempte de passion; tout le monde scât qu’elle aimait Phaon & qu’elle l’aimait d’une manière fort violente.

Anyway, even if I am sure that there was a lot of slander in everything that was said against Sappho, still I do not believe that she was a model of wisdom. She was not free from passion; everybody knows that she loved Phaon and that she loved him most violently.

Here Anne Le Fèvre uses the ancient tradition that the true object of Sappho’s passion was a young man named Phaon, and thus takes a different stand from her father. In his Abrégé des Vies des Poètes grecs, he had recognized that Sappho was perhaps justly called tribas (in Greek, literally ‘one who rubs’, and therefore understood as ‘lesbian’: this term already appears in the ancient discussion of Sappho). He had also claimed that her Ode à une aimée is so admirable that the poetess and the work deserved forgiveness.

Daniel Bourchenin, a Huguenot, who, in 1785, wrote a book on Tanneguy Le Fèvre, recalls that Pierre Bayle (philosopher, critic, and contemporary of Dacier) judged that Anne had failed in her defence of Sappho: he thought that ‘Le Fèvre had not only veiled, but moreover had excused the abominable love affairs of Sappho, and then Anne had in vain tried to absolve the same poetess from any crime’.

It does not matter today whether or not Anne Le Fèvre succeeded in ‘saving’ Sappho. It is more interesting to see what arguments she used. She dealt in fact with the heart of the matter, but by displacing it. What could displease and shock in Sappho is the description of her passion, whose object was, in the second ode, without any doubt for a woman. Anne chooses to leave aside the texts. When she presents the passion of

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26 Le Fèvre (1681) 394. 27 Le Fèvre (1681), 395–6.
28 See e.g. Campbell (1990) Testimonium 17, a comment made on Horace Epistle 1.19.28, where Horace is discussing Phaon, by the Latin grammarian Pomponius Porphyrio, ed Holder (1979 [1894]) 362.
29 Mora (1966) 164.
30 animaduertit Fabrum non modo Sapphonis nefandos amores non uelasse, immo eos excussasse; Annam deinde camdem uatem crimine ullo absoluere frustra tentasse; Bourchenin (1822) 146.
Sappho for Phaon as public knowledge, it causes (implicitly) less damage than the love of women, which Anne never evokes. This passion, she explains, drove Sappho to Sicily to join Phaon, who had retired there never to see her again. She composed verses that had no effect on her lover. So she went to Leucas, to throw herself from the height of the promontory ‘s’imaginant se défaire de la passion qu’elle avoit toujours’ (‘believing it would rid her of that passion she still had’),\(^{31}\) and she died.

It is curious that Anne Le Fèvre accepts such an unbelievable story. In any case, she explains (on the same page) that the belief in curing love by jumping from the cliffs of Leucas was ‘une opinion généralement reçue en Grèce’ (‘an opinion generally accepted in Greece’).

A little earlier in her preface, she also tells a story (from the ancient biographical tradition about Sappho) which was destined to become the kernel of Charles Perrault’s *Cinderella* (*Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre*) in 1698, after Perrault apparently recognized its fairy-tale qualities. Rhodopis, the courtesan who was loved by Sappho’s brother, became the wife of the king of Egypt after a strange adventure. As Rhodopis was bathing, an eagle took one of her shoes from the hands of a servant and carried it to Memphis, letting it fall on the knees of the king, who was dispensing justice. The king, marvelling at it, ordered for its owner to be sought throughout Egypt and, once she was found, he married her. This story has Aelian’s authority behind it (*Varia Historia* 13.33), and the one about Phaon has Ovid’s (*Letters from Heroines* 15); Anne Le Fèvre does not indicate this. It is interesting to notice that while she doubts the former one (‘L’on fait une histoire de cette maîtresse de Caraxus qui ne me paraît pas trop vrai-sensible; mais qui est assez jolie pour être rapportée’ (‘This beloved of Caraxus gave rise to a story that is not easy to believe but is nice enough to be told’)),\(^{32}\) she devotes four pages to recall all she has found on Leucas, its temple, and the different kinds of jumps performed there.

Even though seventeenth-century scholars had a tendency, of course, to believe what they were told by the Ancients, and Anne Le Fèvre is no exception amongst her contemporaries, her insistence in trying to bolster this legend about the death of Sappho with these further details about Leucas is nevertheless a little suspect. The details of the life of the poetess

\(^{31}\) Le Fèvre (1681) 397.  \(^{32}\) Le Fèvre (1681) 391.
that she adds after this also aim to establish implicitly the idea that Sappho was heterosexual. Anne Le Fèvre comes back to what she had said at the beginning of her preface: Sappho remained a widow from a young age but she adds that ‘elle ne voulut jamais se remarier, quoy qu’elle trouvât des partis fort avantageux’ (‘She never wanted to remarry, even though there were attractive suitors’).33 She goes on to quote a letter that Sappho is supposed to have written to a man to refuse his proposal of marriage.

Anne Le Fèvre ends her preface by speaking of Sappho’s work, of which, she says, there remains only the Hymne à Vénus and ‘une Ode qu’elle fit pour une de ses amies’ (‘one ode she wrote for one of her female friends’).34 Anne sidesteps the issue by translating ‘amie’ (female friend) instead of ‘aimée’ (female beloved), and she adds a personal remark: ‘Presque tous ces ouvrages estoient faits à la loïange de ses amies; mais une chose me surprend, c’est que ces amies ayent esté presque toutes étrangères, & qu’elle n’ait pû se faire aimer des Dames de son pays’ (‘Almost all of these works were devoted to the praise of her female friends; but there’s one thing that surprises me, it is that almost all of these friends were foreigners, and that she could not make herself loved by the ladies from her own country’).35 There is, probably, a contemporary reference in that remark: in the Salons des précieuses (female-led literary gatherings), cultured friends used to meet one another, and they were supposed to be fond of each other!36

Anne Le Fèvre then quotes a text that she will not include in the collection (Fr. 55 in Campbell (1990), a poem preserved because it was quoted in Stobaeus’ Anthology), and that she translates without giving the Greek, by introducing it as what Sappho would have said ‘à une des plus considérables & des plus riches Dames de Lesbos’ (‘to one of the most respected and richest women from Lesbos’):37

κατθάνοισα δὲ κείσῃ οὐδὲ ποτα μνημοσύνα σέθεν ἔσσετ οὐδὲ πόθα εἰς ὑστερον οὐ γαρ πεδέχης βρόδων τῶν ἐκ Πιερίας, ἀλλ’ ἀφάνις κἀν Λίδα δόμω φοιτάζῃς πεδ’ἀμαίρων νεκύων ἐκπεποταμένα.

33 Le Fèvre (1681) 401. 34 Le Fèvre (1681) 403. 35 Le Fèvre (1681) 404–5. 36 See further e.g. Maître (1999). 37 Greek text from Campbell (1990) 98.
Lors que tu seras morte, l'on ne parlera absolument plus de toy, car tu n'as jamais eu de bouquets de roses de montagnes de Pierie [with a gloss in the margin: c'est-à-dire: Tu n'as jamais eu de commerce avec les Muses]. Mais tu t'en iras sans aucune gloire dans la demeure sombre de Pluton; & lors que tu y seras une fois, l'on ne se souviendra plus de toy & moy je vivray éternellement.

After you are dead, no one will ever talk about you, as you never had a bunch of roses from the mountains of Pieria. But you will go without any glory into the dark house of Pluto; and once you are there, no one will remember you and as for me, I will live eternally.

It is of course significant that this should be the only fragment quoted and that Anne Le Fèvre explained the meaning of the allusion to the roses from Pieria, the Muses’ mountain: Sappho’s ‘friends’ were then...poetesses too? She goes on to say that Sappho had a high opinion of herself, but that it was justified, as her two odes ‘ont fait passer son nom d’âge en âge’ et l’ont ‘imprim(é) dans la mémoire des hommes’ (‘made her name known from age to age and imprinted her name in the memory of men’).

Therefore, contrary to the opinion of Edith Mora, it is probable that Anne understands her father’s views about Sappho perfectly well. She simply chooses a different position. She aims to defend the passionate woman and the poetess, with whom she doubtless felt a secret kinship. She prefers to believe in Sappho’s heterosexuality and in friendships, akin to what existed between women writers and their friends in the social circles of her contemporary society.

I end this brief presentation of the collection by Anne Le Fèvre with a few remarks on her translations. The choice of prose bears witness to her intention to be accurate, which she achieves, even if her translations are not, by our standards, exact. In the following I offer a few examples of the adjustments she makes as a result of the rules of translation that were in use at the time. In the first line of her translation of the ‘Ode to Aphrodite’ (quoted in full earlier), Ποικιλόθρον ἀθάνατ’ Αφροδίτα (‘You, on your throne of shimmering colours, immortal Aphrodite’), Anne Le Fèvre erases the strangeness of the first part of the compound epithet Ποικιλόθρον (‘of shimmering colours’), omits the word ‘throne’, and replaces it with ‘temples’. She substitutes a subordinate clause in place of the compound epithet, uses the Latin name of the goddess, inserts a...

38 ‘Meaning you never had acquaintance with the Muses.’
39 Le Fèvre (1681) 406–7.
40 Mora (1966) 165.
41 Le Fèvre (1681) 409.
word from a later line, and makes an addition. As for the insertion: she translates πότνια (an honorific title meaning ‘queen’ or ‘mistress’) as ‘great’ and moves the word from line 4 to line 1. As for the addition, she includes an adverbial phrase of place in her subordinate for clarity and to conform to the religious diction of her time: ‘in every place in the world’. This results in the translation of line 1 as: ‘Grande et immortelle Vénus, qui avez des Temples dans tous les lieux du monde’ (‘Great and immortal Venus, who has temples in every place in the world’).

This decision to ‘transcribe’ the text by using contemporary vocabulary and syntax also brought her to eliminate, in line 2, the image of weaving in the adjective δολοπλόκε (‘wile-weaver’) and to substitute a psychological reference (‘who takes pleasure in’). Here, again, she uses a subordinate clause in which she adds an adverbial phrase to avoid any ambiguity: ‘Qui prenez tant de plaisir à tromper les Amans’ (‘who takes so much pleasure in cheating lovers’). In the same spirit, in line 23, the simplicity of the words chosen by Sappho αἰ δὲ μὴ φιλεῖ, ταχέως φιλήσει (‘if she does not love you, she will love you soon’) is replaced by the more sophisticated, amorous speech in use in the Salons: ‘S’il a de l’indifférence au premier jour, il brûlera d’amour et se soumettra à tes lois’ (‘If he shows indifference on the first day, he will burn with love and will submit to your rule’).

The double constraint of the wish to avoid any strangeness and the necessity to resort to the speech in contemporary use (whether religious speech, amorous speech, or physiological speech), led to a weakening of the poetic appeal of the Greek text, particularly in her translation of the second ode, quoted in full at p. 85. In the following example, I have used italics to indicate Dacier’s embellishments to the text and have put in parentheses phrases included in the original poem by Sappho which have been changed or suppressed by Dacier (9–16):

(sous ma peau, soudain) un feu subtil se glisse dans mes veines, mes yeux se couvrent d’épais nuages; (mes oreilles bourdonnent) je n’entends qu’un bruit confus, une sueur froide coule de tout mon corps, (un frisson me saisit toute) je tremble, je deviens pâle (plus pâle que l’herbe), (et peu s’en faut, je me sens mourir) je suis sans pouls et sans mouvement, enfin il me semble que je n’ai plus qu’un moment à vivre.42

42 Le Fèvre (1681) 419–20.
(under my skin, suddenly) a subtle fire slides through my veins, my eyes are covered by thick clouds; (my ears are ringing) I only hear a confused noise, my whole body is dripping in a cold sweat, (I am all shaken by shivers) I shiver, I grow pale (greener than grass), (and I feel I am almost going to die) I am without a pulse and unable to move, still I feel I have but a moment to live.

The immediate success of Dacier’s translation is attested by the multiple editions of it which were published.\(^{43}\) It would also prove significant to the reception of Sappho and translations of her poems in French and in English.\(^ {44}\) It is revealing that contemporary responses to her work should make reference to her gender: the baron de Longepierre (who would produce his own verse translation of Sappho in 1684) acknowledged that her learning would be surprising even in someone of his own sex, while the poet Houdar de la Motte played on her gender in his playful poetic conceit that her translation was in fact the work of the god of love.\(^ {45}\) Both seem to invite reflection on the potential similarities between the female scholar and the female poet whose work she translated: since Longepierre’s comment might be read in light of Dacier’s own comments about Sappho in her preface, while Houdar de la Motte’s poem, with its idea of the intervention of the god of Love, clearly enjoys a relationship with Sappho’s Ode to Aphrodite.

### Renée Vivien

Renée Vivien was born in London but lived in Paris after inheriting her father’s fortune. She had already written three books of poetry when she published her translation of Sappho.\(^ {46}\) We know today, thanks to Salomon Reinach, that she learned Greek by taking private lessons with a teacher, Gaetan Baron. After the death of Renée Vivien, Reinach (1858–1932), a renowned classical art historian and archaeologist, began to gather all the available information and accounts about the poetess whom he considered ‘comme une fille de génie et le plus grand poète français du XX\(^ \text{e} \) siècle’ (‘a genius and the greatest poet of the twentieth century’). He deposited the cardboard box of documents with the

Bibliothèque Nationale (National Library of France) in 1932, requesting that it should not be opened until the year 2000.

The collection contains three letters by Gaetan Baron, with whom Reinach came into contact in 1920. In his first letter (dated 28 March), Gaetan Baron relates that he met Renée Vivien in 1898, and explains how he came to teach her Greek.47


Miss Pauline Tarn was living in a guesthouse in Crevaux street, in 1898, when she had the desire to learn Greek "in order to read Homer in the original text’, as she said. I was, I believe, her first teacher. We made translations from French to Greek and from Greek to French relentlessly, referring all the time to Rieman and Goezler, Audoin, the Abbé Ragon and many others, and we translated episodes from Odyssey . . .

This is a distinguished reading list. Othon Rieman (1853–1891), for example, who taught at the University of Nancy and then at the École Normale Supérieure, is named here because of his *Phonétique et étude des formes grecques et latines* (1891) which he wrote with Henry Goezler, a Latinist and Professor at the University of Paris.48 Édouard Audouin (1864–1933), Professor at the University of Poitiers, published in 1891 an *Étude sommaire des dialectes grecs littéraires autres que l’attique: homérique, nouvel-ionien, dorien, éolien*, with a preface by Rieman.49 Éloi Ragon (1853–1908) is more famous: Professor at the Institut catholique de Paris, he was also a renowned teacher, author of a *Grammaire grecque* (1889), unanimously praised and republished for the fifteenth time in 1902, and of *Thèmes grecs sur la syntaxe, avec une petite stylistique, des exercices récapitulatifs, un tableau des vers irréguliers et un lexique* (1892).50 Like Anne Le Fèvre, Renée Vivien, therefore, had a

47 These letters can be found in the Salomon Reinach collection, *Renée Vivien (Pauline Tarn)*, II, NAF26583, F13–18, Département des manuscrits, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

48 *Phoenetics and the Study of Greek and Latin Forms*. Goezeler was also author of a Latin dictionary, many grammars, and translations of Livy’ and Virgil’s works.

49 *A Brief Study of the Greek Literary Dialects other than Attic*.

50 Greek Grammar and Translations from French to Greek on syntax.
private tutor who trained her rigorously using the most up-to-date methods and the best reference books.

In his second letter, dated 29 March 1920, Gaetan Baron recalls how quickly his student made progress ‘en dialecte attique ou éolien’ (‘in Attic or Aeolian dialect’), which suggests that Renée Vivien was already reading Sappho in the original at this time. This assumption is supported by a passage in Gaetan Baron’s *Carnet de route d’un mitrailleur (Logbook of a Machine Gunner)*, which he wrote during the war. He quotes this passage (dated February 27, 1916) to his illustrious correspondent:

...les plus informes fragments de Sappho prenaient instantanément forme et vie, à l’appel de ses évocations. Il me souvient qu’elle écrivit, sans une rature sous mes yeux éblouis la jolie paraphrase que voici:

\[ Παρθένον ἀδύφων \\
(une vierge à la voix douce) \\
J’écoute en rêvant...La fraîcheur de ta voix \\
Coule, comme l’eau du verger sur la mousse, \\
Et vient apaiser mes douleurs d’autrefois, \\
Vierge à la voix douce.’

The most shapeless fragments of Sappho came instantly to life at the call of her evocations. I remember that she wrote, without any crossings-out, before my dazzled eyes, this lovely periphrasis:

‘(virgin soft-spoken.) \\
I listen dreaming... \\
The freshness of your voice \\
flows, like water from the orchard on the moss \\
and by coming soothes my pains from times past, \\
‘virgin soft-spoken.’

This passage is interesting on two fronts. On the one hand we can conclude that, contrary to what has long been assumed, it was Gaetan Baton who introduced Renée Vivien to reading Sappho, rather than Eva Palmer, whom Vivien met in 1900 in the United States where Vivien was travelling with Natalie Barney. On the other hand, this text reveals that Renée Vivien was immediately inspired by Sappho: the process of translating the poetess of Lesbos immediately leads Renée to write a little poem. We can see here an anticipation of the poetic variations which she will add to her translations in 1903 in *Sappho: A New Translation with the Greek Text*. This book, published five years after starting to learn

\[ 51 \text{ See, for example, Goujon (1986) 142–3.} \]
Greek with Gaetan Baron, proved not only that Renée Vivien worked very hard during this period but also that, like Anne Le Fèvre, she was outstandingly gifted.

It presents 118 fragments divided into three groups of unequal size, respectively titled *Odes* (103 texts), *Épithalames* (*Wedding Poems*: 13 texts), and *Fragments conservés par les auteurs anciens* (*Fragments Preserved by Ancient Authors*: 2 texts). Renée Vivien begins her book with a Preface and a biographical note in which she seeks to introduce two images of Sappho: the Poetess and the ‘lesbian’. In order to celebrate the first, Renée Vivien masculinizes Sappho with an expression which constructs her as an alter ego of a male poet, (probably equated with or understood as parallel with Homer): ‘L’œuvre du divin Poète fait songer à la Victoire de Samothrace, ouvrant dans l’infini ses ailes mutilées’ (‘The work of the divine Poet makes one think of the Victory of Samothrace, opening to the infinite her mutilated wings’). The comparison invites the reader to visualize the famous statue of the female Greek god of Victory, an imposing second-century BC Parian marble sculpture generally regarded as a masterpiece of Hellenistic art, which has been exhibited in a conspicuous place in the Louvre since 1884. The choice of this female statue can be explained by its mutilated wings which can offer a symbolic counterpart to the fragments of (mutilated) Sappho’s work. Renée Vivien also here avoids using the diminutive noun ‘poetess’ as it would have diminished Sappho’s glory by placing her into a lesser category, that of women who happen to write poetry. In the rest of her preface, Vivien resorts to a metaphor taken from Alcaeus: ‘la Tisseuse de violettes’ (‘The (female) Weaver of Violets’); in the section giving the biography of ‘Psappha’, she uses another masculine word: ‘l’Aède de Lesbos’ (‘The *aiados* or ‘bard’ of Lesbos’), and once again ‘the Weaver of Violets’.

Like Anne Le Fèvre, Renée Vivien sees in Sappho a passionate woman who suffered from love (‘de quelles blessures envenimées ces mots ont-ils coulé, comme de brûlantes gouttes de sang?... Et qui jamais apprendra les douleurs secrètes de ce cœur si magnifiquement humain?’ (‘From

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52 Vivien (2009a) 23. The original edition was published by Alphonse Lemerre, my references are to the reprint of this work in 2009.
53 Vivien (2009a) 23.
54 Viewable online at http://musee.louvre.fr/oal/victoiredesamothrace/victoiredesamothrace_acc_en.html.
what poisoned wounds have these words flown, like burning drops of blood? And who will ever learn the secret pains of so human a heart?)

If she refers to an ‘Amie’ (female friend) as well, it is to add a detail to the word ‘Amante’ (female lover): ‘L’incomparable Amante fut aussi l’incomparable Amie’ (‘The peerless female lover was also a peerless female friend’). The text of the preface is in a lyric style, with an over-indulgence in capital letters and a marked predilection for hyperbolic adjectives in circumlocutions. Renée Vivien describes Sappho singing, surrounded by female disciples. She gives them names, most of which occur in the fragments of Sappho and the ancient testimonia: she names them Éranna, Dika, Damophyla, Gorgô, Gurinnò, Atthis, Andromèda, Télésippa, Mégara, Anagora, Gongyla, Anactoria, Euneïka, and she introduces some of them as loved by her or as in love with each other. She identifies Atthis with the unknown woman from the only two odes translated by Anne Le Fèvre.

In her biographical note, Renée Vivien quotes the verses that Alcaeus addressed to Sappho and her reply: Alcaeus addressed her as ‘violet-haired, holy, sweetly smiling Sappho’ (Alcaeus fr. 384 Campbell (1990)), and she is supposed to have responded, ‘if you had a desire for what is honourable or good, and your tongue were not stirring up something evil to say, shame would not cover your eyes, but you would stake your claim’ (Sappho fr. 137 Campbell (1990)). According to Vivien, the first bear witness that Sappho was beautiful and was loved, and the second that Alcaeus’ homage was ill received. Anne Le Fèvre alluded in her preface to a letter by Sappho showing her refusal to re-marry. In other words, both translators are using ancient texts to support their thesis on the sexual preferences of the poetess. Renée Vivien gives in her notes the same kind of information as Anne Le Fèvre: the time when Sappho lived.

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60 Le Fèvre (1681) 401: ‘Il nous reste un fragment d’une lettre qu’elle écrivit à un homme qui la recherchait en mariage, où elle lui dit: “si vous êtes de mes amis, vous ne songerez pas à m’épouser; mais vous prendrez une femme plus jeune, car étant plus âgée que vous, je ne saurais jamais me resoudre à vous prendre pour mari.”’ (‘A fragment of a letter that she wrote to a man who had proposed to her, survives, in which she says to him: “If you are one of my friends, you won’t think to marry me, but you will take a younger woman, because being older, I don’t know that I would ever decide to take you for a husband.”’) The fragment to which Anne was alluding is a short quotation from Stobaeus, fr. 121 in Campbell (1990). Anne Le Fèvre assumes that the speaker in the poem cannot be separated from the poetess herself: see further DeJean (1989) 58.
the name of her father, of her mother, and of her brothers; she indicates also the two names of the courtesan loved by one of them. Everything changes when she comes to the exile of Sappho. For Renée Vivien, its motive is unknown, but it is certain that it is not because of Phaon. It is, according to her, ‘un mythe créé par quelques écrivains d’après la tradition populaire’ (‘a myth created by some writers following popular tradition’),61 and she goes on to explain that this error was passed on by several ancient writers who were ‘peu soucieux de vérifier l’exactitude de leurs affirmations’ (‘little concerned with verifying the accuracy of their statements’).62 Once this clarification has been made, Renée Vivien introduces, without further ado, her own position on Sappho’s sexual preferences: she loved women and despised marriage:

... nous n’y trouvons point (dans ses vers) le moindre frisson tendre de son être vers un homme. Ses parfums, elle les a versés aux pieds délicats de ses Amantes, ses frémissements et ses pleurs, les vierges de Lesbos furent seules à les recevoir... Elle traduit son mépris pour le mariage par ce vers: ‘Insensée, ne te glorifie pas d’un anneau!’

We do not find (in her verses) the slightest tender frisson in her for a man. Her fragrances, she has poured them out at the delicate feet of her female lovers, her thrills of passion and her tears, the virgins of Lesbos were the only ones to receive... She expressed her scorn for marriage by this verse: “Mad woman, do not glorify yourself with a ring!”63

Here in the biographical note, as previously in her Preface, Renée Vivien emphasizes passion: ‘ses poèmes sont asiatiques par la violence de la passion’ (‘Her poems are [marked out as being] from Asia by the violence of their passion’).64 She introduces Sappho’s companions as her disciples: ‘des vierges et des femmes délaissant leur pays et oubliant leurs tendresses, venaient des contrées lointaines apprendre d’Elle l’art des rythmes et des pauses’ (‘virgins and women, abandoning their country and forgetting their tender bonds, coming from far off regions to learn from Her the art of rhythm and pauses’).65

I now move to the examination of her translations, but in this essay I will only deal with the two odes which were also translated by Anne Le Fèvre. Renée Vivien’s translations of these odes are also in prose and aim

64 Vivien (2009a) 27.  
65 Vivien (2009a) 27.
to be as accurate as possible, although she was working from a different Greek text from Anne (the text used by Renée is printed here):⁶⁶

ποικιλόθρον’, ἀθάνατ’ Ἀφρόδιτα,  
παῖ Δίος, δολόπλοκε, λασομαί’ σε  
μὴ μ’ ἁσαις μὴν’ ὀναιαὶ δάμνα,  
πότεν, θύμων’  
ἀλλὰ τῦδ’ ἐλθ’, αἰσθαναί κατέρωτα  
tὰς ἔμας αἰθας ἀνουσα πῆλοι  
ἐκλευς, πάτρος δὲ δόμου λίποσα  
χρύσαιον ἄθλες  
ἀμ’ ὑποδειξαίσα: κάλοι δὲ σ’ ἄγον  
ἀκες στροβοῦντι περὶ γάς μελαιάς  
πύκνα δίνεντις στέρ ἀπ’ ὑώραν αἰθε- 
ρας δια μέσσων.  
ἀλφ’ εξίσκοντο τῷ δ’, ὦ μάκαρα,  
μειδάσαισ’ ἄθανατῳ προσώπῳ,  
ἡρ’, ὅτι δὴντε πέπονθα κῶττι  
δήντε κάλημαι,  
κώττι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαί  
μανιλα θύμων’ τίνα δήντε Πελθώ  
μαῖς ἄγην ἐς σὰν ψιλότατο; τοι’ σ’, ὦ  
Ψάπφ’, ἄδικης;  
Καὶ γὰρ αἱ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει,  
αἱ δὲ δοῦρα μὴ δέκετ’ ἀλλὰ δώσει  
αἱ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει  
κοίκ’ ἐθέλουσα.  
Ἐλθε μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλέσαν δὲ λύσον  
ἐκ μερίμνων, ὅσα δὲ μοι τελέσαι  
θύμως ἠμέρας, τέλεσον’ σῦ’ αὕτα  
σύμμαχος ἔσο.  

Toi dont le trône est d’arc-en-ciel, immortelle Aphrodita, fille de Zeus, tisseuse de ruses, je te supplie de ne point dompter mon âme, ô Vénérable, par les angoisses et les détresses. Mais viens, si jamais, et plus d’une fois, entendant ma voix, tu l’as écoutée, et, quittant la maison de ton père, tu es venue, ayant attelé ton char d’or. Et c’étaient de beaux passereaux rapides qui te conduisaient. Autour de la terre sombre ils battaient des ailes, descendus du ciel à travers l’éther. Ils arrivèrent aussitôt, et toi, ô Bienheureuse, ayant souri de ton visage immortel, tu me demandes ce qui m’était advenu, et quelle faveur j’implorais et ce que je désirais

⁶⁶ See Campbell (1990) 52–5 and 78–81 for the standard Greek text and accurate English translations of both these odes.
le plus dans mon âme insensée. “Quelle Persuasion veux-tu donc attirer vers ton amour? Qui te traite injustement, Psappha? Car celle qui te fuit promptement te poursuivra, celle qui refuse tes présents t’en offrira, celle qui ne t’aime pas t’aimera promptement et même malgré elle.” Viens vers moi encore maintenant, et délivre-moi des cruels soucis, et tout ce que mon cœur veut accomplir, accomplis-le, et soit Toi-Même mon alliée.67

She follows the order of the words and does not waver before strangeness. So, for example, in the first line, she translates Ποικιλόθρον as ‘dont le trône est d’arc-en-ciel’, (‘whose throne is made from a rainbow’), 68 which amounts to choosing an image, but matches well the idea of multiple and changing colours. She does not give a French version of the name of the goddess and she translates πότνια by ‘Vénérable’ (honoured), leaving the word in its place in the stanza: ‘You, whose throne is (made) from the rainbow, immortal Aphrodita, daughter of Zeus, weaver of ruses, I beg you not to tame my soul, o venerable one, with anguish and distress.69 The accuracy in the choice of words and the compliance with their original order in the Greek are made all the more conspicuous by comparison with the translation of the same lines by Dacier (see pp. 84–5).70 One can still point to an oversight in Renée’s translation of the first ode (πήλαι is not translated), to a mistake (χρύσιον is related to the chariot instead of the house of Zeus), and to an addition in the second ode (‘et dans ma folie je semble presque une morte...’; ‘and in my madness I seem almost dead...’).71 But overall the translations by Renée Vivien are remarkably successful; they restore the beauty of the Greek verses with an exceptional strength.

In the first part of her book, Odes, Renée Vivien followed her own prose translations with a free poetic version inspired by the text of Sappho (generally an amplification), in which her chosen prosody implicitly represents a modern equivalent for ancient texts.72 Eight times, in fact, Renée Vivien followed her own poems with decadent Sappho-inspired verses by Swinburne, which she gives in English, including lines from his famous ‘Sapphics’ and notorious ‘Anactoria’; this is a sexually explicit lyrical account of lesbian love, in which he coopts the ‘Sapphic sublime’

67 Vivien (1903) 5–6. 68 Vivien (2009a) 33. 
69 Vivien (2009a) 33. 70 Le Fèvre (1681) 409. 71 Vivien (2009a) 37.
72 She writes stanzas of four lines with an uneven number of syllables, in which the first three lines are hendecasyllables and the fourth line a verse of five syllables.
by making Sappho speak for homoerotic love between men as well.\(^73\)

Vivien’s second poem, called by her the *Ode à une femme aimée* (*Ode to a beloved woman*), is accompanied by the *carmen* 51 by Catullus, which itself is the Latin adaptation of this text. I believe that these poetic pairings were conceived as, and should be taken as, clues on how to read Sappho ‘today’: in Vivien’s case, Sappho in 1900.\(^74\) It was also a means to compensate for the fact that the poetry of Sappho has been transmitted to us in the form of fragments.

*Sappho. A New Translation with the Greek Text* is a species of chimera, with three poetic strata: the Greek text, a French translation in prose, which does its best to be as faithful as possible, and variations in French and/or English by contemporary poets. The aim is to give us Sappho in two ways. The translation in prose restores what Sappho was, transcribing in the most accurate way possible what she wanted to express. In adding a free poetical version, Renée Vivien completes her transmission of Sappho by pursuing a totally different approach, as is often the case in translating a poem: a transcription into the linguistic, prosodic, and stylistic codes which the epoch associates with its idea of poetry. Renée Vivien knows that each poetic text is ‘of its own time’, and thus if the poetic form is inappropriate to someone who wishes to translate a text with exactitude, this form imposes itself, on the contrary, on whoever wishes to adapt an author of the past for her/his own epoch. The poetic texts which she added have in effect a totally different goal than her translation into prose: to render Sappho alive, current, modern, to show how she is able to be the contemporary of her readers, male and female, and, as far as she, Renée Vivien, is concerned, how Sappho is also her sister, her other self!

In her poems, it is the choice of vocabulary (I take as an example the first three poems) which creates an atmosphere that is different from that of the ancient original. This is not only because suffering predominates: Renée Vivien loves the words ‘frémissements’ (thrills of passion), ‘détresses’ (distress), ‘effroi’ (fright), ‘triste’ (sad), ‘pleurs’ (tears), ‘angoisse’ (anguish, in

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\(^73\) Swinburne’s poems appear on the following pages: Vivien (1903) 9–10, 17, 19, 28, 73–4, 78, 94, and 126. For Swinburne’s complex adoption and adaptation of Sappho’s metre and content, see the brilliant study of Prins (1999) ch. 3.

\(^74\) Renée Vivien was nicknamed ‘Sapho 1900, Sapho cent pour cent!’ (‘Sappho 1900, Sappho 100%’) by André Billy in his book *L’époque 1900* published in 1951.
order to qualify the joys), ‘sanglots’ (sobs), ‘anxiété’ (anxiety), ‘ravage’ (ravage), ‘tourenenté’ (tormented), ‘souffrir’ (to suffer), ‘tremblant’ (trembling), ‘frissonne’ (shivers), ‘douloureux’ (sorrowful), and again, ‘triste’ (sad). It is also because of her predilection for a background made up of immobility, of uncertainty, of the evanescence of things, and emotions in the past and in dreams: ‘j’ai longtemps rêvé’ (I have dreamed for a long time), ‘stupeur’ (stupor), ‘lointaine’ (far away), ‘songe’ (daydream), ‘réflexion’, ‘langueurs de l’attente’ (langors of waiting), ‘ombre’ (shadow), ‘las’ (weary), ‘brisés’ (shattered), ‘rêver’ (to dream), ‘fanées’ (faded away); ‘trouble’ (troubles), ‘rêflète’ (reflects), ‘vain miroir’ (vain mirror), ‘sans lueurs’ (without a glow), ‘pâlies’ (grown pale), ‘incertaine’ (uncertain). It is death which is thus profiled in the shadow of sensual pleasure. It is extremely significant that the last verse of the Ode à une Femme aimée: ‘mais il faut tout oser’ (‘but it is necessary to dare everything’) does not give rise to any echo or transmission in the poetic version by Renée Vivien, who translated the preceding verse in the text of Sappho like this: ‘et dans ma folie je semble presque morte’ (‘and in my madness I seem almost dead’), but wrote in her own poetic version: ‘et je vois ton visage/À travers la mort’ (‘and I see your face through death’).

To conclude with a single question: what does it mean for a woman to translate Sappho? Anne Le Fèvre and Renée Vivien identified with the passionate woman and the poetess, and both tried to find support from Sappho: Anne Le Fèvre for women succeeding in competing with men, Renée Vivien for women loving women and writing about their loves. Centuries apart, they looked for the same public: women with whom to share their tastes and pursuits, ideally a community of friends, or at least, what we form, as contributors to this volume dedicated to female scholarship (some of us anyway): a group of women grateful to these pioneers for their intellectual daring.

75 Note that her translation of the preceding verse: ‘je suis plus pâle que l’herbe’ (I am paler than grass) is one of the rare cases of infidelity to the Greek text: ‘I am greener than grass’.
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Intellectual Pleasure and the Woman Translator in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-century England

Edith Hall

Of fellowship I speak
Such as I seek, fit to participate
All rational delight

[Adam’s plea for a companion in Milton, Paradise Lost, Book 8, 389–91]

Must we suppose that if a woman knows a little Greek and Latin she must be a drunkard, and virago?

[Anne Donnellan, letter to Samuel Richardson, 1762]¹

Consequential Arguments about Women’s Education

In 1751–2, Henry Fielding published his final novel, Amelia, which engages in a dialogue with the Aeneid. Its central male character, Captain Booth, is an eighteenth-century Aeneas, and his extra-marital lover Mrs Mathews is a Dido figure.² Epic in scale and narrative convention, Amelia traces the relationships of several men and women in London in 1733, while investigating the question of female education. Amelia herself is a virtuous but under-schooled young woman who has read only a few

Christian tracts and some literature in English. Much more intriguing is the classically educated but morally ambiguous Molly (Mrs Bennet, later Mrs Atkinson), the first developed 'learned lady' in English fiction.

In a long embedded narrative, Molly tells Amelia her shocking life story. After her marriage to Mr Bennet, an impoverished curate, she was drugged and raped by a decadent aristocrat who had pretended to offer her husband career advancement. Infected by the rapist with a mysterious disease, she then infected Bennet. He beat her up and subsequently died. Molly is an eloquent narrator of her own past. Until this point in her story our sympathies lie with her. But she now evolves into a more shady character. She accepts an annuity from the rapist, and further compromises her moral stature by hypocritically marrying Mr Atkinson when she had earlier claimed that she abhorred the practice of second marriages by widows and widowers. Worse, she resorts to devious tactics, in which she implicates the innocent Amelia, in order to procure an army commission for her new spouse.

Fielding’s picture of Molly, whose integrity and respectability are compromised by her queasy moral decisions and increasing dissipation, is informed by her prodigious intellectual accomplishments. A catty female acquaintance criticizes her as someone who would not want to go out for a recreational evening, since she is ‘a woman of very unaccountable turn; all her delight lies in books’. Mrs Bennet’s erudition is first introduced when she cites Christian authors—Petrarch and St. Jerome—in a discussion of whether second marriages are compatible with Christianity; Captain Booth responds to these citations with pertinent pagan classical allusions—Diodorus Siculus, Valerius Maximus, and Martial. But Molly ‘wins’ the competition in classical scholarship. She silences him with a six-line quotation in Latin from Dido’s speech to Anna at Aeneid IV.24–9, where the Carthaginian queen states that a second marriage would violate her chastity. ‘She repeated these lines with so strong an emphasis, that she almost frightened Amelia out of her wits, and not a little staggered Booth, who was himself no contemptible scholar.’ Encouraged by the equanimity with which Booth reacted to her extraordinary classical performance, she comments ‘on that great absurdity (for so she termed it) of excluding women from learning; for

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4 Henry Fielding (1752) vol. 1, 336.
5 Henry Fielding (1752) vol. 1, 332–4.
which they were equally qualified with the men, and in which many had made so notable a proficiency; for proof of which she mentioned Madam Dacier, and many others.\(^6\)

Molly tells Amelia how she became a classical scholar. A parson’s daughter, she became mistress of the household in her late teens, when her mother and only sister died; by staying unmarried she was able to continue the studies which her father had encouraged from childhood. She had ‘made so great a proficiency’ that she had become ‘a pretty good mistress of the Latin language, and had made some progress in the Greek’.\(^7\) Her happiness was shattered when her father remarried and she was driven from her home by her stepmother, but she later won the heart of her handsome if impoverished curate by displaying to him her command of Latin. This aroused envy in her own wealthy aunt, with whom she lived as a poor relation, and who was her rival for the young man’s affections. The aunt, who also prided herself on being learned, ordered her niece to keep her Latin to herself, ‘which, she said, was useless to anyone, but ridiculous when pretended to by a servant’.\(^8\) But, in fact, this was a curious case of two women competing romantically for the heart of a man on the criterion of classical knowledge.

If we assume the prejudices of many of Fielding’s readers, and read Molly’s autobiography as sceptics about the value of women’s education, we will diagnose her as making a series of mistakes, connected with her academic skills, which precipitate her moral decline. First, she wanted to be an independent spinster, enabled to pursue her studies by looking after her father’s vicarage; the reader must ask whether she would not have been better to find herself a husband at that point. Secondly, she arrogantly makes no effort to form a relationship with her stepmother, dismissing her as a vapid creature of minimal intelligence. Thirdly, she and Mr Bennet fall in love solely because of the intellectual frisson between them; the choice of husband dooms the marriage. He is hopelessly in debt, is incapable of career management, and has a tendency to drink. Her education has encouraged her to adopt emotional and moral postures which, Fielding shows, are not sustainable in the real social and economic world inhabited by middle-class women. The voice of greatest authority in the novel belongs to Dr Harrison, who is a vocal opponent of

6 Henry Fielding (1752) vol. 1, 334.  
7 Henry Fielding (1752) vol. 2, 9.  
educating women. No wonder that Samuel Richardson’s feisty literary correspondent, Anne Donnellan, was sufficiently annoyed when she read *Amelia* to complain to him that Fielding had negatively characterized a woman, who happened to be classically educated, as a drunkard and a virago.9

One argument for advanced female education is never made in *Amelia* by its compromised advocates: that it brings women joy. The only character to use a term referring to a female’s potential pleasure in reading a classical author is the woman who regards Molly with suspicion because she *likes* reading. She is censuring Molly when she says that ‘all her delight lies in books’.10 The novel otherwise merely rehearses in fiction hoary moral arguments for and against female education, focusing on consequences rather than on what might motivate women to read challenging texts. We shall return to the portrait of Molly later, when the classical expertise of Fielding’s own sister Sarah, who published a fine translation of Xenophon, will come to the forefront of the argument.

If Fielding suggested in his fictional Molly that women were ruined by classical education, those on the other side of the argument—proponents of women learning Latin and Greek—were also usually focussed on consequences rather than motives. Indeed, these consequential arguments had been circulating since well before the Renaissance, in late medieval times. We can see this from Christine de Pizan’s *Book of the City of Ladies* and *Treasure of the City of Ladies*, dedicated in the earliest years of the fifteenth century to Margaret of Burgundy.11 Presenting herself as a philosopher, a female version of Boethius, in *Book of the City of Ladies* de Pizan portrays herself sitting in her study, surrounded by books, and engaged in indefatigable reading in the liberal arts. Her depression at the relentless misogyny of male authors disappears when she is visited by Lady Reason, Lady Rectitude, and Lady Justice. In dialogue with these sympathetic personified ideals, she uses her own advanced knowledge of Aristotle, classical rhetoric, and ancient and patristic literature to prove that women are as intelligent as men, and that education to the same standard will result in benefits to society. To

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9 See the epigraph at the head of this chapter and n.1.
10 Henry Fielding (1752) vol. 1, 336.
11 For information about the manuscripts and early printed versions, see de Pizan (1999), the excellent edition by Rosalind Brown-Grant.
bolster her claim that the consequences of female education are all desirable, she also includes a catalogue of ancient illustrious females—goddesses and heroines of myth and history who did their peoples service—a literary genre founded by Giovanni Boccaccio’s *De mulieribus claris* (1374) and frequently imitated in several European languages. One of the most detailed was assembled and included in a treatise on female education by the Englishwoman Bathsua Makin, on whom see further below.

The question of whether women should be trained in the Humanist curriculum, and particularly in secular Greek and Latin authors, became a steadily recurring if not particularly frequent theme in Renaissance Humanist texts. Interest in the debate was fuelled by Erasmus’ remarks on female education in *Institution of Christian Marriage* (1526). Erasmus’ argument for educating girls is that it makes them more pious and better wives, and in the course of the discussion he paints a lively, ironic picture of the way in which unschooled young women of leisure do actually spend their time:

In the morning make-up and hair-do, then to church to see and be seen, then breakfast, then gossip. After this lunch. Then trifling little stories. Here and there girls will sit down, and men will throw themselves on their laps—which offends no one, indeed is greatly praised as polite conduct. Then there are foolish games, not infrequently immodest. So the afternoon is passed until dinner time. At dinner there is the same behavior as at lunch . . . This is how they pass the time! They would do better set to weaving cloth.

The *topos* of the inane activities with which untutored girls are forced to pass their time, thus increasing the danger of moral depravity, is one which recurs in discussions of western female education into the twentieth century. A searing example occurs in a late-eighteenth-century poem by Mary Darby Robinson, in a form influenced by Horace in Pope, and on a hackneyed theme, ‘Letter to a friend on leaving town.’ In it Robinson describes the ludicrous, trivial, luxurious lives of society ladies, spent on parties, fashion, and self-beautification. Herself a prolific writer—poet, novelist, and literary editor—she concludes with a scathing comment on the idle female rich:

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12 See the Introduction to this volume, p. 10.
13 See Sowards (1982).
14 Translation quoted from Sowards (1982) 86.
Thus giddy pleasures they alone pursue;  
Merely because, they've nothing else to do.15

In Robinson’s hands, it is not just the inanity of the women’s activities which receives censure; the sarcastic use of the term ‘pleasures’, which subtly suggests their underlying unhappiness, strikes a more sympathetic note than Erasmus’ stern conclusion that they would be better set to weaving. As an expert on eighteenth-century women’s poetry has observed, Robinson’s poem ‘shocks with the stark insight of women’s boredom and prescribed uselessness’.16

The Catholic Erasmus’ goal of creating useful Christian wives was shared by the radical Protestants of several different brands who promulgated female education. They included, most influentially, the Czech denomination ‘Unity of the Brethren’, whose last bishop Comenius (Jan Ámos Komenský), included the schooling of girls in his programme for universal education of 1657 (see p. 114). In England, where both Erasmus’ views and Continental Protestant ideas circulated, the argument acquired urgency during the religious and political turmoil of the Civil War, the Interregnum, Restoration, and Glorious Revolution. Yet it can scarcely be stressed enough that the advocacy of educating women in all such writing is overwhelmingly based on moral arguments assuming that women exist to benefit others. These arguments are routinely marshalled to refute or pre-empt claims that educated women may question their husband’s authority and reject traditional virtues such as obedience and chastity.

Yet on rare occasions the austerely utilitarian moral mask worn by the advocates of educating women slips, and we hear—briefly, and usually from women—the more joyous claims that females may have a perfectly acceptable but non-altruistic reason to study advanced subjects including Greek and Latin: from such study, in addition to moral elevation, it is just occasionally regarded as a legitimate argument that they will derive great pleasure. This chapter looks at some scattered manifestations of these ideas, especially in English literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, before asking what place intellectual pleasure and fulfilment may have played in motivating two noted women translators of classical authors in that period, Lucy Hutchinson and Sarah Fielding.

15 The poem, originally published in Robinson (1775) is here quoted from Pascoe (1999) 73.
Pleasure as a Motive for Female Study

When the three noble ladies reassure Christine de Pizan of her right to participate in intellectual culture, she compares what they have said to 'sweet rain and dew', fertilizing waters which have sunk deep into her 'arid mind, refreshing and replenishing my thoughts which are now ready to take seed.' This is a striking metaphor for the pleasure experienced by the possessor of an active mind when it is appropriately enriched. A few decades later, in the mid-fifteenth century, the Mantuan aristocrat Cecilia Gonzaga, who had been the pupil of the humanist scholar Vittorino da Feltre, received a letter from a male friend. Gregorio Correr had once been her fellow student, but now directed her away from pagan classical authors towards Christian texts. 'Dismiss your beloved Virgil', he urged, and 'take up instead the Psalter'; rather than Cicero, whom she enjoyed, she should be reading the gospels.

Christine de Pizan and Cecilia Gonzaga were not the first and certainly have not been the last women to fall in love with classical authors, but subjective responses are always difficult to prove. The requirement for women who were educated to cite altruistic reasons to defend their privilege obscures evidence of such love of literature even in the documentation which we do have available. This is also, of course, notoriously slight and rarely offers intimacy with women’s lived psychological experience. As Virginia Woolf wrote in *A Room of One’s Own*, women before the eighteenth century are almost unknowable:

I have no model in my mind to turn about this way and that. Here I am asking why women did not write poetry in the Elizabethan age, and I am not sure how they were educated; whether they were taught to read and write; whether they had sitting-rooms to themselves; how many women had children before they were twenty-one; what, in short, they did from eight in the morning until eight at night.

One educated sixteenth-century English woman about whom we do know a little, as McCallum-Barry has shown in this volume, was Thomas More’s eldest daughter Margaret Roper. She is believed to have inspired the ‘erudite woman’ in Erasmus’ tongue-in-cheek dialogue *Abatis et

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17 de Pizan (1999) 15.
18 See King (1976) 292; the whole letter is published in King and Rabil (1983) 103.
19 Woolf (1957 [1928]) 48.
Eruditae, between the Abbot and the Learned Lady, Antronius and Magdalia, first published in the 1524 edition of his Colloquia Familiaria. Antronius the Abbot pays a call on Magdalia, and is shocked to discover her surrounded by ‘books lying about everywhere’. And not just any books, but ‘Greek and Latin ones’. The discussion explores whether women have a right to ‘live pleasantly’ (vivere suaviter), and in what ‘living pleasantly’ might consist. The Abbot believes that it is the result of sleeping, feasting, and the acquisition of wealth and honour; Magdalia suggests she might find it more pleasurable (suavius) to read ‘a good author’ than to hunt, drink, or gamble: ‘Quid si mihi suavius sit legere bonum auctorem, quam tibi venari, potare, aut ludere aleam?’

So Erasmus’ definition of the pleasant life as one spent reading good classical authors is here, albeit for droll effect, put in the mouth of a woman. Magdalia’s words were eagerly devoured by women looking for arguments to defend their right to an education in the ancient languages. One of these learned women’s allusions to Erasmus’ colloquy occurs in conjunction with the most affecting sentences on women’s right to study I have been able to find in texts from the Early Modern period, in an educational treatise by Englishwoman Bathsua Reginald Makin, a professional teacher. It is entitled An Essay To Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen, in Religion, Manners, Arts & Tongues, with an Answer to the Objections against this Way of Education (1673). Late in her argument, she refers to Erasmus’ dialogue between the Abbot and the Erudite Woman, summarizing it thus:

She gives many good Reasons why Women should be learned, that they might know God, their Saviour, understand his Sacred Word, and admire him in his wonderful Works; that they might also better administer their Household Affairs amongst a multitude of Servants, who would have more reverence towards them, because they were above them in understanding. Further, she found a great content in reading good Authors at spare times.

Bathsua has perceived the unusual emphasis on the ‘pleasantness’ of reading in Erasmus’ colloquy, and develops it. She summarizes the Erudite Lady’s other arguments—that educating them will ‘exercise their thoughts’

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20 Erasmus (1524) 53.
21 Makin (1998 [1673]) 129, my emphasis. The treatise is reproduced online at http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/makin/education/education.html.
and keep them busy. Since they are tied to their homes, however, it is important that they are happy:

...if Learning be their Companion, Delight and Pleasure will be their Attendants: for there is no pleasure greater, nor more suitable to an ingenious mind, than what is founded in Knowledge; it is the first Fruits of Heaven, and a glimpse of that Glory we afterwards expect. There is in all an innate desire of knowing, and the satisfying this is the greatest pleasure. Men are very cruel that give them leave to look at a distance, only to know they do not know; to make any thus to tantalize, is a great torment.22

Although she carefully reassures her reader that knowledge is but a pre-echo of the glory the Christian can expect after death, and although we must bear in mind that this treatise is part of an advertisement for her business—a school she has established in a district outside London which is now Haringey—Bathsua’s description of knowledge for women is inspirational. Study will offer women, confined to the home, ‘Delight and Pleasure’ as well as companionship. In all people there is ‘an innate desire of knowing, and satisfying this is the greatest pleasure’.

Bathsua’s emphasis on the pleasure offered by satisfying the desire for knowledge results from her citation of the opening of Aristotle’s Metaphysics (‘All humans have an innate desire to know’), fused with the defence of mimetic art in his Poetics: ‘Learning things (manthanein) gives great pleasure (literally, is hēdiston, ‘most sweet’) not only to philosophers but also in the same way to all other people.’23 But Bathsua’s paraphrase of Aristotle requires the reader to assume that the Greek phrase which I have translated ‘to all other people’ (tois allois) includes women; many translators prefer to limit the ‘other people’ to men alone, and translate ‘to all men’. The Greek bears either interpretation, although a masculine plural of allois (‘other’), without any further specification such as the noun which means ‘men’ (andres) as opposed to ‘women’ (gunaikes), is more justifiably taken to include both sexes. The important point, however, is that Bathsua chooses to take Aristotle as meaning both sexes, as her next sentence proves: ‘Men [my emphasis] are very cruel that give them leave to look at a distance, only to know they do not know; to make any thus to tantalize, is a great torment.’ This is a strongly worded statement indeed.

23 αἰτίων δὲ καὶ τούτων, ὅτι μαθάνειν οὐ μόνον τοῖς φιλοσόφοις ἥδιστον ἄλλα καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἰμῶν (1448b13–15).
EDITH HALL

Bathsua (c.1600–c.1675) was a schoolmaster’s daughter, educated to an advanced level in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew as well as modern languages. She was one of a substantial group of London-centred Protestants committed to the Stuart family and later to the Royalist cause. In 1616 her first book was published, a collection of multilingual poems dedicated to James I and praising him and members of his family, clearly designed to promote the interests of Bathsua and her father at court: Musa Virginea: Graeco-Latina-Gallica, Bathsuae R. (filiae Henrici Reginaldi Gymnasarchae et philologetti apud Londinenses) anno aetatis suae decimo sexton edita (The Virgin Muse in Greek, Latin and French, by Bathsua R. (daughter of Henry Reginald, headmaster and lover of Languages in London) published in her sixteenth year [FIG. 6.1]. Like several other proto-feminist texts composed by Protestant women at the time, it may have been intended partly as a response to a misogynist tract published the year before by the fencing master Joseph Swetnam, under the pseudonym Thomas Tel-Trot, The Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward and Unconstant Women.24

In 1621, Bathsua married Richard Makin, a civil servant; the Protestant Sir Simonds D’Ewes recorded in his diary his delight at being invited ‘to my ould schoolmasters daughters wedding, being the greatest scholler, I thinke, of a woman in England’.25 Although she maintained contact with the most prominent Protestant educationalists at the time, including John Pell and Samuel Hartlib, ‘the greatest scholler . . . of a woman’ will not have had much time for her own scholarship over the next two decades. Living in Westminster, she gave birth to at least nine children as well as practising as a healer and looking after her ageing father.26 She also ended up having to earn a living. Her husband fell into disfavour in Charles I’s court; Bathsua needed to find paid employment. By the autumn of 1640, as civil war became likely, she was appointed academic tutor (she is adamant that this is a different status from nurse or governess) to King Charles I’s daughter Elizabeth.

Bathsua corresponded with Anna Maria van Schurman, whose 1638 Dissertatio De Ingenii Muliebris ad Doctrinam, & meliores Litteras aptitudine, discussed in this volume by Rosie Wyles, she greatly admired. In

24 For the other responses provoked by Swetnam’s treatise, see O’Malley (1996).
25 D’Ewes’ diary, entry 4 March 1621, in Bourcier (1974) 68.
1640 van Schurman wrote to her, in Greek, expressing sympathy for the pressures on Bathsua’s time and the political climate which made it so difficult for her to study: ‘Now it is wonderful that you are cheerful while attending to your many household cares, rarely being in the company of philosophy, and in no way having a taste of your Muses, voiceless in the midst of the noise of armed men . . . you lend your talent in the education of the royal girl.’ 27 Van Schurman, whose own time with Philosophy and the companionable Muses was also limited by her responsibility for two ageing, semi-blind aunts, understands how Bathsua’s ‘household cares’ must deprive her of opportunity for private study.

27 Translation by Thomas Poss, quoted in Teague (1998) 59. The correspondence with Bathsua Makin was published in van Schurman (1648).

Fig. 6.1 Etching of Bathsua Makin (née Reginald), 1640s, by William Marshall, frontispiece to her publication Musa Virginea, NPG D13657 © National Portrait Gallery, London and reproduced by their kind permission.
Princess Elizabeth was held in custody by Parliament and died at the age of fourteen in 1650, but her education had progressed rapidly in 1643, when she broke her leg, and 'her books were her chief pleasure.' 28 Bathshua later claimed that the young captive had been a talented linguist, who 'at nine Years old could write, read, and in some measure understand, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French and Italian. Had she lived, what a Miracle would She have been of her Sex!' 29 Bathshua petitioned for payment in recognition of her services as tutor to a member of the royal family, but unsurprisingly her appeal was dismissed in 1655. Impoverished after her husband's death in 1659, she was employed by Lucy Hastings, the Dowager Countess of Huntingdon, whom she tutored in languages, Arts, and Divinity until 1662. She then set up her own school at Tottenham High Cross, an advertisement to which appeared in the remarkable treatise from which I have already quoted, *An Essay To Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen* (1673). The treatise was of course influenced by van Schurman's, which had been published in English translation in 1659, and honours the Dutch prodigy by mentioning her name in a passage listing learned women of history. 30 Bathshua's account, although partially compiled from previous works on the subject, 31 is nevertheless an astonishingly comprehensive and rhetorically bravura piece of work, in which the display of her own scholarship becomes part of the argument: this learned woman uses her learning to advocate the education of women.

The influences on her Essay include, in addition to van Schurman, the radical ideas of Comenius, whom she seems to have met when he visited England in 1641. 32 In his *Didactica Magna* (1657) Comenius argues that girls be educated in a manner similar to boys, and poor children alongside rich ones, in a programme of universal education delivered in schools run by the community. Chapter 9 is devoted to arguments for educating women:

29 Makin (1998 [1675]) 115–16. It may well have been Elizabeth's proficiency at Greek which led to the circulation of a Royalist version of Sophocles' *Electra* dedicated to her after the execution of her father: see Hall (1995) and Hall and Macintosh (2005) 162–5.
30 Makin (1998 [1675]) 121.
31 They include Heywood (1624).
They are also formed in the image of god, and share in His grace and in the kingdom of the world to come. They are endowed with equal sharpness of mind and capacity for knowledge (often with more than the opposite sex) . . . Why, therefore, should we admit them to the alphabet, and afterwards drive them away from books?33

It is instructive, however, to compare Comenius’ ambivalence towards educating women with Makin’s passionate advocacy. For Comenius then shows that although he is aware that women are the equal and sometimes the superior of men intellectually, they must not be given exactly the same books. Girls need only those books ‘from which, by the due observation of God and His works, true virtue and true piety can be learned’. He develops the theme:

For we are not advising that women be educated in such a way that their tendency to curiosity shall be developed, but so that their sincerity and contentedness may be increased, and this chiefly in those things which it becomes a woman to know and to do; that is to say, all that enables her to look after her household and to promote the welfare of her husband and her family.34

Although that concern about women’s natural ‘curiosity’, inherited from Eve, insinuates a less enlightened approach, the books that might help women to promote the welfare of her husband and family did include volumes in Latin and on rhetoric, at least to judge from Comenius’ textbook for children Orbis Sensualium Pictus (Visible World in Pictures, 1658). This is an attractively illustrated encyclopedia, designed to help children of both sexes absorb Latin as they learned about the world around them. The assumption of a readership including girls is made clear by the two sets of figures—both male and female—in section 39, ‘Septem Aetates Hominis’ (‘Seven Ages of Man’). The same applies to the man and woman in the section on human physiology (section 40), the male and female banqueters enjoying the feast (60), the men and women having their hair dressed at the barber’s (76), and both the audience and the performers in stage shows (132, 133). The illustration of the children in the school (section 100) shows both boys and girls reading. But Comenius at no point implies that women might simply need the pleasure offered by advanced intellectual stimulation, or that depriving them of the opportunity might be cruel: Bathsua, on the other hand,

33 Comenius (1967) 68. 34 Comenius (1967) 68.
concludes that pleasure for women is indeed one of the goals of educating them: ‘The Women would have Honour and Pleasure, their Relations Profit, and the whole Nation Advantage.’

Bathsua’s treatise subsequently informed Mary Astell’s *Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of their True and Greatest Interest* (1694). An upper-middle class Anglican of conservative and royalist political views, Mary was born in 1666 in Newcastle upon Tyne. She envied her brother’s education, but received what seems to have been unconventional and stimulating informal tuition at the hands of an uncle, Ralph Astell. He had been suspended from the Church of England for spells of alcoholism, but retained connections with radical philosophers in Cambridge. In 1688, Mary moved to London, and was welcomed by the circle of aristocratic literary women including Lady Mary Chudleigh and Lady Mary Montagu; she also received financial support from the Archbishop of Canterbury. She never married.

Her 1694 *Serious Proposal to the Ladies* outlines a plan for a college for women. She does not discuss the specifics of the literary curriculum, although she assumes that women can equal academically anything that men can do; she herself never read fiction, but in addition to philosophers from Plato and Marcus Aurelius to Descartes and Locke, and Homer and Virgil, she had a passion for Thucydides; she was acutely aware that the study of history was perceived by men to be ‘off limits’ for all but the most studious of women:

They allow us Poetry, Plays, and Romances, to Divert us and themselves . . . and when they would express a particular Esteem for a Woman’s Sense, they recommend History; tho’ with Submission, History can only serve us for Amusement and a Subject of Discourse. For tho’ it may be Use to the Men who govern Affairs, to know how their Fore-fathers acted, yet what is this to us, who have nothing to do with such Business?

Mary also discusses the problems caused by failing to offer competent minds sufficient stimulation: ‘A rational mind . . . will never be satisfy’d in doing nothing, and if you neglect to furnish it with good material, ’tis like to take up with fuch as come to hand.’ Her most striking idea is that while academic talent is but one gift amongst many bestowed on human

beings, it is to be found in both men and women in similar proportions. We need, she recommends,

to observe the bent and turn of our own Minds, which way our Genius lies and to what it is most inclin’d. I see no reason why there may not be as great a variety in Minds as there is in Faces, that the Soul as well as the Body may not have something in it to distinguish it, not only from all other Intelligent Natures but even from those of its own kind. There are different proportions in Faces which recommend them to some Eyes . . . and tho All Truth is amiable to a Reasonable Mind, and proper to employ it, yet why may there not be some particular Truths, more agreeable to each individual Understanding than others are? Variety gives Beauty to the Material World and why not to the Intellectual?

Mary Astell was right. There has probably always been a proportion of all women, just as there has always been a proportion of all men, by nature inclined (and gratified by satisfying the urge toward) cerebral activity which in literate societies takes a bookish form. It is important to remember that while Charles I’s daughter Elizabeth revelled in her classical training, this was not the inevitable response of an aristocratic girl. In 1642, the Scottish Comenian John Dury was appointed tutor to her older sister Mary in The Hague, but his efforts met with little success.38 In the remainder of this essay, I consider two English women to whose ‘intelligent nature’ and ‘individual understanding’, to use Astell’s language, pagan classical authors were indeed ‘agreeable’: the seventeenth-century Latinist Lucy Hutchinson, and the eighteenth-century Sarah Fielding, translator of Xenophon’s Socratic discourses.

Lucy Hutchinson

The first translation into the English language of the whole of Lucretius’ *de Rerum Natura, On the Nature of Things*, was almost certainly by a woman, Lucy Hutchinson (1620–1681).39 As a middle-class English Protestant girl she had been educated, in common with Bathsua Makin, to a high standard. She was encouraged by a father with no aspirations to scholarship himself but who seems to have become aware of the education available to some royal females in his role as Lieutenant of the Tower of

39 There is an anonymous prose translation of *De Rerum Natura*, possibly of earlier date, contained in a manuscript in the Bodleian Library (Bodleian MS Rawl. D.314).
London. Her scholarship was further encouraged by her husband Colonel John Hutchinson, heir to a family estate in Owthorpe, Nottinghamshire. He was a Calvinist Parliamentarian, keen theologian, and one of the co-signatories of Charles I’s death warrant.

From the summer of 1643, Lucy lived with her husband in Nottingham Castle, where he was appointed Parliamentary governor of the town. The next few years must have been demanding, since the town was several times attacked, albeit unsuccessfully, by Royalist forces. Her husband became MP for Nottinghamshire and was a member of the Commonwealth’s first two Councils of State, but in 1653 he took his family back to Owthorpe, and in 1659 was made High Sheriff of the county. The Hutchinson’s fortunes took a downturn at the Restoration. Although the Colonel was not executed as a regicide, he was prevented from holding public office. After being accused in 1663 of involvement with a plot to overturn the monarchy, he died in prison.

Lucy completed her Lucretius translation in Nottinghamshire in the 1650s, when she was in her thirties, and raising her children (she had nine altogether, the youngest of whom was not born until 1662). The manuscript (Add. MSS 19333) is in the British Library; it was never published until 1996. Consisting of 7,800 lines of heroic rhyming couplets, with a remarkably high level of accuracy in the construing of the Latin syntax and vocabulary relative to other classical translations of the same era, it an outstanding piece of work. It displays not only a command of Latin and of Epicurean ideas, but a musical ear, poetic assurance, and sensitivity to metaphor. There is, moreover, a fitting cohesion between the form of her verse, with its long, sprung sentences and forward drive, and its content—Lucretius’ whirling world of matter constantly in motion, forming and reforming into the entire, grand phenomena of which the ever-changing material universe consists. Although my intention is not a detailed examination of the literary effectiveness of Hutchinson’s translation, it is important to convey her lively response to the Latin and the sonorous English poetry into which she has converted it, so I here reproduce the opening Invocation to the Goddess of Love:

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40 The first printed edition was by de Quehen (1996a), now largely superseded by Barbour and Norbrook (2012).
41 See especially de Quehen (1996b).
Faire Venus mother of Aeneas race
Delight of gods and men thou that doest grace
The starrie firmament, the sea, the earth
To whom all living creatures owe their birth
By thee conceivd, and brought forth to the day,
When thou (O Goddesse) comest stormes flie away
And heaven is no more obscur’d with showres.
For thee the fragrant earth spreads various flowers
The calmed ocean smiles, and att thy sight
The serene skie shines with augmented light.
Then doth the spring her glorious days disclose
And the releast, life-giving westwind blowes.
Thy power possessing first birds of the ayre
They thy approach with amorous noates declare,
Next when desires the savage heard incite
They swim through streames, and their fat pastures slight
To follow thee, who in seas, rivers, hills
In the birds leavie bowers, and in greene fields
Instilling wanton love into each mind,
Mak’est creatures strive to propagate their kind.
Since all things thus are brought to light by thee,
By whom alone their natures governd bee,
From whom both lovelinesse and pleasure springs,
Assist me...  
Though this reads to me like the enthralled response of an assured poet, revelling in her own intuitive ear for English rhyme, delicate touch with alliteration, and wonderful skill in deployment of adjectives, to Lucretius’ sensual evocation of the voluptuous glories of the natural world and its constant regeneration.

Hutchinson’s reasons for translating Lucretius have been pondered ever since the manuscript was purchased by the British Library in 1853. The Lucretius scholar Hugh Munro set the agenda in a substantial article (1858), declaring it difficult to conceive the motives ‘which induced the noble Puritan to translate into elaborate verse the whole of a poem that develops principles so abhorrent from her own’.  

The question of why a committed Puritan chose the arcane poet Lucretius, a dogged opponent of superstition whom many of her contemporaries regarded as heretically atheistic, has dominated the discussion ever since. She did not do it

42 BL Add. MSS 19333 fol. 6r, lines 1–24.  
43 Munro (1858) 121.
for money, and indeed never published the text. Unlike Makin, she never had to work for a living. But one answer which has never been explored is that, as an outstanding Latinist with a relentlessly active brain, she craved a challenge which would stretch her intellectually and provide substantial food for mental sustenance. Recreating the subjective experience of long dead writers is of course impossible, especially when the protocols of the genres in which they could confide their thoughts were narrow, prescriptive, and deeply informed by conventional pieties. But there are few fleeting remarks in what Hutchinson has left us which offer insights into her motives.

Lucretius had been put on the intellectual map of Europe by the dazzling edition of Frenchman Denys Lambin (Dionysius Laminus, 1564). This led to an improved understanding of Epicureanism in France and greater tolerance of some aspects of the philosophical system by French Christians, both Catholic and Protestant. Lambin was also impressed by Lucretius as a poet, so amongst advanced Latin scholars his reputation grew. From the 1620s onwards, further attention to Lucretian atomism and metaphysics had been encouraged by the publications of another French thinker, Pierre Gassendi. Lucy had herself been brought up bilingual in French, her mother having deliberately employed a French maid to look after her precious first daughter after several sons, and she was conversant with the intellectual currents flowing across the Channel. But Lucy herself used Daniel Pareus’ pocket edition, printed in Frankfurt in 1631, which synthesized the work of previous editors. As a translator, she will have found it particularly convenient since it included line numbers, which were still uncommon in editions of classical authors.

She has left us a fascinating picture of the environment in which she created the translation. She would work

in a roome where my children practizd the severall qualitied they were taught, with their Tutors, & I numbred the sillables of my translation by the threds of the canvas I wrought in, & sett them downe with a pen & inke that stood by me; How superficially it must needs be done in this manner, the thing it selve will shew.

Engaged in creating a tapestry, by threading yarn or silk through the grid of a canvas, she uses the grid to help her order the rhythmic syllables of her translation, with the Latin text presumably open nearby. As the words became perfected in her mind, she would write them down.
is no reason to doubt this: many women writers, by no means only classical scholars, have made long hours of childcare or domestic tasks more congenial by simultaneously working out sentences in their heads. When my own children were so tiny that their physical demands made either reading or writing impossible, and boredom threatened my sanity, I would get up an hour early to read and memorize a brief but dense Greek text, preferably philosophical. I could then mull it over while kept away from books, breastfeeding, nappy changing, or toddler-chasing throughout the rest of the day.

Lucy’s self-portrait was probably also designed to underline that her scholarship had not taken her away from her conventional duties as a mother. Indeed, her attitude to her own scholarly achievements seems to have been conflicted: a mother and a devoted wife, who embraced a widowhood in which she continued to promote her husband’s reputation loyally (indeed she wrote a long and beautiful account of his life published by a descendant of the family in 1806\textsuperscript{44}), she professed publicly to believe that women were inferior intellectually. Yet she agreed to be portrayed by the painter-in-chief to the Parliamentarians, Robert Walker, with a laurel chaplet in her lap symbolizing her literary aspirations [FIG. 6.2]. And her final sentence in the quotation above crystallizes this ambivalence: ‘How superficially it must needs be done in this manner, the thing it selfe will shew.’ She is both acknowledging that scholarship done by a needlewoman may be deficient, or ‘superficial’, and inviting the reader to continue reading in order to ask whether the translation itself is deficient at all: ‘the thing it selfe will showe’, moreover, is a cunning iteration of one of Lucretius’ own formulae, ‘res ipsa . . . vociferatur’ (\textit{De rerum natura}, 2.1050–1).

In her youth, Lucy had written love songs. Her own long poem \textit{Order and Disorder}, which began to be published in 1679 near the end of her life, explores the themes of Genesis. She clearly believed herself capable of a biblical epic to compare with Milton’s \textit{Paradise Lost}, the first version of which had been published in 1667. Although her earlier absorption in Lucretius affects the diction, tone, and style of \textit{Order and Disorder} at every level, in its preface it comes as a shock to find her emphatically repudiating her translation of Lucretius on religious grounds. She claims

\textsuperscript{44} Hutchinson (1806).
that she has written the biblical poem to correct this error, to ‘wash out all ugly impressions’ of the fancies that had ‘filled my brain’.45 She openly chides herself for having spent so much time translating a pagan author; she even expresses her anxiety that further circulation of her translation of Lucretius may corrupt the minds of its readers. But these self-criticisms also appear in the fresh preface she had provided for a new manuscript of Lucretius she had recently, in 1675, made and dedicated to ‘the justly celebrated Maecenas of our days’, the Earl of Anglesey. Lucy was still proud enough of her translation of the pagan poet to be

45 See the remarks of Norbrook in the preface to Hutchinson (2001) xvii–xviii.
recirculating it in court circles, even as she was writing the biblical epic which she claimed was intended as an antidote to the ‘ugly impressions’ with which Lucretius had previously ‘filled her brain’.

Lucy was not poor and she was devout. She did not translate Lucretius for money or because she was promoting Epicurean ideas. But she was clearly proud of her achievement in the translation, and her own self-portrait of the Nottinghamshire family schoolroom where she satisfied her brain at her tapestry frame suggests that she enjoyed creating it. One additional factor, however, needs taking seriously: Lucretius was not as repugnant to seventeenth-century Protestants as used to be assumed. Recent work by English literature specialists, especially David Norbrook, has shown the substantial evidence of Lucretian influence on Milton, for example in his cosmic perspective and evocations of majestic infinitude, grandeur, and sublimity. Norbrook has also asked whether Lucy was really so unusual as a Puritan attracted to Lucretian ideas. Lucy’s grasp of atomism has also led her to being rehabilitated as a figure in the history of science. To be sure, classical Epicureanism made assumptions with which she could never have agreed—that life could have begun in the absence of divine agency, and that it is theoretically possible to lead a good life without religion. But Early Modern Protestant intellectuals were not all closed of mind. Gassendi’s rehabilitation of Lucretius had made it possible to combine Lucretian science with Christianity by seeing the origins of the organized confluence of atoms as proof that God existed. Norbrook points out that Lucy translates Lucretius’ term for religion as ‘superstition’, thus making him an opponent not of religion per se but of unenlightened irrational delusions and indeed of ignorant wonder at alleged religious miracles.

Finally, Lucy Hutchinson was not the only woman to have become fascinated by Lucretius: Christina, Queen of Sweden, for example, was a famous enthusiast. Norbrook further suggests that Lucy’s ‘translation represented a degree of emulative identification with Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle’, who was the leader of ‘the avant garde pursuit of female intellectual ambition’, the Duchess, a royalist, was involved with the circle around Gassendi in Paris. Perhaps Lucy knew

48 Norbrook (2010).
50 Norbrook (2010).
that the ancient Epicureans had allowed women to participate in debates, for Gassendi himself drew a parallel between these ancient female philosophers and Anna Maria van Schurman. Norbrook points out that the only places at which Lucy alters the Lucretian text to any degree come toward the end of the fourth book where Lucretius discusses the treatment of women. She introduces an ideal of companionate marriage. Lucy, he concludes, was ‘ready to be faithful translator of Lucretius’ atheism but not of his sexual double standards’. Perhaps the choice of Lucretius was part of her own covert defence of women’s right to a classical education.

Sarah Fielding

It was a Stoic rather than Epicurean philosopher who attracted the translating skills of by far the most famous female classical scholar England ever produced before the nineteenth century, Elizabeth Carter. An accomplished poet and translator of modern languages, she however made her name and moderate fortune with All the Works of Epictetus, Which are Now Extant (1758), as Wallace describes in this volume. Carter was one of the most famous women in the Bluestocking circle associated with Samuel Johnson, and much celebrated in her own lifetime, as a very extraordinary Phaenomenon in the Republick of Letters, and justly to be rank’d with the Cornelia’s, Sulpicia’s, and Hypatia’s of the Ancients, and the Schurmans and Daciers of the Moderns. Far less well known to classicists is Carter’s friend Sarah Fielding, who was also drawn to ancient philosophy. An established novelist, living in Bath, Sarah was sufficiently encouraged by the success of Elizabeth’s Epictetus to publish, four years later, a handsome translation of Xenophon’s Memorabilia and Apology of Socrates. This was several times reprinted; her version of the Apology was still being re-used as late as the Socratic Discourses edited by A.D. Lindsay for the Everyman series, first published in 1904 but reprinted until 1937. When she died, her friend the Reverend Dr John Hoadley commissioned a memorial plaque which can still be seen, low down and often hidden by furniture, in the north-west vestibule of Bath Abbey [FIG. 6.3]. It reads,

In this city lived and died Sarah, second daughter of General Henry Fielding; by his first wife, daughter of Judge Gould. Whose writings will be known as incentives to virtue, and honour to her sex, when this marble shall be dust.

Her unaffected kindness, candid mind,
Her heart benevolent, and soul resign'd,
Were more her praise than all she knew, or thought.
Though Athens' wisdom to her sex she taught.

But it was not only members of her own sex who read her highly successful translations of the Athenian wisdom of Socrates as recorded by the historian Xenophon.

The possible connection between the fictional Molly of *Amelia*, the 1751 novel written by Sarah's brother Henry, will be briefly examined below after considering their earlier lives together. The childhood of Henry, Sarah, and their five full siblings was disrupted when their mother died and their father remarried. Henry was packed off to Eton, where he learned well (but did not enjoy) classical languages; his sisters were sent to live with their maternal grandmother in Salisbury; she won legal custody of them. Sarah attended a girls' school run by Mary Rooke; she also studied some Latin and Greek with a family friend, Dr. Arthur Collier. Sarah may or may not have envied Henry his educational...
opportunities at the time (as Mary Astell had envied her brother’s), but she certainly remained close to him. Her first excursions into print occur in his novel *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and ‘fictive afterlife’ text, *Journey from this World to the Next* (1743). In 1744 she moved in with him in Lincoln’s Inn Fields for more than three years.

After his wife Charlotte’s death, Sarah looked after him and the children, but when he married their pregnant kitchen maid in November 1747, after an embarrassing situation for everyone, Sarah moved out to live with her sisters in Westminster. She may have felt relieved, or she may have felt displaced and exploited. While the theory that the siblings’ relationship involved difficult incestuous feelings has no basis in the evidence, and they remained friends, there does seem to have been some cooling of affections between them. When Henry died in 1754, racked with agonizing gout, it was their half-brother John, rather than Sarah, who took responsibility for the welfare of Henry’s children.

Intellectually speaking, their relationship seems to have been complicated, at least that is what is implied by Henry’s preface to the second edition of her successful first novel, *The Adventures of David Simple*, which had first been published anonymously in 1744. There were speculations that its author was her brother Henry, and he supplied a preface for the second edition, published later in the same year, insisting that it was entirely her own work. For evidence, he says that he would never have made so many mistakes in grammar. He suggests that anyone looking for proof compares this revised edition, which he has personally corrected, with the original published text, to see where she had committed errors which ‘no Man of Learning would think worth his Censure in a Romance; nor any Gentleman in the Writings of a young Woman’. For ‘the Imperfections of this little Book, which arise, not from want of Genius, but of Learning, lie open to the Eyes of every Fool, who has had a

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55 Sarah’s first known venture into literary creativity occurs in print as a ‘letter’ from ‘Leonora to Horatio’ included in her brother’s first major novel, *Joseph Andrews* (1742) book 2, ch. 4. The letter’s courtship theme of personal integrity and solid values corrupted by materialism and fashion anticipates her later fiction. Sarah’s short fictional autobiography of Anne Boleyn appeared as the final chapter of Henry’s *A Journey from this World to the Next* (1843).

56 Battestin (1979) argued that the interest of both Henry and Sarah in incestuous desire, apparent from their novels, must at some level have reflected the reality of their relationship.

57 Anon. (1822) xv.
little Latin inoculated into his Tail.\textsuperscript{58} It is difficult to believe that Sarah would have been entirely grateful to a brother who wrote about her like this in public;\textsuperscript{59} it is tempting to think that the portrait of the educated but unhappy Molly in his \textit{Amelia}, published four years after Sarah moved out of his house, has something to do with his clever sister.\textsuperscript{60}

Sarah would not, however, have made a good housekeeper; even her female friends scoffed at her inability to offer her guests an acceptable dinner.\textsuperscript{61} Years later, Hester Thrale Piozzi reported a rumour (which she did not believe) that Sarah was over-fond of drink.\textsuperscript{62} Perhaps the rumour had begun circulating because people had assumed that the picture of the tippling Molly in Henry Fielding’s \textit{Amelia} was based on his literary sister. In another rumour reported by Piozzi, it was alleged that brother and sister did fall out, but not because he was sleeping with the kitchen maid. The alleged reason was that Henry resented Sarah’s determination to acquire expertise in the classical languages:

Though they lived upon the tenderest terms before, yet after she had by their common Friend’s assistance made herself a competent scholar, so as to construe the sixth Book of Virgil with Ease—the Author of Tom Jones began to teize and taunt her with being a literary lady etc till at last she resolved to make her whole pleasure out of study, and becoming justly eminent for her Taste and Knowledge of the Greek Language, her Brother never more could persuade himself to endure her Company with Civility.\textsuperscript{63}

Perhaps Piozzi had found this gossip in an anonymous review of Fielding’s \textit{Tom Jones}, which had remarked in reference to the character Jenny’s alleged ‘learning’, that Henry ‘by an indirect Reflection takes care to ridicule a learned Education in Women, perhaps invidiously, as conscious how much he is excelled by one of his own Name among that Sex’.\textsuperscript{64}

\textsuperscript{58} Henry Fielding’s preface to Sarah Fielding (1744) 5–6.
\textsuperscript{60} But see Williams (1988), who argues that Fielding is less opposed to the classical education of women than I am here suggesting. See also Smallwood (1989).
\textsuperscript{61} See Elizabeth Montagu’s letter to Elizabeth Carter, cited with no date in Blunt (1923) vol. 2, 144 and discussed by Catto (1998) 128–9.
\textsuperscript{62} Piozzi (1913) vol. 1, 178–9.
\textsuperscript{64} ‘Orbilius’ (1749). I owe this reference to Catto (1998) 127 with no. 180.
Whatever the truth of the relationship between them, when Sarah ‘resolved to make her whole pleasure out of study’, her teachers of Latin and Greek were old family friends from Salisbury. One was Dr Arthur Collier and the other her brother’s close associate James Harris, a classicist, philosopher, musical patron, and politician. She later turned to Harris for support and assistance, and corresponded with him intensively, while she made the Xenophon translation.\(^{65}\) Perhaps it was easier for her to discuss Greek with Henry’s best friend once Henry had died in 1754.

The Xenophon translation is graceful, lucid, and accurate; it was well received by contemporary reviewers, one patronizingly commenting on how remarkably few mistakes were to be found.\(^{66}\) Yet it has never received the same attention as Carter’s Epictetus, and I hope soon to publish a close comparison of Sarah’s translation with those into French by Charpentier (1657), whom she mentions explicitly,\(^{67}\) and into English by Edward Bysshe (1712). One thing is certain, and that is the influence of her friend Elizabeth Carter. In her notes she quotes Elizabeth’s edition of Epictetus, for example when pointing out that ancient Greek thought was undeveloped relative to Christian doctrine in terms of the concept of the human moral conscience. She here includes a warm ovation of her fellow-enthusiast for Greek philosophical writing: ‘One, who will ever be, not only a Credit to her Sex, but an Honour to her Country.’\(^{68}\)

So why did Sarah Fielding devote several years to translating Xenophon? She never married, and after 1744 always lived with her sisters or female friends, so had more time to fill than many women of her era. She had no dowry, and although she was never entirely without other sources of income, she did need to supplement them by writing. Yet she could have continued writing novels. There is no reason to think that she did not gain creative satisfaction from them; they were not slight romances but serious and original works engaging with real social issues, especially the unfairness of the gender system. But something had undoubtedly

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\(^{65}\) Probyn (2004).


\(^{67}\) Where she is in any doubt about construing the Greek text, she adds a footnote saying that she is following the choices made by Charpentier (1657), e.g. Sarah Fielding (1762) 318.

\(^{68}\) Sarah Fielding (1762) 317, where she also quotes Carter (1758) 62.
changed for her in the 1740s, when she discovered that she was better than her brother at ancient Greek, and that she enjoyed it. Her *The Governess; or, the Little Female Academy*, a book designed for girls, was published in 1749, although she had begun it several years previously; the picture it presents of ideal female education resembles what she had herself experienced at Salisbury, and even makes fun of over-learned ladies, in conformity with the conventional views of the adolescent female readership she was addressing. But Hester Thrale Piozzi was correct in saying that at some point in the 1740s, Sarah finally ‘resolved to make her whole pleasure out of study’.

By 1754, in her three-volume *The Cry*, co-written with her friend and intermittent cohabitee Jane Collier, she paints a daring picture of a classical scholar. Cylinda, an expert classical linguist and Platonist, does undergo a moral fall, but is allowed by her author to see the error of her ways and reform. She was brought up to read classics but not as a Christian; she prefers the company of learned men to female friendship, and forms sexual relationships with them. But Fielding and Collier stress that this is not the result of Cylinda’s scholarship: it is caused by ‘a lack of underlying moral and religious principles’. Cylinda repents and embraces Christianity, thus illustrating the principle that female education, provided the woman is also trained in religion, makes her ‘more, not less, attentive to her duty’. She is also ‘fundamentally an attractive character for the reader—lively, entertaining and possessed of a great deal of intelligent wit’. It has been pointed out that any other eighteenth-century authors would have made Cylinda’s fate, inevitably, ‘social and physical degradation’. Samuel Richardson simply evaded the problem of the moral consequences of a woman studying classical languages by making his Clarissa run away with Lovelace ‘before fulfilling her plan to add Latin to her list of accomplishments’; in his *Sir Charles Grandison*, Harriet says that the only woman of her acquaintance who knows Greek and Latin ‘wants of all things to be thought to have unlearned them’.

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70 For an excellent study of the form taken by the collaboration, see McVitty (2008) 180–226.  
71 Catto (1998) 94.  
74 Bree (1996) 105.  
75 Williams (1988) 33.  
76 Richardson (1753) 49.
By the late 1740s it was not just intellectual pleasure, but intellectual ambition which was motivating Sarah. Subscriptions were being solicited for her proposed *Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia*, which reveals her strong interest in ancient history and immersion in Plutarch, as early as 1748, although it was not published until 1757. One year later the Xenophon project was launched, and received 611 subscribers, including Elizabeth Carter. The 1762 published translation was deemed ‘excellent’ by ‘the Queen of the Bluestockings’, Elizabeth Montagu, who wrote that Sarah’s ‘genius points to the Portico & Academick groves, never let it saunter in the tuilleries . . . Her style and manner is more suited to the concise wit of Diogenes in his tub’. Sarah certainly shared her caustic wit with her brother Henry; what we can never know for certain is how far her turn to classical Greek studies was the result of her inherent love of ancient literature, or a desire to prove her own abilities resulting from envy at his education and pique at his under-estimation of her intellectual potential. It was probably a result of both.

Conclusion

What women from de Pizan through Makin, Hutchinson, and Fielding achieved in the study of classical authors is all the more remarkable given the overwhelming strength of the ideology which told them that they were congenitally incapable of equalling men in intellectual ability. One example reveals the enormity of the prejudices they faced and often internalized. Lucy Hutchinson, author of that dazzling translation of Lucretius, had been encouraged by both her parents and by her husband to pursue her studies. Her mother had dreamed that her daughter was a star, and that she would achieve ‘extraordinary eminency’; her husband, when courting her, went out of his way to express admiration for her Latin books and her poetry. She nevertheless either believed she was the intellectual inferior of men or pretended that she believed it, at least in texts which circulated beyond her household. It is startling but informative to find this remarkable intellectual stating, in a religious tract, that women are imbeciles:

77 See the edition of Johnson (1994) and the insightful discussion of Oliver (2011).
79 Hutchinson (1806) 287; Scott-Baumann (2011) 177.
As our sex, through ignorance and weakness of judgment (which in the most knowing women is inferior to the masculine understanding of men), are apt to entertain fancies, and [be] pertinacious in them so we ought to watch our selves...and...embrace nothing rashly; but as our own imbecility is made known to us, to take heed of presumption in others.80

It is impossible to prove what went on inside the heads of Hutchinson and Fielding, how far they believed or disbelieved mainstream views on female intellectual potential, and how far they felt pleasure in their scholarly endeavours. But I hope to have shown that the difficulties do not mean that it is not worth asking the question.

I was personally drawn ineluctably to the study of the ancients not because they were edifying or morally improving, but because they were fun. Antiquity was and remains a world of infinite excitement, delightfully removed from everyday reality. We must never forget the instrumental role played in society by activities which are not inherently ‘useful’, but which thrill people, satisfy their curiosity, offer an escape from everyday environments, stimulate imagination and creativity, and help them cope with long hours, weeks, and months spent heavily pregnant, in domestic drudgery or in attendance upon babies and tiny children. Pleasure and the need for intellectual stimulation have not often been discussed by previous historians of classical scholarship. Perhaps we should all pay more attention to Bathsua Makin’s Aristotelian injunction: ‘There is in all an innate desire of knowing, and satisfying this is the greatest pleasure.’

80 Hutchinson (1817) 5–6.
Confined and Exposed
Elizabeth Carter’s Classical Translations

Jennifer Wallace

Elizabeth Carter [FIG. 7.1] enjoyed a considerable reputation as the foremost female classical scholar of the eighteenth century.¹ According to her first biographer Montagu Pennington, she was a ‘deep scholar and a pious moralist’ and her fame as a female classicist even extended beyond the British shores.² One scholar working in Germany, a John Philip Baratier, wrote to her, in Latin, addressing her as ‘Angliae sidus, orbis litterati decus’ [the Star of England, the ornament of the literary world].³ And yet Carter spent much of her time, both in her written work and in her correspondence, distancing herself from the classical world, pointing out its alienating paganism and suggesting that physical exercise was preferable to scholarship. ‘The understanding of the Athenians was enlightened by philosophy, and their genius decorated by the graces; but their hearts were the hearts of barbarians. A sad proof that something more than the illumination of speculation, reason and the fine arts is necessary to dispel the darkness of disordered principles and tame the savage outrage of the passions’, she wrote to her bluestocking friend, Elizabeth Montagu.⁴

Being scholarly meant being feted by men but it also meant being pointed out as an oddity, spending time in an unusual, sometimes

¹ This chapter was originally published under the same title in Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature, 22, No. 2 (Fall 2003), pp. 315–34. We are grateful to the journal for permission to reprint it.
troubling environment. Carter lived out the consequences of her
dilemma by moving between London and Kent, between a male world
and a female world, between the Classics and Christianity. Recent critical
studies of Elizabeth Carter have urged the unproblematic nature of her
life and work. Claudia Thomas writes of the way in which the climate of
the early eighteenth century made possible and acceptable Carter’s
‘distinctively feminine, Christian critique of her culture’, while Carolyn
Williams describes the ‘consistency’ of Carter’s scholarship and femin-
inity. In this chapter I want to point out, in contrast, the ambiguities and
tensions of Carter’s classical scholarship, ambiguities which were rooted
in the ambivalent attitudes towards women’s learning in the eighteenth
century.

Thomas (1991) 166; Williams (1996); See also Myers (1990) 45–51.
The study of classics in the eighteenth century was strictly organized according to gender. It was absolutely central to the education of boys, so much so, in fact, that Penelope Wilson has argued that Latin and Greek became bound up in association with the formation of male character: ‘Masculinity is so encoded into the language of the subject that in the eighteenth century it is virtually inseparable from it.’ In contrast, Latin and Greek were not taught to girls formally at school and women could only learn the languages through being taught informally by their fathers or by family friends. Classical scholarship was thus very unusual and highly problematic for women. In his *An Essay upon Projects*, Daniel Defoe, responding to Mary Astell’s call for a female academy, articulated the widely shared feeling about the dangers of female learning: ‘I know ’tis dangerous to make Publick Appearances of the Sex; they are not either to be confined or exposed; the first will disagree with their Inclinations, and the last with their Reputations; and therefore . . . I doubt a Method proposed by an ingenious Lady, in a little book, call’d *Advice to the Ladies*, would be found impracticable.’

In fact it was precisely either ‘confined or exposed’ that the learned lady who could read Latin or Greek found herself in the early eighteenth century. Mostly women were discouraged from learning classics and ridiculed when they showed some classical knowledge. Swift ironically expressed a common argument—‘A humour of reading books, except those of devotion or housewifery, is apt to turn a woman’s brain . . . All affectation of knowledge, beyond what is merely domestic, renders them vain, conceited and pretending.’ Henry Fielding, meanwhile, tried a little more earnestly to discourage the scholarly aspirations of his sister, Sarah: ‘Though they lived upon the tenderest terms before, yet after she had by their common Friend’s assistance made herself a competent scholar, so as to construe the sixth Book of Virgil with Ease—the Author of Tom Jones began to teize and taunt her with being a literary lady etc till at last she resolved to make her whole pleasure out of study, and becoming justly eminent for her Taste and Knowledge of the Greek Language, her Brother

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7 Defoe (1697) 285. Defoe is responding to Mary Astell’s *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694), on which see the chapter by Hall in this volume, p. 116.
8 Swift (1973) 226.
never more could persuade himself to endure her Company with Civility.\textsuperscript{9} However, a few women, who managed willy-nilly to learn Latin or Greek informally, were ‘exposed’ as marvels. Constantia Grierson, who published editions of Terence in 1727 and Tacitus in 1729, is a notable example. Jonathan Swift, writing to Alexander Pope about Mrs Grierson and two other learned ‘citizens’ wives’, asked whether Pope would be able to ‘show such a triumfeminate in London’.\textsuperscript{10} The fact that these women were feted and marvelled over reveals the extent to which they were thought to be extraordinary. These were exotic, unusual subjects to be exhibited, with all the ambiguous implications associated with such exposure.

Elizabeth’s Carter’s classical learning, then, needs to be understood in the context of the eighteenth-century debate about the exemplary and polite qualities of women. According to G.J. Barker Benfield, ‘politeness’ was increasingly associated with ‘the wishes and presence of women’ in the eighteenth century, a phenomenon evidenced by the male anxiety over an effeminacy of manners.\textsuperscript{11} But Lawrence Klein has shown that the ‘language of politeness’ in the eighteenth century, which he portrays strictly as male or ‘gentlemanly’, was bound up with ‘literary classicism’ since ‘ancient writings were said to be the epitome of politeness’.\textsuperscript{12} He argues the centrality for polite culture of classical philosophers as arbiters of moral and ethical behaviour and as models of restraint.\textsuperscript{13} Women seem to have been consequently both central to and yet marginalized from polite culture in the period.\textsuperscript{14} And on a more specific level, classically trained women found themselves in the paradoxical situation of having to become public examples by not exposing themselves, by not pushing themselves too much into the public eye. They needed to distinguish the chastening and virtuous qualities of classicism, identified by Klein, which still as ‘polite’ discourse needed to be performed or

\textsuperscript{9} Letter of Mrs Piozzi to Rev. Leonard Chappelow, 15 March 1795: see Battestin and Battestin (1989) 380–1. See also Fielding’s portrayal of an intellectual woman, Mrs Bennet, in Amelia (Book VI, chapters ix–Book VII chapter x) and his criticism of his sister’s novel The Adventures of David Simple in his preface to it, discussed by Hall in this volume, pp. 126–7. Carolyn Williams thinks that Fielding is more charitable to classically educated women; see Williams (1988).
\textsuperscript{10} Swift to Pope, in Pope (1889) vol. 7, 177.
\textsuperscript{11} Barker-Benfield (1992) 97, 104–53. See also Copley (1995).
\textsuperscript{12} Klein (1994) 4, 7.  \textsuperscript{13} Klein (1994) 41–7.
\textsuperscript{14} For this double bind, see, for example, Shevelow (1989).
displayed, from the ‘pedantic’ or exhibitionist associations of classical learning.

**Exposure in the Gentleman’s Magazine**

Elizabeth Carter was taught Latin and Greek by her clergyman father, who showed her off to others as his prodigy and who corresponded with her in Latin. Her entry into the public male world of magazine writing was marked by the publication, in the aptly named *Gentleman’s Magazine*, in 1734 of her poem with classical references, ‘A Riddle’, and her translation of the Greek poet Anacreon the following year.\(^\text{15}\) In 1735 she moved from Kent, where she lived with her father, to London so that she could participate in public literary life, and she frequently attended writers’ dinners hosted by Edward Cave, editor of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, at which she met her other contributors. It was at one such dinner that she met Samuel Johnson, a long-term supporter, and subsequently was introduced to his friend, the chaotic and wild Richard Savage.

Carter’s first translation, of Anacreon, reflected the masculine, classically trained environment in which she hoped to be published. Indeed, it could be said to perform a certain type of louche masculine sensibility. She chose to translate Anacreon’s ‘αἱ Μοῦσαι τὸν Ἐρωτα’, one of the best known and most quoted of his poems. Not fearing Anacreon’s reputation for being, as Thomas Moore later described him, ‘the elegant voluptuary, diffusing the seductive charm of sentiment over passions and propensities at which rigid morality must frown’,\(^\text{16}\) she went ahead unabashedly with offering a version of the teasing binding of Cupid:

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The Muses once intent on play
Young Cupid roving caught,
With flowery wreaths they ty’d his hands
And bound, to beauty brought. (ll. 1–4)
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Carter signified her desire to enter into the established Anacreontic tradition of celebrating the poet’s hedonism and to escape expectations of female virtue by actually introducing a playfulness into the poem


\(^{16}\) Moore (1810) vol. 1, 15.
which was not there in the original. While the Greek only described the 
muses pursuing and binding Eros, Carter’s muses are set in a carefree, 
ludic context: ‘The muses once intent on play.’

Having arrived at the Gentleman’s Magazine, Carter found herself 
very much in the atmosphere of a male club, where the performance of 
masculine sociability and discourse was essential. Her letters to members 
of the club, and particularly to Edward Cave and Thomas Birch, Cave’s 
main assistant on the magazine, reveal the bantering masculine tone 
which she had to adopt to take part in this world. ‘I should be obliged to 
you if you would let me know in what century ’tis probable Mr Brown’s 
works will be published’, she wrote, teasingly to Cave, for example. ‘My 
present intention is to leave them as a legacy to the future great grand-
child of my youngest sister.’ Her one surviving letter to Birch, of 1738, 
placed itself even more firmly in the male camp, by being written in 
Latin. ‘Tu interim quid agis? quid legis? quid scribis?’ (‘Meanwhile what 
are you doing? what are you reading? what are you writing?’) She even 
repeated a male joke about women’s garrulous natures, turning the joke 
on its head and distancing herself from it by expressing it in the exclusive 
classical language of men: ‘Scribam, quanquam quod scribam—nihil 
habeo, ne verba quidem. Res inaudita? Puella se verbis egerere queritur.’

These playful remarks actually reveal the contradictions of Carter’s 
position. She points out the fact that she is identifiably female and 
different: ‘puella queritur’ (‘the girl complains’). But simultaneously she 
dismisses her identification with the female sex, both by drawing atten-
tion to the fact that she is concise and by displaying her knowledge of 
Latin: ‘nihil habeo, ne verba quidem’ (‘I have nothing, not even words’).

The anomaly of Carter’s position at the Gentleman’s Magazine is best 
exemplified, however, by the series of poems about and by her which 
appeared in the journal in the summer of 1738. In July of that year, a 
Latin epigram addressed to her and probably penned by Samuel Johnson 
was published:

17 For the hedonism of Anacreon’s poetry and lifestyle and the long tradition of critical 
doubt about his morality, see Rosenmeyer (1992) 15.
18 Elizabeth Carter to Edward Cave, 31 July 1739, BL Stowe MSS 748, 171f.
19 ‘Meanwhile what are you doing? what are you reading? what are you writing?’: 
Elizabeth Carter to Thomas Birch, 24 November 1738, BL Add MSS 4456, 59f.
20 ‘I will write, although I have nothing to say. Isn’t that an unheard of thing? A girl 
complains that she has no words.’
Elysios Popi dum ludit laeta per hortos
En avida lauros carpit Elisa manu.
Nil opus est furto. Lauros tibi, dulcis Elisa,
Si neget optatas Popus, Apollo dabit.\(^1\)

In case any reader should remain in doubt about the import of the poem—an unlikely event given the classical proficiency of most readers of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*—the poem appeared ‘Englished’ the following month, along with other adaptations:

From Pope’s fair mount why, bright Elisa, say,
So rapt with eager hand you snatch the bay?
Unmov’d could Pope refuse a wreath so due,
Phoebus, like me, would pant to give it you.\(^2\)

The poem seemed to be intended for a coterie of like-minded readers. Like many poems and articles in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, it formed part of a dialogue between different contributors to the periodical which was conducted under pseudonyms and in a spirit of scholarly flirtation and teasing contestation.\(^3\) Readers had to read the periodical regularly in order to decipher the coded poetical debate waged each month with the result that they could feel included within the charmed circle. The fact that the poem was written in Latin only added to the sense of its exclusiveness. Once ‘Englished’, indeed, the poem declared what might be termed its belatedness, its inevitable distance from the Olympian circle of the original Latin, by allowing the translator to intrude: ‘Phoebus, like me, would pant to give it you’ (my emphasis).

Elizabeth Carter’s position within the cosy atmosphere of the poem is ambiguous. On the one hand, she is figured as very much part of the coterie, the object, after all, of the poet’s evident admiration. By plucking the laurel from Pope’s garden, she is represented as the natural heir to his legacy as the premier poet and—following the great prestige of his Homer translations—classical scholar of his day. The fact that she plucks

\(^{21}\) ‘When Elisa played happily in the Elysian gardens of Pope, she plucked a laurel with eager hand. There is no need for secrecy. If Pope refuses you the laurel you long for, sweet Elisa, Apollo will give it to you’ (my literal translation): *Gentleman’s Magazine*, July 1738, p. 372. For a discussion of the authorship of this poem, see Johnson (1974) 82.


\(^{23}\) For the competitive atmosphere of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, particularly stimulated by Edward Cave’s innovative poetry competitions in the magazine, see Barker (1996) 245–6.
the laurel while playing in Pope’s garden suggests that she is accepted within the enclosure: she does not steal secretly over the wall. And yet despite the fact that she has been apparently invited into Pope’s garden, there are repeated suggestions of stealth and secrecy which imply that Elisa’s role as Pope’s heir is by no means unproblematic. ‘Nil opus est furto’ reads the Latin, which one adaptation the following month translates as ‘Yet do not steal it, lovely maid’ while another—probably by Johnson—offers ‘Cease, lovely thief’. Elisa’s intrusion into the male classical preserve of Pope’s garden is represented both as furtive and as aggressive, since she avidly ‘snatches’ or ‘crops’ the laurel rather than demurely waiting for Apollo to crown her. Indeed, in Johnson’s English version, Elisa even seems to be usurping Phoebus’s role by becoming rapaciously Apollo to the laurel’s Daphne:

Cease, lovely thief! my tender limbs to wound,
(Cry’d Daphne whispering from the yielding tree:)
Were Pope once void of wonted candour found,
Just Phoebus would devote his plant to thee.

Elizabeth Carter’s reply to the epigram was understandably fairly downbeat. How could she respond to such a double-handed compliment? She replied initially in Latin, matching the original classical elegance with her own:

En marcet Laurus, nec quisquam juvit Elizam,
Furtim sacrilega diripuisse manu:
Illa petit sedem magis aptam, tempora POPI;
Et florere negat pauperiore solo.

24 Hampshire (1972) suggests that Johnson’s poem is based on a real visit to Pope’s garden in 1738 when a laurel was probably plucked. However the association of the laurel with poetry and the crowning of the poet with a garland wreath of flowers to symbolize his initiation as a poet has a long history in classical literature and it is far more likely that Johnson’s poem was intended to be understood metaphorically. For examples in classical literature, see particularly Hesiod, *Theogony*, 30–1, Horace, *Carmina*, 1.26.6–9, and Propertius, *Elegies*, 4.6.3.

25 Another, signed by ‘Urbanus’, *Gentleman’s Magazine*, August 1738, p. 429. This translation has been attributed to Johnson; see Johnson (1974) 82.

26 ‘See! the laurel droops, and can give no pleasure to Eliza, plucking it stealthily with profane hand. It needs a seat suitable for the great, the temples of Pope, and refuses to flourish on poorer soil’ (my literal translation): *Gentleman’s Magazine*, August 1738, p. 429.
Her self-deprecation in this poem is carefully offset by her ability to turn out a Latin hexameter to compete with any male admirer. She can enter into the teasing dialogue of the magazine, as much an insider as anyone. And yet her English version, printed beneath the Latin poem, added a stanza which sowed a seed of doubt and uncertainty into her response:

In vain Eliza’s daring hand  
Usurped the laurel bough;  
Remov’d from Pope’s, the wreath must fade  
On ev’ry meaner brow.  
Thus gay Exotics, when transferr’d  
To climates not their own,  
Lose all their lively bloom, and droop  
Beneath a paler sun.

While the original Latin, and Carter’s first stanza, describe clearly only the fading of the laurel, the second stanza is ambiguous. By broadening the scope of the poem, to talk more generally about the difficulty of cultural translation—the import of ‘Exotics’ to foreign climates—Carter raises the possibility that she is referring to another type of displacement implied in Johnson’s ambivalent compliment: that of her own crossing of gender boundaries. Now it is not only the laurel that is wilting but herself, drooping under the feverish attention devoted by men to ‘Exotics’, to those who inspire wonder precisely because they are out of place.

The pressure brought to bear upon Carter in London as a consequence of her exoticization can be detected in the next two translations which she published in the Gentleman’s Magazine in November 1737 and March 1738. These translations, from Horace, strike a moralizing note which was to become a distinct characteristic of her engagement with the classics. Both translations are from well-known odes—she did not shy away from the canonical—but in both cases, she departs from the original Latin in order to put a more pious spin on the original. The first poem, Ode II.10, is an argument for moderation—‘auream quisquis mediocritatem / diligit’ or ‘whoever chooses the golden mean’ is its much quoted line (ll. 5–6)—to which Carter responds enthusiastically. Drawing out the opening image of a ship carefully avoiding the open sea and the shipwrecking shore, she emphasizes the avoidance of extremes urged in Latin with a carefully balanced English of rhyming couplets and with additional paraphrases of the poem’s argument:

A mind whose motions moderation guides  
With equal caution each extreme avoids. (ll. 5–6)
But in the second half of the poem, when the original describes the vicissitudes of fortune which are subject to the whims of the gods, when Jupiter can send winter storms and just as easily remove them, or when Apollo can just as easily reach for his lyre or his bow, Carter chose to depart from the Latin and made no mention of the gods. In doing this, she was anticipating her later declared reservations about the ancient gods: ‘We have at present, I think, banished the whole rabble of the Greek and Roman divinities from our poetry. The muses and graces may be still tolerated, as they only denote the powers and ornaments of genius and character’, she wrote, for example, to Elizabeth Montagu in 1768.27

Carter’s second translation from Horace, Ode I. 22, published four months later, is similar in its attempt to make Horace’s argument even more moralizing. Again she stays close to the original Latin for the opening lines, simply making more emphatic Horace’s original contrast of extremes to be avoided:

The virtuous man, whose acts and thoughts are pure,
Without the help of weapons is secure;
Without, or quiver, or impoisoned spear,
His stedfast soul forgets the sense of fear:
Whether thro’ Libya’s burning sands he goes,
Or Caucase horrid with perpetual snows.28

But the second half of Horace’s original poem moves from the general picture of self-sufficiency to a passionate commitment to private love, regardless of circumstances: ‘dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo/dulce loquentem’ (‘I will love Lalages’s sweet smile and voice’, ll. 23–4). Carter ignores these lines completely and just continues in the same vein as the opening, making the poem not a love poem but a lesson in duty and stoicism:

Virtue alike its tenor can maintain,
In splendid courts, or on a barren plain. (ll. 23–4)

What is clear from these translations in the Gentleman’s Magazine is that Carter was changing her public approach towards classical antiquity. The Anacreon translation was conducted in an optimistic mood of competitive rivalry, imitating the opinions of the male, public, London world which she was just about to join. The Horace translations, on the other

27 Letter of 3 September 1774 in Carter (1817) vol. 2, 272.
28 Gentleman’s Magazine, March 1738, p. 159.
hand, mark a new discomfort, symbolized by her efforts to make one of the most pious of Latin poets into an even more moral writer. Carter evidently recognized the ambivalence and anomaly of her position in Cave’s London circle and decided to counter the possible charges of intellectualism and classical pedantry by implying that studying the right Latin and Greek texts could actually offer moral improvement. This change of tactic, rejecting a male classical masquerade in favour of a search for a female classical virtue, was accompanied symbolically by Carter’s retreat from London in the summer of 1738 to the domestic environment of Kent.

Confinement in Epictetus

Moralizing the classics as a defence against charges of intellectual arrogance was becoming a recognizable strategy for the few intellectual women in the eighteenth century. The ethos of the female school in Millennium Hall, for example, is intended to seem classical—the narrator compares it initially to ‘the Attick school’—but it turns out that the emphasis is more upon Christian piety and charity than upon ancient languages.29 And in line with this moral turn, Sarah Fielding transformed her account of Cleopatra and Octavia into a moral lesson on bad and good characters from antiquity.30

One of the ways in which classics could be portrayed as moral was by restricting the classical canon to certain acceptable texts and by narrowing the translation and interpretation even of those texts. The limitation of Carter’s reading following her retreat from London is clearly evident. After 1735, for example, there is no record of her reading Greek lyric poetry again. However she did read Horace, Cicero, Virgil, Xenophon, the Greek dramatists, and Plato because these writers supposedly could give moral and spiritual guidance which was not so far from their Christian successors.31 Cicero, for example, she described as virtuous, noble, and the only good natured man among a world of savages,32 while

29 [Montagu and Scott] (1764) 8. 30 Fielding (1757).
31 There is surprisingly an indication that both Carter and her correspondent Elizabeth Montagu were familiar with Aristophanes, who is impossible to read in a moralistic way, but unfortunately no specific record of their opinions of him has been found: letter of 9 May 1764 in Carter (1817) vol. 1, 189.
32 Letter of 25 December 1764 in Carter (1817) vol. 1, 263.
people were seriously missing something if they were not able to read Plato in the original. She wrote to her friend Elizabeth Montagu in 1764: ‘There is no describing how immoderately I am scandalized at your calling Plato a sophister and a pedant; there is no possible reparation that you can make him, but by learning Greek, reading the original, and from thence confuting your own scandal’.33

Certain texts were distorted to serve a specific moral purpose. One of Carter’s poems published just as she was moving back to Kent, entitled ‘On the Death of Her Sacred Majesty Queen Caroline’, transforms a lament for the early death of the queen into an object lesson on Christian resignation and humility:

When Heaven’s decrees a Prince’s fate ordain,
A kneeling people supplicate in vain…
Though just our grief, be ev’ry murmur still,
Nor dare pronounce His dispensations ill.

The queen has joined other ‘God-like Princes’ in heaven, and their virtuous and ‘secure’ state is corroborated by Carter with a footnoted quotation from Horace: ‘Post ingentia facta, Deorum in templa recepti / Dum terras, hominumque; colunt genus etc’ (‘After the great deeds are done, they are received into the temples of the gods, as long as they looked after the earth and humankind’).34 The pagan Latin sentiments are quoted in order paradoxically to place a secular poetic genre, the elegy, into a new, appropriate Christian context. The poem also opens with a prefatory quotation from Euripides’s Hecuba, ‘Ιση θεοίσι πλήν τὸ κατ θανεῖν μόνον’ (‘equal to the gods except only in death’). This quotation is taken from the speech of the princess Polyxena before she is taken away to be sacrificed in order to appease the ghost of Achilles.35 While Hecuba, her mother, has been made cynical by her cruel experience of the Trojan war, Polyxena herself is still filled with ideas of glory to be won from noble self-sacrifice.

What is interesting, however, about this poem is what is omitted and how much of the classical corpus is left as a silent but telling counter to the ostensible moralizing tone of the poem. Carter quotes Horace out of context, crucially leaving out the end of the sentence which raises doubts about the rewards of heaven: ‘ploravere suis non respondere favorem / speratum meritis’ (‘they complained that the hoped-for favour did not

33 Letter of 9 October 1764, in Carter (1817) vol. 1, 250.
34 Horace, Epistle II.1.5–6. 
35 Euripides, Hecuba 356.
correspond to their just deserts’, ll. 9–10). And she also chooses to ignore the fact that Euripides’s play actually sets Polyxena’s words in an ironic context of pragmatism and brutality, where personal morality no longer has a place or a point. Carter was aware of the possible negative interpretation of Euripides and attempted to counter it with a more moralizing and noble interpretation. ‘I cannot perfectly agree with you, as I think Euripides at least equal to Shakespeare in expressing the sentiments of the speaker’, she wrote later to Elizabeth Montagu. ‘He never surpasses one by the vivid starts, and extravagant [sic] greatness of the impetuous passions in popular heroic character; but no author is more successful in describing the calm dignity of virtue in gentle and delicate minds. His Hippolytus, Iphigenia in Aulis and Polyxena, are masterpieces in this kind.’

But other possible interpretations of Polyxena’s speech in the context of the play overall lurk behind this protestation and add a certain tension to the published poem.

Carter’s transformation of classics into a series of moral and pious texts in order to negotiate the ambivalent expectations placed upon the intellectual female writer reached its climax when she came to translate the stoical philosopher Epictetus in the 1750s. According to contemporary critics, Epictetus seemed to be moulded in Carter’s image. Through her translations and allusions to such writers as Horace and Cicero, she had created her own distinct classical heritage, based upon a history of resignation and patient suffering, and therefore her own apparent right to the ancient texts. One of her biographers wrote at the beginning of this century: ‘It was a strong sympathy between the ancient philosopher Epictetus and his eighteenth-century translator, Elizabeth Carter, which led her after the lapse of many centuries to reveal him to English readers. Both were thinkers; both were sufferers; both bore their sufferings

36 Letter of 19 July 1768, in Carter (1817) vol. 1, 393–4. Unfortunately Elizabeth Montagu’s original letter, which provoked this reply and which obviously expressed doubts about Euripides, does not survive.

37 See in particular the interpretation of Robert Potter, translator of Euripides: ‘The devoted Polyxena fixes out attention; we are struck with admiration at her delicate sensibility and generous spirit; we melt with pity at her unhappy fate; but we are roused from this sympathetic sorrow by scenes of a different nature: the dissimulation of the barbarous Polymestor excites our abhorrence, and the revenge of Hecuba fills us with terror’: Potter (1781–3) vol. 2, 215.
cheerfully according to their different lights, and both were philoso-
phers." Carter did indeed present Epictetus in many ways as Christian
in all but name, or, in other words, like herself: ‘the just and becoming
Manner, in which the Stoics, in many Instances, speak of God, should
incline one to form the same favourable Judgement of them: and those
Authors seem guilty of great Injustice, who represent them, as little better
than atheists.’

Yet Carter was also careful to point out the problems of Epictetus and
the danger that he might lead the virtuous reader astray, if she were not
sufficiently warned of his non-Christian tendencies. The stoicism of
Epictetus, for example, could encourage readers to rely too much upon
their own resources and not enough upon God. ‘The Stoical Excess was
more useful to the Public as it often produced great and noble Efforts
towards that Perfection to which it was supposed possible for human
Nature to arrive. Yet at the same time, by flattering Man with false and
presumptuous Ideas of his own Power and Excellence, it tempted even
the Best to Pride: a Vice not only dreadfully mischievous in human
Society, but perhaps of all others, the most insuperable Bar to real inward
Improvement.’

One reader, Hester Mulso, wrote to her of the right way
to read the translation. One should not depend too much upon the actual
arguments of the book, nor should one rely too much upon the transla-
tor, but the text should be used as an inspiration, a *vade mecum* on one’s
spiritual journey towards God:

‘Nor thou, ELIZA, who from early Youth
   By Genius led, by Virtue train’d,
Hast sought the Fountain of eternal Truth,
   And each fair Spring of Knowledge drain’d;
Nor Thou, with fond Chimeras vain,
   With Stoic Pride and fancied Scorn
Of human Feelings, human Pain,
   My feeble Soul sustain!
For nobler Precepts should thy Page adorn.
O rather guide me to the sacred Source
   Of real Wisdom, real Force
Thy Life’s unerring Rule!
To Thee, fair Truth her radiant Form unshrouds,

38 Gaussen (1906) vii. 39 Carter (1758) ii.
Though, wrapp’d in thick impenetrable Clouds
She mock’d the Labours of the Grecian School.\textsuperscript{40}

There was, therefore, a fundamental contradiction motivating Carter’s translation, driving her both to stress her closeness to the philosopher and at the same time to highlight her distance, and this contradiction is evident in the actual translation. Warned by Hester Mulso and by the repeated requests of Catherine Talbot, for whom Carter initially prepared the translation, to ensure that the translation of Epictetus should lead its readers to Christ and not to pagan stoicism, Carter translated fairly freely, expounding Epictetus’s message rather than offering a strict and literal translation. She replaced the metaphors which appeared in the original, like the toga distinctions in the second chapter, with simpler explanations: ‘Why, what good does the Purple do to the Garment? What, but the being a shining Character in himself, and setting a good Example to others?’\textsuperscript{41} And she included helpful explanations and glosses in the text, adding, for example, that she was referring to Socrates when translating Epictetus’s discussion of philosophical compliance.\textsuperscript{42} Since Carter undertook the translation in order to comfort Catherine Talbot in her grief, following the death of Talbot’s guardian, the words of Epictetus were not interesting for their own sake, for historical curiosity or philosophical speculation, but were intended as a real practical guide. Carter sent the translation by instalments to Talbot as she completed them, rather like a series of medical prescriptions, and Talbot confessed that she took a dose of Epictetus whenever she felt her spirits failing. ‘I found my mind relieved and my spirits the better for it’, she wrote to Carter.\textsuperscript{43}

But since the emphasis was less upon the literal letter of the translation and more upon the supposed spirit of Epictetus’s words, Carter could afford to censor the aspects of the treatise which she found more distasteful and thereby distance herself from the alien detail of Epictetus. For example, she glosses over the carrying of a chamber pot, which Epictetus, in order to indicate the relative nature of suffering, says is shameful to some and not to others. Carter writes simply of ‘a dirty

\textsuperscript{40} [[Hester Mulso], ‘An Irregular Ode, To EC, who had recommended to me the Stoic Philosophy, as productive of Fortitude, and who is going to publish a Translation of Epictetus’, printed in Carter (1758).

\textsuperscript{41} Carter (1758) 1. (Epictetus, I. ii. 22).

\textsuperscript{42} Carter (1758) 17. (Epictetus, I. iv. 24).

\textsuperscript{43} Letter of 6 January 1760 in Carter (1808) vol. 2, 309.
disgraceful Office’, although she admits in the notes that a certain euphemism has been necessary: ‘The Translation here gives only the general sense, as a more particular Description would be scarcely supportable in our Language.’ Later, Carter translates a reference to cutting off the genitals as ‘an ignominious Amputation’, without this time even bringing herself to admit that any bowdlerization has taken place.

Carter’s translation reveals then less the consistency and ‘unflinching brutality’ which Carolyn Williams argues for and more a fissured, self-contradictory tract which reflects the ambivalences of its production. The translation moves from greater or lesser literalism, and from a fidelity to the original to an adaptation of the text to contemporary texts and concerns. Everywhere one encounters a confusion of contexts and registers:

Concerning the Gods, some affirm, that there is no Deity: others, that he indeed exists; but slothful, negligent and without a Providence: a third sort admits both his Being and Providence, but only in great and heavenly Objects, and in nothing upon Earth: a fourth, both in Heaven and Earth; but only in general, not Individuals: a fifth, like Ulysses and Socrates:

O Thou, who, ever present in my Way,
Dost all my Motions, all my Toils survey.

Pope’s Homer

This extract reads like a bricolage of ancient and contemporary reference, with Epictetus’s original example from Homer replaced very overtly not with Homer literally Englished, but with ‘Pope’s Homer’, the ‘pretty poem’ which we ‘must not call Homer’. The footnote goes on to compound the confusion of reference and provenance, by quoting Xenophon to support Carter’s departure from Epictetus in believing in the omniscience and omnipresence of God: ‘It was the Opinion of Socrates, that the Gods show all Things that are either said or done or silently thought on: that they are everywhere present and give Significations to Mankind concerning all human Affairs. (Xen. Mem. L.1).’ Through referring to other authors in the text, Carter disrupts the supposed natural affinity and consistency of

44 Carter (1758) 8. (Epictetus, I. ii. 8).
45 Williams (1996) 19.
46 Carter (1758) 46. (Epictetus, I. xii. 1–3). The Homer quotation is from Iliad X.279–80: ‘nor am I unseen by you wherever I move.’
her writing with the philosophy of Epictetus and suggests the tensions inherent in translating an ancient pagan.

But most tellingly the tensions and censorship are most evident not in the actual text but in the footnotes, where the reader is repeatedly warned about the dangerous implications of the Stoic philosophy. The complacency about death, for example, which led stoics to advocate suicide, elicits a reproving note: ‘This cheerful Readiness for Death, whenever appointed by Providence, is noble in a Christian, to whom dying is taking Possession of Happiness. But in Stoics, who seem to form no Hope beyond the Grave, it had surely more Insensibility than true Bravery, and was indeed contrary to Nature.’

48 Or, similarly, Epictetus’s argument that people do wrong only out of ignorance is countered in the footnotes: ‘The most ignorant Persons often practise what they know to be evil: and they, who voluntarily suffer, as many do, their Inclinations to blind their Judgement, are not justified by following it. The Doctrine of Epictetus, therefore, here and elsewhere, on this Head, contradicts the Voice of Reason and Conscience: nor is it less pernicious than ill grounded. It destroys all Guilt and Merit, all Punishment and Reward, all Blame of ourselves or others, all Sense of Misbehaviour towards our Fellow-creatures or our Creator. No wonder that such Philosophers did not teach Repentance towards God.’

What is interesting is the fact that the footnotes were added at the instigation of Catherine Talbot, who was alarmed at some of Epictetus’s ideas. Elizabeth Carter, on the other hand, found herself, in her correspondence with Talbot, actually defending Epictetus and arguing that his philosophy was not so far removed from Christianity: ‘I believe it is scarcely ever of any use, and perhaps very seldom right, to depreciate the heathen morality. Wise and good men in all ages, who suddenly applied their hearts to the discovery of their duty, cannot, I think, be supposed in any material instances to have failed, though they had neither a proper authority, nor could promise sufficient encouragements to qualify them for effectual instructors of the multitude of mankind.’

Her footnotes frequently appear with a distancing proviso that they are not so much her own words or beliefs as those of a friend. One particularly
pedantic note, for example, significantly contrasting Epictetus unfavourably with Christians, is carefully marked as instigated by another: ‘The Philosopher had forgotten that Fig-trees do not blossom: and is less excusable than the English Translators of the Bible, Heb. iii, 17, to whom Fig-trees were not so familiar. But the Hebrew Word used there signifies rather in general to shoot out, thrive, than in particular to flower. The LXX have καρποφορησεις; reading, perhaps, הִפְרֵז for הָפִּר. This Note was given to the Translator by a Friend.’ In another footnote, Carter observes with thinly disguised irony that a comment about different types of education in the ancient world—’that sort of Education peculiar to Gentlemen, that is, such as were free; and of which the Slaves, or lower Sort of People, were forbid to partake’—was dictated to her by a man who was the beneficiary of a very similar exclusive education: ‘The Translator is obliged for this Note, as well as for many other valuable Hints, to Mr Harris, so well known for many Works of Literature and Genius.’

In the discrepancy between Carter’s text and footnotes, there is, then, what could be described as a dialogue between two poles of the female response to the classics. The text, which represents Carter’s response, transforms the original Greek into something appropriate to feminine sensibility and propriety but remains sufficiently alive to the original that it remains open to some of the alien qualities and is prepared to fragment rather than repress at all times. The footnotes, on the other hand, which stem from Talbot’s reaction, reveal the anxiety felt by women who were very much constrained by the expectations of their gender. As such, the doubleness of Carter’s Epictetus, inscribed most strikingly and visually on the page in the division between text and hypertext, reflects the ambivalence of women’s classical scholarship in the public domain in the mid-eighteenth century.

Reception

Carter’s public translations of classical texts appeared to please men. She had learnt well how to fit in with male expectations of appropriate female literary preoccupations. She seemed to combine scholarship with feminine

51 Carter (1758) 55 (footnote to Epictetus, I. xv. 7).
52 Carter (1758) 112 (footnote to Epictetus, II. i. 21).
domesticity: Samuel Johnson famously remarked that 'My old friend, Mrs Carter, can make a pudding as well as translate Epictetus, and work a handkerchief as well as compose a poem', thus coping with her scholarship through a kind of absurd deflation. And she repressed her independent views in order to comply with demands for typical female humility. While working on her Epictetus translation, for example, she accepted the notes and suggestions of various male scholars. She consulted the Bishop of Oxford, Talbot’s guardian, over points of grammar and logic, and also showed her text to a classical scholar, James Harris, for correction. In her correspondence with these men, Carter adopted the expected note of inadequacy, even when in fact it turned out that she had a better understanding of the Greek and was correct in her original opinions. And the Bishop would reply with a chastening condescension, even when it became apparent that he knew less than Carter: ‘Are you not ashamed to persecute a poor English Archbishop with Heathen Greek which, it may be hoped, he hath had the grace to forget entirely.’

These tactics garnered Carter ostensibly rave reviews. Even male writers who were, in general, critical of women writers praised Carter. Richard Polwhele, for example, who attacked Mary Wollstonecraft in his poem The Unsexed Females, praised Carter precisely because she combined Christian morals and modesty with her scholarship: ‘Carter, with a milder air, diffuse / The moral precepts of the Grecian Muse.’ The ‘milder air’ of Carter and her willingness to confine what might appear unnatural learning within the compass of the typical feminine virtues of softness and humility—she and others ‘In silken fetters bound the obedient throng / And softened despots by the power of song’—make her acceptable to a critical public. The main periodicals of the day recommended the Epictetus translation to their readers. ‘She displays extensive learning, deep reflection and sound judgement . . . In short, it will not be saying too much to pronounce that this work does honour to her sex and to her country’, wrote the reviewer in the Monthly Review.

And the Critical Review was equally encouraging: ‘We are very glad to find by the large list of subscribers prefixed, that the translation has met with that encouragement which it so highly deserves; and hope, as

53 Gaussen (1906) 165.  
54 Pennington (1807) 446.  
55 Polwhele (1798) 32.  
Mrs Carter’s first performance has been so well received by the public, it will not be long before she favours it with another.\(^{57}\)

But the qualities for which the reviewers admired Carter were precisely the ones which she ‘performed’ (the Critical Review’s description of her ‘first performance’ is telling) in order to appeal to male expectations and which were achieved at the cost of repressions, contradictions, and tensions. Indeed, when the reviews are studied further, one sees the same tensions which Carter’s text displayed replicated in the reviewers’ reactions. Carter is praised for her religious sensibility and her scepticism about the pagan beliefs of Epictetus: ‘She has prefixed an excellent INTRODUCTION, in which she explains the principles of the Heathen Philosophy, and shews how deficient they are when compared to those of the Christian system . . . above all, her zeal for Religion, which animates the whole, deserves the highest applause.’\(^{58}\) There is an implied sense of incongruity found in the pairing of the dry classical philosopher and the ‘lady’ translator: ‘The fair sex are seldom very passionately fond of moral and didactic writings; Epictetus is therefore singularly happy in thus becoming the object of a lady’s choice; and will probably from this lucky circumstance in his favour, stand the chance of being better attended to than he ever was before.’\(^{59}\) And the incongruity is both countered by the eliding of paganism and Christianity—Carter is ‘as good a Christian as a scholar’—and yet also re-inscribed and policed by the chastening tone of the reviewers. Having praised, the reviewers also go on to criticize, pointing out the weaknesses of Carter’s translation in ways that would have not been used to discuss a man’s translation. ‘Her language is in most parts pure and elegant,’ writes one reviewer; ‘we would observe, that the translation, though never spiritless, is, in some few places, rather languid, for want of using a liberty which the Writer seems well qualified to manage discreetly,’ writes another.\(^{60}\)

Elizabeth Carter’s translations and writings are instructive. They represent one of the most influential examples of a rare eighteenth-century phenomenon, the classical scholarship of a woman. They also reveal some of the problems and tensions involved in reading and translating Latin and Greek as a woman, tensions which have strangely been ignored...

by critics but which are evident both in Carter’s texts themselves and in the critics’ reactions to them. Reading Carter in a way which made her acceptable involved erasing the troubling discrepancies and incongruities. The success of this tactic is evidenced in the fact that her text of Epictetus continued to be reprinted in the Everyman edition of Epictetus, for example, right up until 1955.\footnote{Rouse (1955).} In other words, Carter’s careful repression of real scholarly as opposed to moral interest in the classical resulted in a tradition of female scholarship which came to strengthen gender boundaries rather than subverting them. By consciously repressing the alien nature of the classical world, which she had identified and explored in the early part of her career, and by creating instead an apparently natural connection between feminine concerns and some carefully selected ancient texts, Carter formed a distinctive female classicism which appeared ostensibly to be uncontroversial, unsubversive, and ultimately supportive of the rigid gender status quo. But in fact the underlying tensions and contradictions, picked up by some of her readers and critics, only illuminated the inevitable problematic nature of any female encroachment upon male scholarship in the eighteenth century.
8

This is Not a Chapter About Jane Harrison

Teaching Classics at Newnham College, 1882–1922

Liz Gloyn

Until the end of the nineteenth century, women’s education in England took place in the domestic sphere.\(^1\) Any systematic instruction tended to come from parents or governesses at home. Private girls’ secondary schools, which duplicated the domestic model, demonstrated ‘want of thoroughness and foundation, want of system; slovenliness and showy superficiality; inattention to rudiments [and] undue time given to accomplishments’.\(^2\) However, from the middle of the century, a symbiotic relationship began to develop among a new national network of girls’ schools and women’s higher education institutions; the first of the

\(^{1}\) This chapter would not have been possible without the help and patience of Anne Thomson at the Newnham College archives. Gillian Sutherland and Chris Stray generously shared their time, thoughts, and expertise. Anne Logan helped me with background on women academics. Colin Harris and the Imaging Team at the Bodleian assisted with some last-minute research. Caroline Bishop, Lauren Donovan, Isabel Köster, and Darcy Krasne provided valuable support, as always. I thank Rosie Wyles and Edith Hall for inviting me to contribute to this volume.

latter was Bedford College, London, in 1849. Newnham College, Cambridge, offers a case study of how these institutions engaged with classics, a previously male-dominated subject, and created women who were themselves experts.

Newnham began in 1871 with five women students attending university lectures in Cambridge under the supervision of Anne Jemima Clough. Newnham Hall opened in 1875, and Newnham College was formally registered in spring 1880. By 1882, a second hall of residence was in operation, including the college’s first lecture rooms. In this chapter I offer a chronological overview of the pioneering women who taught Classics on the college staff, and how their approach to teaching developed. Important developments were also taking place at university level. University legislation (the so-called Three Graces) passed in 1881 meant that in 1882 women were permitted to sit University exams formally rather than by private arrangement with each Tripos examiner. This year marks the point at which female students at Newnham (and, by extension, their teachers) gained some partial official recognition of their existence.

Beginnings—Margaret Merrifield and Edith Sharpley—1882–1900

The reformed Classical Tripos was offered for the first time in 1882. Part I maintained a traditional linguistic emphasis; the new optional Part II (first examined in 1883) now allowed specialization in sub-disciplines such as philosophy and archaeology. Women could thus demonstrate academic ability in areas besides linguistic competence, which had not featured significantly in their pre-university education. Nevertheless, the fundamentals of Latin and Greek remained a sizable part of Newnham’s teaching needs.

3 Tuke (1939) offers a history of Bedford College; her study has been reassessed in interesting ways by Brown (2011).
4 Gardner (1921) and Sutherland (2006) outline Newnham’s early history.
5 For more on the Three Graces, see McWilliams Tullberg (1998) ch. 5.
6 Breay (1999) 62–70 analyses the impact of Part II on women’s academic achievement.
7 Newnham students still had to pass the Part I exams, and until 1895 the A paper on literature was compulsory for Part II students.
Prior to 1882, teaching was offered by men, led by Richard Archer-Hind, Fellow and Lecturer of Trinity College. He found young men to coach Newnham undergraduates; he also lectured to Newnham’s ‘mere beginners in Greek’, and took no fees. Margaret Merrifield was appointed Newnham’s first female Resident Lecturer in Classics in 1880 after receiving a notional second class in the Tripos. She married in June 1882, and resigned the lectureship. Edith Sharpley, one of the first women to sit the revised Tripos examinations of 1882–3, replaced her in 1884; she remained in post until 1910. It would be easy to assume that Margaret and Edith embody two Victorian stereotypes of academic women—the undergraduate who abandons academia for a husband, and the spinster married to her subject. However, college records reveal a much richer picture of teachers and teaching provision.

Margaret was the daughter of Frederic Merrifield, barrister-at-law, and Maria Angélique de Gaudrion; like many of her peers, she was educated at home before she came to Newnham as an undergraduate in 1875. She married Arthur Woollgar Verrall; he was a classical Fellow at Trinity College when they married, and would become the first Professor of English at Cambridge. They had two daughters: Helen, born in 1883, and a child who died in infancy. Margaret continued to have an active and productive intellectual life after her marriage. In 1890 she published *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens* with Jane Harrison, and was a keen participant in the work of the Society for Psychical Research; her ‘natural psychic power had been of great value to the S.P.R.’ and she ‘was among the first of their automatic writers’.

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8 Gardner (1921) 24.
9 While women were able to sit the Tripos examinations, they did not become full members of the University eligible for degrees until 1948. Their results were published in a separate women’s list, indicating where they would have come if the list were integrated. Beard et al. (1998) 6 reproduces the 1882 lists.
10 All biographical information is taken from the Newnham College Register and the Girton College Register.
11 The celibacy requirement for Fellows was abolished by the university in 1860, although not all colleges immediately followed suit.
13 Sidgwick (1938) 175. Newnham was an unexpected hotbed of interest in psychical research. Henry Sidgwick, one of the college’s co-founders, was the first President of the Society when it was founded in 1882; his wife Eleanor Sidgwick was also an active researcher and continued to be involved with the Society after his death. In this, she was...
Edith, by contrast, had experienced a range of formal schooling. She was the second of ten children born to Thomas Sharpley, a medical doctor, and Sarah McNicoll, whose father was a minister. Born at Louth in Lincolnshire, she began her education at the Miss Evisons’ school and then Miss Chapell’s School in Louth; she moved to Miss Reed’s School in Taunton, Mlle Fray’s School in Paris, and Manchester High School before going to Newnham in 1879. At Newnham, she not only established a precedent for her sister Mary, who came up in 1890 and gained a 2:1 in Part I of the Moral Science Tripos in 1893, but also was assimilated into the wider college family [FIG. 8.1], symbolized by Newnham’s first Principal, Anne Jemima Clough, and her niece Blanche Athena Clough, known as Thena. Their relationship became so close that she was present, alongside Thena, at Anne’s death after nursing her through her final illness.

Margaret and Edith, coming from different educational but similar socio-economic backgrounds, were the first Newnham alumnae to instruct other women classicists at the college. Several resources help us reconstruct who taught what at Newnham when, including the Records of Newnham College (RNC). The RNC was an annual newsletter giving various information about the college, its staff, students, and scholarships. Nearly every edition includes a list of people providing lectures or individual instruction in each subject; this differs from the RNC’s staff list in that it includes all men and women teaching a subject, not only lecturers employed by the college. The information in the lists enables us to follow each individual’s college teaching career; Table 8.1 tabulates this for the women classicists of Newnham. This approach aided by Helen Verrall (Sidgwick (1938) 175). The College itself deliberately did not have any religious affiliation, and has no chapel building (see Gardner (1921) 60–3). Anne Jemima Clough’s brother, the poet Arthur Clough, had been unable to take up a tutorship at Oxford because he had lost his faith in the historical Jesus (Sutherland (2006) 42–4) and she thus took a dim view of compulsory Anglicanism. Henry Sidgwick resigned his Fellowship at Trinity because he could no longer subscribe to the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England as was then required, after a period of personal doubt about, inter alia, the credibility of the miracles in the New Testament (Gauld (1968) 50–8).

14 Sutherland (1990) 146–52 explores the stratification of boys’ and girls’ schools that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century.
15 Anne Jemima Clough died in the morning of 27 February 1892. Sutherland (2006) 129 gives Thena’s account.
16 For unknown reasons, this list is not included in the RNC of December 1899, December 1900, January 1902 and December 1902.
means that we can track not only the resident lecturers working at Newnham, but also those who taught for the college on a more informal basis and who might not otherwise appear in official records. The RNC reveals that Margaret, while not on the formal staff, continued to offer academic supervision. She is listed in the RNC teaching lists for twenty-seven years—beating Edith, who is listed twenty-five times.

Florence Stawell joined them briefly in 1894. Florence was another Newnham undergraduate who achieved a first class in division one for Part I, demonstrating the linguistic competence that made her a desirable teacher. When considering whether to continue her Classical Scholarship, the Education Committee minutes note: ‘Miss Stawell is the best classical scholar we have had for a long time’ (28 April 1891). As the
youngest daughter of Sir William Stawell, Chief Justice and Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, Australia, and Mary Frances Elizabeth Greene, she had received a private education before attending Trinity College, Melbourne and then Newnham. Unfortunately, ill-health meant that she was unable to continue in post at Newnham, although she continued to work on classical subjects; for instance, she published a verse translation of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, for which Gilbert Murray wrote the preface, first written as a crib for a performance at University College, London in 1897.\(^{17}\) Occasionally she served as an examiner for the college’s Classical Scholarship Examination; she gave a series of lectures without fee on ‘Some Aspects of Homer’ in autumn 1904, and taught in 1905 and 1912.

The Newnham classicists had to arrange two sorts of teaching for their students—individual or small group ‘coaching’, and larger college lectures. A list of lectures for women appeared in the Cambridge Reporter each term, usually separate from the men’s lecture lists; they give a picture of the subjects on offer. In Easter 1883, Latin I on Lucretius, book II was taken by Mr Tottenham; Latin II (book unspecified) by Mr Goodhart; Latin Composition by Mr Nixon; Greek I (book unspecified) by Mr Duff; Greek II on *Oedipus Coloneus* [sic] by Mr Archer-Hind, and Greek III on Thucydides, book IV by Mrs Verrall [FIG. 8.2]. Both Margaret and Richard also offered papers for their Greek classes. Seven men besides the classical lecturers appear in the list, showing other subjects also called on external expertise.\(^{18}\)

The Education Committee considered whether to approve additional coaching on a case-by-case basis. For instance, Miss Silcox was to be given coaching in Greek and in Latin by Mr H. Wilson and Mr Wyse (22 January 1884); private instruction was authorized three times a week for Miss Ashford, and once a week for Miss Baxter and Miss Falding (26 April 1887). The coaches were not members of college staff, meaning

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\(^{17}\) Stawell (1897) and (1929). Florence also worked with Gilbert Murray under the aegis of the League of Nations Union, and wrote a volume for the Home University Library for which he was an editor. Correspondence preserved in the Bodleian reveals that he had asked her to write another volume on Goethe (MS. Gilbert Murray 408: 172–80). The closeness of their working relationship is evinced by his authorship of her obituary in *The Times* (11 June 1936, pg. 18). For more on the League of Nations Union, although sadly deficient in charting women’s involvement, see Birn (1981).

\(^{18}\) From the 1870s some of the male colleges opened their lectures to women, but women still mainly attended the lectures put on in their own college until the turn of the century; see Breay (1999) 58–9.
that resident lecturers could focus on college lectures and group language tuition to support students through Part I. Students received between one and three hours a week of supervision, depending on individual need. These decisions show Newnham students receiving the same language-focused coaching as the male students at the other colleges, although women’s coaches had more ground to cover. The SIC report of 1868 noted that in girls’ schools ‘Greek is so little taught that it need not be noticed’; the Latin examined was viewed unfavourably, but ‘the fault was plainly due to want of teaching’.19 By contrast, male undergraduates often had received systematic and rigorous language teaching in both ancient languages since prep school.

19 See the reprint of the Schools Inquiry Commission Report in Beale (1870) 4. Breay (1999) 50–4 discusses the role of Classics in girls’ secondary education. The issue of women learning Greek was highly contentious; see the discussion in Prins (1999) 43–6.
Part II teaching made different demands; students had to develop greater specialization than Newnham alone could ever provide. The December 1899 RNC includes for the first time a page titled ‘Course of Study’, which is reproduced with little alteration to the end of our period. It notes that ‘in Mathematics and Classics the main part of the teaching is provided by the College… For the Second Part of the Mathematical, Classical, Moral Sciences and Natural Sciences Triposes, which do not form a necessary part of any degree course, the instruction is almost wholly provided by the University’ (December 1899: 14). As such, the Education Committee concerned itself with supporting Part II students financially and arranging appropriate private supervision. For instance, the minutes of 26 April 1887 note that Miss Pocock should receive private instruction three times a week for Classics Part II.

Richard maintained his initial influence over organizing the classical teaching in this period, and he remained the subject’s sole representative on the Education Committee. The first set of minutes note that ‘arrangements of classical lecturers proposed by Mr Archer-Hind were agreed to’ (2 June 1880). Richard seems to have retained control over logistics and personnel for the classical teaching; for instance, on 8 June 1882, ‘Mr Archer-Hind did not think any changes of importance would be needed in the classical lecturing and the necessary arrangements for it were left in his hands’, although this meeting took place nine days before Margaret’s wedding. Although Richard reported Edith’s recommendations to the Education Committee, she did not attend an actual meeting until 23 January 1897, thirteen years after her appointment as resident lecturer.20

The selection of examiners for the Entrance Exam and Classical Scholarship Exam reflects the imbalance in power and expertise between the Newnham classicists and the Cambridge men.21 When the Education Committee took responsibility for this task in 1894, Edith was asked to act as an examiner for the Entrance Exam, along with her opposite

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20 The first instance of her indirect influence appears in the minutes of 24 April 1888 about the provision of individual private instruction.
21 Another form of power imbalance that sometimes occurred was when a brother was hired onto the teaching staff when his sister was in residence as an undergraduate, as happened in the case of Seymour Conway and Katharine Glasier (née Conway). Katharine joined Newnham in 1886 on a Clothworker’s Scholarship to study Classics; Seymour is first listed in the December 1888 RNC. One of his non-academic actions was to break off a romance between his sister and a postman she had met as part of the University’s Extension education scheme (see Hall (2015) 204 for further details).
numbers for Mathematics and Modern Languages. In-house ancient language expertise was necessary as three of the eight papers candidates sat examined Latin and Greek. However, the examiners nominated for the Classical Scholarship Exam were Richard, Dr Verrall and Mr Wedd, with Mr Dimsdale in reserve. The division of labour between women dealing with the entrance exam and men moderating the Classical Scholarship exam continued until 1898, when Florence was asked to examine the latter.22

Various signs of women’s increasing administrative ownership of the subject appear in the Education Committee minutes. The decision to ask Jane Harrison to lecture for the first time is particularly instructive, as it reflects the broader college context of the move from a quasi-domestic environment to a more formal institutional structure, and the women classicists’ response to it.23 The minutes of Tuesday 22 April 1890 contain the single line ‘Miss Harrison to be continued for archaeology’—except there has been no mention of Miss Harrison beginning archaeology, unusual in a context where every new payment is noted. The minutes of the following meeting offer clarification:

The sanction of the Committee was asked for a provisional arrangement made by Mrs. Verrall, Mrs. Sidgwick, & others, with Miss Jane Harrison. A strong desire had been expressed by some members of Newnham College that Miss Harrison should be asked to lecture for the College on some subject in Classical Archaeology—this was approved by Prof. Middleton & Dr. Waldstein. It was hoped that these lectures might be recognized by the Classical Board & delivered in the Archaeological Lecture-room [this has since been agreed to]; in order to be in time for a meeting of the Board it was impossible to wait for an Educ. Comtt & a provisional arrangement was therefore made with Miss Harrison.

This is the closest that any subject in the college has come to having some official lectures recognized by the university—no other subject’s Board has been mentioned in the committee minutes. Margaret, Mrs Sidgwick and the mysterious ‘others’ have engineered a situation where the committee cannot but approve the arrangements made to accommodate another committee’s timetable. Naturally, it does—but the involvement

22 Although asked to examine in 1899, ill health prevented her; Margaret replaced her in 1900.
23 Formally, the college remained a Limited not for Profit Company until Newnham secured its own charter and statues in 1917, the first women’s college to do so.
of Margaret in this unorthodox process, rather than Richard, indicates both her deep engagement with Newnham Classics despite her marriage, and the shift of control to those women whom the college had trained.

Professionalizing—Jane Harrison and Rachel White—1900–1909

Jane Harrison’s story is well known.24 Her father, Charles Harrison, was a timber merchant; after his first wife’s death, her education was in the hands of governesses. After a period at Cheltenham Ladies’ College, she went up to Newnham in 1874. After Newnham, she briefly became a schoolteacher at Oxford High School before moving to London to give lectures on classical art, supported in part by a modest inheritance from her mother’s will. Her return to Newnham in 1898, foreshadowed by the 1890 lecture series, signalled the college’s attempt to establish itself as a place for serious research. She began as a sort of visiting lecturer in residence, then became a staff lecturer in archaeology; in 1900, a research-focused position was funded by the new Fellowship Fund, whose funding came with the condition ‘that during tenure of the Fellowships [award holders] must be in the main engaged in work intended to advance knowledge’.25 Despite her focus on research, she provided supervision for students working for the archaeology papers in Part II, and in 1910 was appointed as supervisor of studies in Archaeology for the Classical Tripos Part II (Education Committee minutes, 14 March).

Her arrival was not without friction. The Newnham College Council Minutes report that a ‘scheme proposed by the Associates for the administration of a fund raised by them for Fellowships was read & considered’ on 12 May 1900. The scheme was eventually passed—upon which ‘Mr Archer-Hind said he wished to have his dissent recorded, as he felt that this necessitated his resignation of membership of the College’. A Special Meeting of the Council on 24 May duly received his resignation. The Council’s expression of regret was, perhaps pointedly, moved by Jane

24 See, for instance, Peacock (1988); Beard (2002); Robinson (2002).
25 RNC December 1900: 33.
and seconded by Margaret. The cause of Richard’s strong feelings is not recorded, but the unusual circumstances around her 1890 lectures and the fact a Fellowship was more or less earmarked for Jane may indicate some personal animosity. There was also disagreement over whether sparse resources should be channelled into research instead of delivering the teaching the college needed. Whatever the story, the women had their way; nonetheless, Richard continued to teach.

Jane was preceded onto the teaching scene by Rachel White. In December 1897, Rachel is listed in the RNC staff list as an Assistant Lecturer in Classics, a new category of staff first included that year. Her hiring was somewhat unconventional (Education Committee minutes, 18 August 1897):

Miss Sharpely made a proposal to offer some of the classical teaching during the coming academic year to Miss R.E. White. She stated that there was no hope of Miss Stawell’s returning for another year at least, that Miss White was looking for work, and would be glad of an opportunity of doing some original work, & she pointed out some of the advantages of having a second woman lecturer in Classics. Mr Archer-Hind supported the proposal, and it was agreed that Miss Sharpely should communicate with Miss White and offer her some of the first + second year work. viz for the Michaelmas term elementary verse composition (if it should be needed) and some not quite elementary Latin prose composition—and for the other terms the same, with probably a lecture on some Greek or Latin book.

There was no job advertisement. Rachel had distinguished herself by being placed in the third division of the first class in Part I, and by winning the Historical and Archaeological Essay Prize for an essay on ‘Women in Egypt under the Ptolemies’ in 1897. Florence’s ill-health meant a solution was needed for providing teaching within the college, and Rachel had a similar academic profile to Florence. In the Newnham Register, her father is listed as ‘John Forbes White, flour miller, scholar, collector of fine arts’; he had trained as a doctor, but had to give up this career to manage the family mill. Rachel was educated at the Collegiate

26 Margaret and Jane were friends since their undergraduate days; Jane claimed to have encouraged Margaret to take up the college lectureship (see Robinson (2002) 54).
27 His teaching style became peripatetic and thus difficult to follow with age; see Beard et al. (1998) 18.
School in Aberdeen, where the mill was based; she attended University College, Dundee before going up to Newnham in 1891.28

The work proposed for Rachel reflects the basic linguistic support needed by Newnham students, but also an increasing level of staff competence. That both Edith and Richard advise hiring Rachel implies an agreement that the college needed more in-house experts, even if from this period Edith is the regular representative at Education Committee meetings while Richard begins to fade from view. The Reporter lecture list for Michaelmas 1899 gives a snapshot of teaching. Richard lectures on Plato’s *Theaetetus*; Rachel has Thucydides book VI while Edith has ‘Lysias, Contra Eratosthenem, etc’. Latin texts are in the hands of men—Mr Nairn offers Cicero’s *Orator*, Mr A.B. Cook gives both selections from Catullus and lectures on classical literature, and Mr Moulton lectures on Plautus’ *Rudens* and *Captivi*. Alice Gardner, the history lecturer, has also begun a series of lectures on the outlines of Roman history to 100 BC. The only other man in the lecture list, who also appeared in the 1883 list, is Monsieur Boquel, offering French Grammar and Composition for first-year students. The need to lecture on individual classical texts required much more external involvement, even after Rachel’s arrival.

That said, while men were offering college lectures and individual tuition, in this period the number of women teaching alongside them rises slowly but steadily. Previously, female teachers besides Edith and Margaret were infrequent.29 After the RNC lists resume in January 1904, they demonstrate two significant changes. First, Edith and Margaret are joined by Jane and Rachel in teaching every year. Second, other women’s names appear, offering tuition for a couple of years, or towards the end of this period starting their own long terms of service as supervisors rather than resident lecturers.

Mrs Archer-Hind follows a similar pattern to Margaret; as Laura Pocock, in 1887 she had gained a first class in Part II under Richard’s instruction. She married him in March 1888; they had two children. She

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28 University College, Dundee was opened in 1883 as a co-educational higher education establishment following a generous gift by Mary Ann Baxter in 1881; see Dyhouse (1995) 38–9.

29 In addition to Florence and Jane, Constance Black, later Garnett, is listed in the December 1883 RNC, and Sarah Hall in the December 1891, February 1892, and November 1892 RNC. See Table 8.1.
first appeared in the November 1898 RNC, and continued to appear until December 1905. Unlike Margaret, she did not publish, but continued to support the college by teaching alongside her husband.

Lilian Bagge also began to supervise in this phase; she appears continuously in the RNC from December 1905 to 1916–17. She had been educated at home before coming to Newnham as an undergraduate, where she also achieved a first class in Part II. She never held a formal college position as a classicist but, after a brief spell in London as Secretary at Queen Mary’s Hostel for Women at Campden Hill, she became Bursar of Newnham in 1920, and held the position until 1934.

While the Education Committee minutes of this period often discuss teaching Natural Sciences or providing German and French instruction, they do not focus on the arrangement of classical teaching. The minutes of 24 January 1901 provide an explanation, as Edith reports a resolution passed at the Classical Lecturers Meeting about verse composition. This is the first mention of the Classical Lecturers Meeting, which continues to appear intermittently in the minutes. Although brief, it shows that there was a separate administrative space to discuss issues of classical teaching, and that it used a formal committee structure.

Edith’s report of the Meeting’s recommendation to the main committee for its approval reflects the adoption of traditional forms of governance. The Meeting may have been a formalization of a more casual series of discussions, or it may have been instituted under Richard. Unfortunately, no separate series of minutes exist for the Meeting, so we cannot know what was discussed and by whom. No other subject seems to have had a similar Meeting; it appears to have acted as a forum for the matters that other subjects discussed in the Education Committee. Given the number of Newnham alumnae involved with the classical teaching, the gradual retreat of Richard and the increasing prominence of Edith at the Education Committee, we can assume that their voices would have been as loud as men’s.

That women continued to consolidate their hold on the subject is clear from the names of the examiners of the Classical Scholarship examination; although one or two years have all-male examiners, Rachel and Margaret frequently served in this capacity. Jane did not examine, but served every year on the committee that awarded the Creighton Memorial Prize for an essay on historical or archaeological subject by a current student or recent alumna. Another indicator of changing expectations
was the reception of Rachel’s marriage to Nathaniel Wedd of King’s College, who appears in the RNC teaching lists every year from December 1891 until December 1906, and was a member of the College Council until 1908. Nathaniel taught Rachel as a pupil and worked alongside her for over ten years. They married in August 1906. Unlike Margaret, Rachel did not relinquish her position as a classical lecturer, but continued in post as Mrs Wedd. This change was significant, as it represented the development of an academic environment that welcomed married women in official positions. The Principal’s note in the December 1906 RNC gives the official view:

Another change which affects us socially if not educationally is Miss White’s marriage to Mr Wedd, on which we heartily congratulate both, but as this has not involved her giving up her work it cannot be regarded as a change on the staff.

Consolidating—Louise Matthaei—1909–1916

In the December 1909 RNC, the Report of the Principal noted that ‘as regards the regular staff of the College—Miss Saunders on the expiry of her Fellowship has resumed her work as lecturer, and Miss Matthaei on the termination of hers has been appointed lecturer and director of studies in Classics in place of Miss Sharpley who has resigned these offices, but who at present continues to act as my secretary’. In the obituary she wrote for the Roll Letter, Thena said Edith made this decision because ‘she recognized that there was a new attitude towards classical studies and that pure scholarship and literature were no longer the main interest, and she believed that a classical Director was needed who would be more in sympathy with the new developments’. This changing attitude can be documented through the choice of specialization made by students taking Part II of the Tripos. Edith continued at Newnham as Vice-Principal of Sidgwick Hall, then as Registrar of the

30 Oxbridge was more congenial to married women in post because of the nature of its teaching; other parts of the UK did not offer the same warm reception. Liverpool University even attempted to formally ban married women academics in the 1930s (Dyhouse (1995) 161–7).


32 Breay (1999) 66 tabulates the subject choice of those students who received a first in Part II from 1885 to 1914; the preference is overwhelmingly for philosophy and archaeology.
new Roll, until her final resignation in 1929. She took a back seat in Classics teaching, providing some instruction noted in the January 1913 and 1914 RNC and acting as an examiner in the Scholarship examination. She also continued to attend Education Committee meetings, presumably in her capacity as Vice-Principal, until 1917.

Her resignation indicates a generational shift. Richard died in 1910. Apart from supervision mentioned in the January 1915 and 1915–16 RNC, Margaret stopped teaching. Jane continued to teach Part II archaeology students, but also started to offer Russian instruction. Chronological progress was evident in more ways than one—one of the names in the RNC teaching lists of January 1909 and January 1911 was that of Helen Verrall, Margaret’s daughter, who had completed her Classical Tripos with a first class in the philosophy option in Part II. Mother and daughter only taught alongside each other for a year, and Helen taught for just two years, but her involvement shows that Newnham classicists continued to mingle bonds of family, friendship, and academia.

Louise Matthaei formally replaced Edith. She combined the strengths of teaching demonstrated in the first phase of Newnham Classics and the research potential developed during the second phase. She was born in 1880 to Ernst Karl Hermann Matthaei, a merchant, and Louise Henriette Sueur, a music teacher. Her educational career reflected the trend towards formal secondary schooling; she attended South Hampstead High School before following her older sister Gabrielle to Newnham in 1900. She finished the Classical Tripos with a first class in both parts and received a three-year Associates Research Fellowship in 1906 before being employed as the new director of studies in Classics. Louise took over Edith’s job of coordinating the delivery of teaching to Newnham students of all levels. In her first Education Committee meeting, for instance, she reported ‘that it had been arranged for 4 of the weaker first year Classical students to do separate translation papers: hitherto the same papers had been set to first + second year students’ (20 January 1910). In subsequent minutes, Louise makes her own mark on the subject; for instance, she presents ‘a new scheme for the arrangement of the Classical teaching of students in their first & second year’ (18 June 1910). Her motivation appears to be to arrange teaching in the best possible way rather than to continue existing practices for tradition’s sake.

The arrival of Adela Adam in the January 1911 RNC marks another significant turning point; Adela, as a Girton alumna, was the first female
classicist *not* to have studied for her Tripos at Newnham. While other subjects had collaborated with their colleagues to the north, this was the first time classics crossed the college line. The relationship between Girton and Newnham classicists at this time was growing closer through the process of introducing a Joint Scholarship Exam, first in Classics and then Modern and Medieval Languages, which began in 1910; as Classics was involved in this task from the outset, closer working patterns began to evolve naturally. In other respects, relations between the two institutions had already begun to grow closer.

Adela was the first Newnham classicist with an academic parent; her father was Arthur Kensington, a Fellow at Trinity College, Oxford, who married Rebecca Le Geyt. Adela was educated at home, and spent three years at Bedford College, London, before coming to Girton in 1885. She passed both parts of the Tripos with first class results, and became Staff Lecturer in Classics at Girton from 1890 until 1894. In July 1890 she married James Adam, a Fellow of Emmanuel College who had taught her at Girton; they had three children before she began work at Newnham in 1909.33 Between 1914 and 1918 she had the distinction of giving university lectures on ancient philosophy, rather than college ones, presumably to replace male lecturers unavailable because of their war duties.

Both Louise and Adela had significant publication records. Although most of Louise’s writing appeared after her time at Newnham, during this period she was working on *Studies in Greek Tragedy* (1918). Adela was preparing *Plato: Moral and Political Ideals* (1913) and a teaching edition of *The Apology of Socrates* (1915) for Cambridge University Press. They combined their teaching load with their research, marking a change from Edith, who never published, and Rachel, who published her essay on Ptolemaic Egyptian women in 1898 but never completed her book on the origins of civilization.34 The classicists were adapting to the more professionalized academic life first recognized in the creation of Jane’s Fellowship.35

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33 One of her daughters was the sociologist and criminologist Barbara Wootton.

34 A typescript of this manuscript is held with her husband’s papers in the archives of King’s College, Cambridge.

35 In this they followed wider university trends; Engel (1983) 264–72 outlines the move towards prioritizing research at Oxford in this period.
Disruption—World War One and beyond—1916–1922

The minutes of the Education Committee during the First World War record a litany of problems encountered ‘due to the war’. The RNC teaching lists are cut short as conscription takes its toll. In the Michaelmas 1921 Reporter lecture list, the only offering by a classicist is Jane’s elementary Russian. No men appear in the list. The 1917–18 RNC reports a further disruption for Classics:

There has been one change in the Staff owing to the resignation of Miss Matthaei, Fellow and Lecturer of the College and Director of Studies in Classics and an Associate. Miss Matthaei has been at the College since she came as a student in 1900 and has been on the staff as a Lecturer and Director of Studies since 1909. She has now left to undertake other work. Her zeal in her work and her interest in her pupils have been much appreciated during her time here and she has shown constant vigour and industry in writing on her own account. She is about to publish her ‘Essays on Greek Tragedy.’ The post of Director of Studies is being filled for this year by Mrs Adam, no fresh appointment to a classical Lectureship having been made.

This brief note conceals more than it reveals. In early 1915, Louise published an essay titled The Lover of the Nations, in which she called on Cambridge academics to engage with their German counterparts in debate and discussion, using Reason and Affection as their weapons on the intellectual rather than physical battlefield. Her sympathy for the Germans, particularly given her own German heritage, was not well received. Due to ‘anti-German feeling’, she submitted her resignation to the College Council meeting of 18 November 1916. Her timing was bad. Rachel had been on leave since September 1916 because of her husband’s ill-health, so was unable to take over as director of studies. Adela was asked to act as director—the first time a non-Newnhamite had held that position. Although the Council minutes present this as a temporary measure, Rachel’s leave was extended for

36 Her obituary note in the College Roll Letter of 1970 is equally evasive about this period.
37 Interestingly, the pamphlet was dedicated to Florence, presumably because of her interest in pacifist work even before the foundation of the League of Nations Union in 1918.
38 See Oldfield (2004). The Council minutes note that ‘this resignation was accepted with regret’, but no motion of regret or thanks was passed.
the 1918–19 academic year, and in May 1919 she resigned as a College Lecturer. Adela retained supervision of the college’s Classics instruction until 1920. A replacement staff lecturer was needed, and the January 1920 RNC announced her arrival:

I have to report with great regret that Mrs Wedd has resigned her post as Classical Lecturer: though the regret is mingled with satisfaction in the fact that Mr Wedd’s health has so much improved that he and Mrs Wedd can live together at Cambridge and she can still undertake teaching in Classics though she is no longer a College lecturer. Miss H. Richardson of Girton College, Classical Tripos Part I, Class I (1911), Part II, Class I (1912), late classical lecturer at the Royal Holloway College, was appointed as her successor and came into residence in January, 1920. Mrs Adam kindly undertook to continue to act as director of classics till Miss Richardson’s arrival. We have to thank Mrs Adam for her kindness in acting as director of studies and classical lecturer since Miss Matthei’s resignation three years ago.

The college transitioned to a more sustainable arrangement as well as repeating old patterns. While Rachel no longer served on the formal college staff, she continued to be part of the community of classicists teaching for the college on a more informal basis, as Margaret did before her. Although 1920 was the last year Adela taught at Newnham, she served as a linking figure, enabling a more permanent member of staff to come into residence.

Hilda Richardson was not only a Girtonian but, in another first for Newnham Classics, had spent part of her academic career outside Cambridge. Her father was a schoolmaster, and before Girton she attended James Allen’s School in Dulwich. After going up to Girton in 1908, she received first classes in both parts of the Tripos. She spent a short time as an assistant mistress at Church High School in Newcastle-on-Tyne before moving to Royal Holloway as a lecturer in 1915. The move to Newnham was the logical next step in her career; she was appointed a University Lecturer in 1926 before her early death in 1927. On this occasion, the college’s hiring process was more formalized. In May, College Council appointed a subcommittee to make recommendations, consisting of the Principal, Adela, Edith, and Harris Rackham, a Fellow at Christ’s who appears in the RNC teaching lists for classics from November 1893.39 In June, the subcommittee reported receiving several

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39 His wife was the suffragist Clara Rackham, who read Classics at Newnham under his tutelage and also served on the College Council.
applications, presumably responding to an advertisement. Hilda was one of two favoured candidates; the other was Katherine Westaway, a Newnhamite who was then an Assistant Mistress at Cheltenham Ladies College. While Hilda was the preferable hire, perhaps on the basis of stronger Tripos results and greater teaching experience, the old girl network did not let Katherine down—she received a Marion Kennedy Research Studentship for 1919–20.  

With Hilda’s arrival, the collaboration with Girton started by the Joint Scholarship examination became closer. The Girton College Education Board and the Newnham College Education Committee held their first joint meeting in November 1920; for the first time the Girtonians teaching for Newnham outnumbered the Newnhamites. Margaret died in the summer of 1916. Rachel and Jane continued to teach, but were joined by Phyllis Tillyard, one of Hilda’s Girton contemporaries, and Janet Bacon, Hilda’s opposite number at Girton and thus an obvious person with whom to exchange teaching.

This change of personnel altered the atmosphere of Classics teaching at Newnham. The differences at both college and university level were not lost on Jane, the final representative of the old guard. In 1921, she wrote to Gilbert Murray:

It looks as if this would be my last year in Cambridge (not public yet)—I retire forcibly the year after & I think it is better not to wait till one is booted out. Old Cambridge is gone I felt that so at the praelections.

The praelections were to select a new Regius Professor of Greek, after the death of Henry Jackson, who had held the post since 1906. The sense of the new replacing the old was at work in Jane’s own colleagues as well as the faculty. Edith’s shift of focus from teaching to administration had been softened by Louise’s own share in Newnham heritage. The influx of Girtonians after the upheavals of the war and Margaret’s death may have contributed to Jane’s sense that old Cambridge was indeed gone. Her

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40 She held Hilda’s vacant post at Royal Holloway from 1920 to 1924; she then became Head Mistress of Bedford High School until 1949.


42 PP/Harrison/1/1/36, Harrison papers, Newnham College Archive. The letter is dated twice in pencil, not in Jane’s hand, as 17 November 1921 and Dec 1921. Peacock (1988) 123 discusses this letter further.

43 Alfred Pearson was eventually elected.
own departure from the college in 1922 severed the last connection that Newnham Classics had with the pioneers of the 1880s—but also allowed the college to continue moving forward, responding to the introduction of the new Faculty system at Cambridge, and the changes in teaching that this would require.44

Conclusion

We live in a time where Classics departments constantly adjust to evolving institutional structures and demands. This chapter’s examination of women classicists at Newnham reveals that they, too, were reacting to the challenges posed by a unique environment characterized by polar opposites, chief of which was the support and hostility offered to women’s education. This chapter’s rapid review of how Newnham women handled teaching Classics in the college’s early years shows how the subject developed as conditions changed, and how the women gradually took control from the men who were initially indispensable.

I also hope I have dispelled any belief that marriage meant the end of one’s involvement with the college. Given that many Newnham classicists married classicists or other academics, it seems unlikely that they would have been expected to exchange intellectual activity for pure domesticity. However, Newnham had always presented itself using familial language. In 1905, as part of a redesign of the college grounds, a sunken garden with a fountain was built as a memorial to the college’s co-founder, Henry Sidgwick. The inscription reads ‘the daughters of this house to those that shall come after commend the filial remembrance of Henry Sidgwick’. For Newnham classicists, becoming a daughter of the house took many forms—and just like daughters in any family, so did their lives.

The relationships formed at Newnham created a supportive network that sustained the classicists through their varied career trajectories, providing a group of like-minded women who were pursuing lives which somehow did not fit the social norm. Their closed community would inevitably open—the appearance of Girtonians on the scene is a

44 Although chairs of Latin and Greek existed at the various colleges from the late 1860s, a proper faculty system was first put in place following the University Commission of 1922; see Stray (1998) 143.
dramatic sign that the early years’ intimate world was fading away, but it did not mean the end. Alumnae had moved to other higher education institutes, and undergraduates were still flourishing. Although we leave the college with Hilda at the helm, it would not be long until another daughter of the house, Jocelyn Toynbee, took her place.
Table 8.1 Women classicists listed in the *Records of Newnham College* as teaching for the college.

| Name                        | Nov 1882 | Dec 1883 | Dec 1884 | Dec 1885 | Dec 1886 | Dec 1887 | Dec 1888 | May 1889 | Nov 1890 | Dec 1891 | Feb 1892 | Nov 1892 | Nov 1893 | Nov 1894 | Dec 1895 | May 1896 | Dec 1897 | Nov 1898 |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|
| Miss Merrifield / Mrs Verrall |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Miss Sharpley               |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Miss Black                  |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Miss S. E. Hall             |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Miss J. Harrison            |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Miss Stawell                |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Miss R. White / Mrs Wedd    |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Mrs Archer-Hind             |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Mrs. Stewart                |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Miss Bagge                  |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Miss Matthaei               |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Miss Hutchinson             |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Miss Verrall                |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Mrs Adam                    |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Miss Gardner                |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Miss Gaskell                |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Miss Lindsell               |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Miss Richardson             |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Mrs Tillyard                |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Miss J.R. Bacon             |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
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Classical Education and the Advancement of African American Women in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

Michele Valerie Ronnick

With isolated exceptions such as the Jamaican neo-Latin poet Francis Williams (fl. 1750) and the American clergyman Alexander Crummell (1819–98), who studied Greek at Cambridge University in 1846, the opportunity for people of African descent in the United States to obtain traditional liberal arts training in Classics in significant numbers began in

1 Carin M.C. Green, (30 March 1948–2 July 2015) died during the summer when this book was being written. I have no doubt but that she would have welcomed our work with open arms. By her own request she asked that there be no funeral service, and so let this notice in this volume stand as our memorial to her, a female classicist in a sorority of female classicists, living and dead. Professor Green was professor emerita and former chair of classics at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA. After completing her doctoral work at the University of Virginia with a study of Sallust’s treatment of Jurgurtha in 1991, she joined the faculty at Iowa and served as the department’s chair, 2007–2012. An active member of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South (CAMWS) for more than twenty years, Professor Green served as the chairman of the Committee for the Promotion of Latin, 2005–2008, state Vice-President for Iowa, 1997–2003, and Vice-President for the Plains Region, 2003 to the present. She also provided valuable service to the Society for Classical Studies (SCS) as a member of the Development, Translations, and Placement Committees. In 2008, her book, Roman Religion and the Cult of Diana (Cambridge University Press, 2007) won CAMWS’s Outstanding Book Award. Requiescat in pace.
1865 at the end of the American Civil War, and reached its height in the first decades of the twentieth century. Until that time, almost any scholastic work by African Americans was done in secret, for the education of blacks was interdicted by law in many places. Those born then were to quote the American former slave Frederick Douglass (c.1818–95), hungry for that ‘more valuable bread of knowledge’, and they were willing to break the law in order to learn to read and write.

Susie King Taylor (1848–1912) was one of those. King was born in slavery on a farm thirty-five miles outside of Savannah, Georgia. Despite the state’s harsh laws forbidding the formal education of African Americans, she and her brother were taught to read and write by one of her grandmother’s friends, a free woman of colour named Mrs Woodhouse.

In her memoir, Taylor tells us that they ‘went every day about nine o’clock, with our books wrapped in paper to prevent the police or white persons from seeing them. We went in, one at a time, through the gate, into the yard to the kitchen, which was the schoolroom... The neighbors would see us going in sometimes, but they supposed we were there learning trades, as it was the custom to give children a trade of some kind. After school we left the same way we entered, one by one... we would go to a square, about a block from the school, and wait for each other.’ White people, including a playmate named Katie O’Connor, and James Blouis, her landlord’s son, also knowingly violated law and custom to help her. During the Civil War, Taylor lived on the coast of Georgia on the Union-occupied island of St. Simons. Her ability to read and write drew the attention of army of officers, who offered to obtain books for her if she would organize a school, which she was happy to do. She taught about forty children during the day, and ‘a number of adults’ came to her at night, ‘all of them so eager to learn to read, to read above anything else’. While Baker did not teach more than basic reading, writing, and arithmetic, her courage and position as the first black woman to teach freed persons in Georgia inspired other women to go further. In this essay I look at some of them who succeeded in acquiring education in classical languages, took advanced degrees in classical subjects,

3 Douglass (1845) 38.
5 Taylor (1902) 11.
and played instrumental roles in establishing permanent institutions which offered educational opportunities in the classics to people of African descent, both women and men. Towards the end of the essay I also consider briefly the creative uses to which classical training has been put more recently by black female authors.

One of the most distinguished black women classicists and educators was Lucy Craft Laney (1854–1933), the founder and principal of the Haines Institute in Augusta, Georgia (1883–1933). Laney was one of ten children born to Louisa and David Laney, who had purchased their freedom some time before her birth. Laney was a precocious child. She learned to read and write by the age of four, and by the age of twelve she could translate passages from Julius Caesar’s account of the war in Gaul.\(^6\) She took full advantage of the classical curriculum offered by Lewis High School in Macon, Georgia, which, with the support of the American Missionary Association, was well-known for its work with black students. In 1869 Laney matriculated at Atlanta University and graduated with the first class to issue from the Teacher Training Department in 1873.

Women were not allowed to take the complete classical course at Atlanta University at that time. The first group of young men to graduate with a B.A. from the college programme did so three years later in 1876.\(^7\) Undeterred, Laney opened her own school in 1883 in the basement of the Christ Presbyterian Church in Augusta, which in its early years only admitted girls. The student body soon numbered 234 and the facilities were no longer adequate.

Seeking support, Laney presented her case at the Presbyterian Church Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1886. Her request was initially denied but she was fortunate: she impressed one of the attendees, Mrs F.E.H.(née Wilder) Haines (1819–77), member of the Women’s Executive Committee of Home Missions, who gathered much of the money needed to open the Haines Normal and Industrial Institute in 1886.\(^8\) A donation from Mrs Emma Marshall Bell, given in honour of her mother, built Marshall Hall in 1890.\(^9\) By 1912 the Institute employed...


\(^7\) For names and descriptions of Laney’s class of 1873 and the men’s class of 1876 see Bacote (1969) 35, 38.

\(^8\) Anon. (1887).

\(^9\) Leslie (2012); see also Cowan (1893) 139.
over thirty teachers, had 900 students, and offered college preparatory high school classes in Latin which Laney taught. Thus prepared, Haines graduates went on to attend at Howard University in Washington, D.C., Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, and many well-respected colleges.

One of these was John Hope (1868–1936). Born in Augusta, Georgia, he was the son of James Hope, a Scottish immigrant, and Mary Frances Butts, a free black woman. John’s father died in 1876 when he was eight. Amid financial hardship, Hope managed to enrol at the Haines Institute. There Lucy Laney taught him to love classics. With a scholarship to Worcester Academy in Worcester, Massachusetts, he studied both Greek and Latin with the school’s headmaster, Daniel Abercrombie (1853–1932). Abercrombie was a Brown University trustee, and under his aegis, Hope continued his study of the classics at Brown University. Upon graduation from Brown University in 1894, he joined the faculty of Roger Williams University, a small black liberal arts college in Nashville, Tennessee where he taught Greek, Latin, and science.

In 1898, Hope moved to Atlanta and became professor of Classics at Atlanta Baptist College, known today as Morehouse College, Martin Luther King’s alma mater. Hope was later the college’s president. Hope quoted from or alluded to classical texts throughout his life. In a speech given in 1901 at Spelman College, a private liberal arts college for black women in Atlanta, he asked the young women to compare Penelope whose life was restricted to her home with that of Lady Churchill (1854–1921), a woman of the world. Hope was just one of the many pupils Laney taught during her fifty years at Haines.

Similar work was performed in the north by women such as Frazelia Campbell (1849–1930). Little is known about Campbell. In the early 1860s, she attended the Institute for Colored Youth (ICY) in Philadelphia, which had been founded by the Society of Friends in 1839. On the teaching staff at the time was Fannie Jackson-Coppin (1837–1913), who had been recruited by the ICY from her alma mater, Oberlin College, to

teach Greek, Latin, and mathematics. Coppin was likely one of Campbell’s own teachers.

After graduation in 1867, Campbell joined the faculty of the ICY and began to teach Latin, German, and Spanish. She was later head of the female department. When the school moved out of the city, and its curriculum turned from academic work to manual training, Campbell left. She joined the faculty at Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina.\(^{15}\) Allen had been founded as the Payne Institute in 1870 by the African Methodist Episcopal Church which, from its establishment in Philadelphia in 1816, rigorously supported all levels of education for people of African descent around the world. Campbell’s name remained listed on the staff at Allen University as an instructor of Latin, German, and Spanish as late as 1912 after which her name disappears.

During this period, Campbell published an essay entitled ‘Tacitus’ German Women’ in the *African Methodist Episcopal Church Review*.\(^{16}\) The *African Methodist Episcopal Church Review* was the leading literary and intellectual journal for black Americans during the nineteenth century. Issued quarterly, it had high standards and attracted a wide range of readers who turned to it for literary, political, religious, and educational news. Campbell’s essay took to task Mrs Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902), the American champion of women’s rights, for erroneously tracing the ‘present improved condition’ of women back to the ‘exalted sentiment for women which prevailed among the Germans during Tacitus’ times’.\(^{17}\) Laney touched a nerve among women’s rights advocates and early black feminists. Seven years later, Anna Julia Cooper (c.1858–1964), who was classically educated at Oberlin College, returned to the topic. She was, however, in Stanton’s camp and referred to the ‘tender regard for women entertained by these rugged barbarians’.\(^{18}\)

Cooper was a phenomenon. Her lifetime spanned more than a century. Dying in 1964 at over one hundred years of age, she had lived from the days of slave auctions to the era of civil rights. She was born in Raleigh, North Carolina. Her mother belonged to a prominent landowner in North Carolina, a white physician named Dr Fabius Julius Haywood, Sr, (1803–80). His older brother George Washington Haywood (1802–90)

\(^{15}\) Coppin (1913) 154.  
\(^{16}\) Campbell (1885).  
\(^{17}\) Campbell (1885) 167.  
was likely her biological father. She was one of the first students to attend St. Augustine’s Normal School and Collegiate Institute, which had been founded in Raleigh, North Carolina with Episcopalian support in 1868. After protesting against the differences between boys’ and girls’ education, she was allowed to study the classical curriculum. She was the first girl to study Greek there.

She taught Greek, Latin, and mathematics for several years at St. Augustine’s, and married her Greek professor to boot. The marriage was brief. Her husband, George A. Christopher Cooper died in 1879. In 1879, the young widow moved to Ohio to attend Oberlin College. There, as she did in Raleigh, she convinced Oberlin officials to break the gender barrier and allow her to enrol in the classically based ‘gentlemen’s course’. In regard to giving people of African descent access to a classical education, she later wrote:

The fact is that the Negro’s ability to work had never been called in question, while his ability to learn Latin and to construe Greek syntax needed to be proved to sneering critics.

Cooper graduated in 1884 with a B.A. in mathematics, and the following year taught at Wilberforce University in Wilberforce, Ohio. Founded in 1865 by the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the school was named for the great British reformer, William Wilberforce (1759–1832), whose crusade against slavery culminated in the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. She stayed at Wilberforce for one year, and after a short time back in Raleigh, she earned her MA in mathematics at Oberlin College in 1887. In the same year she joined the faculty at the Preparatory High School for Negro Youth in Washington, D.C., where she taught Latin and served as principal from 1902 to 1906. (The school, also known as the M Street School, was renamed Dunbar High School in 1906 in honor of the black poet Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906)). In the same year Cooper was embroiled in the ‘M Street School controversy’. Opposition to her came from supporters, both black and white, of Booker T. Washington’s manual and vocational training programme who wanted to quash her curriculum,

22 See Hall et al. (2011), especially the Introduction.
which was designed to prepare students for college, and keep her from becoming a principal. Questions were raised about ‘her status as a married (though widowed) woman in a profession’, and aspersions were cast concerning her rumoured relationship with John Love, a man who boarded in her home.23 Although the allegations were unproven, she was dismissed by the Board of Education in the fall of 1906, and she spent the next four years as chair of languages at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. In 1911 the administration of Dunbar High School rehired her, and she taught Latin until her retirement in 1930.

In 1914, at the age of fifty-six, she began work at Columbia University toward her doctorate. After the First World War, having transferred credits to the Sorbonne, she earned her doctorate on 23 March 1925 with a 168-page dissertation, not on Classics but on one crucial episode in the history of slavery and its abolition, titled ‘L’attitude de la France à L’égard de L’esclavage pendant la Révolution’. She was sixty-six, the first former slave to earn a doctorate at the Sorbonne, and the fourth black woman to earn a doctorate in the United States.24 Aware of her own accomplishments, strong and self-reliant, Dr Cooper was an early voice and life-long advocate of black feminism. She believed in ‘the vital agency of womanhood in the regeneration and progress of a race’, and declared that ‘woman must be loosed from her bands [sic] and set to work’.25

Charlotte Hawkins Brown (1883–1961) also began life in the state of North Carolina. The granddaughter of slaves, she was born in Henderson, North Carolina and moved north to Cambridge, Massachusetts with her family in the late 1880s, where she attended the Cambridge English High School. She was an exceptional student in a very white world. In 1900, during her senior year of high school, she worked as a part-time babysitter. She was observed on the job one day pushing a pram with one hand, while with the other holding open her Latin book to read a page of Virgil; the woman who noticed her was Alice Freeman Palmer (1855–1902). Unbeknownst to Brown, Palmer had been the first woman to serve as the head of a nationally known college in the United States. She was the second

24 Tougas and Ebenreck (2000) 18. For the first three black women to earn doctorate degrees see Perkins (2009).
25 Cooper (1892) 24; 28.
president of Wellesley College, serving from 1881–7, and became so renowned that during the Second World War, the United States liberty ship, SS Alice F. Palmer, was named in her honour. Brown reminded Palmer of her own determination to study, and after that chance encounter she became Brown’s benefactor, helping her attend the State Normal School for Teachers in Salem, Massachusetts.26

In 1901, with degree in hand, Brown accepted a teaching position in a one-room school in Sedalia, North Carolina. Over time the tiny school became a junior college, which was renamed the Palmer Memorial Institute in Palmer’s honour. Suffice it to say, however, that school administrators in North Carolina did not support college training for black students. In 1903 Peter Wedderick Moore (1859–1934), a son of slaves, who was the principal at this time of the historically black institution, Elizabeth City State Normal School, now Elizabeth City State University, in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, reported as follows: ‘[w]e have taught no Latin because the board [all white] said not to teach it.’27 Indeed, while his white Superintendent James Y. Joyner (1862–1954) supported the education of blacks, Joyner nevertheless felt that their training should be restricted to agricultural and industrial work. He objected to the study of Latin or Greek by blacks, ‘because such study put false notions into their heads and caused them to wish to live by their wits’.28

Brown, however, managed to fit Latin into her curriculum. She undoubtedly had help from the Institute’s board members such as Lunsford Richardson (1854–1919), who as an undergraduate had earned medals in Greek and Latin at Davidson College, Davidson, North Carolina in 1875. Richardson was keenly interested in the welfare of African Americans, and the fortune he amassed from pharmaceutical products he had invented, such as ‘Vick’s Vapo Rub’, gave him clout.29 The school bulletin for 1917–18 lists courses in Latin, including Cicero’s orations. By 1935, a four-year sequence in Latin was offered, with French as an option after the freshman year. The same language sequence was in place seven years after Brown retired in 1952.30

26 For these details see Wadelington and Knapp (1999) 31–4.
29 Preyer (1994).
The conjuncture of white and black endeavours, such as those already described, was critical to making classical studies available to black students. At the close of the Civil War, the doors of the classrooms began to swing open, and teachers from the North, as well as native southerners, readied themselves to teach all sorts of subjects. These were mainly white females from the north, but male and female teachers of African descent contributed mightily. The anti-slavery and abolitionist movement in the United States had always been and continued to be fuelled by the activities of various counterparts in England such as William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson (1760–1846), the British Anti-Lynching Committee, and the Quaker sisters, Catherine (1847–1923) and Ellen Impey (1845–1921), from the town of Street in Surrey, whose magazine *Anti-Caste* has been called Britain’s first anti-racist periodical.

These inspired educators sprang into action. Their aims were varied, but the moral imperative to educate and uplift the lowly by religious proselytism were key. Their impact was significant. They along with their students saw ‘learning and self-improvement as a means to individual and collective dignity’. They were, to quote W.E.B. Du Bois, ‘radical in their belief in Negro possibility’, and refused to accept race prejudice or be deterred from their educational work. To those instructors and their students of Greek and Latin, which formed the core of the liberal arts curriculum, the Latin phrase, *liberales artes*, was freighted with meaning because those were the subjects studied by free men in antiquity.

But ‘black uplift had the corollary of white debasement’. The white teachers doing this work were seen as troublemakers, and traitors to their own race. Fear was widespread that these teachers were promulgating ideas about social equality that would bring down the southern caste system and create a mass of discontented African Americans. The women who took up this work were especially despised, described by one person in Alabama as ‘poor, slab-sided old maids who are coming south to teach the Negroes to lie and steal’. For helping the freed slaves, they were anathematized and pushed aside. Those instructors working at the college level, even though they had a higher status than those at the secondary level, were hardly noticed.

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31 For my earlier discussion of this topic see Ronnick (2011b).
34 Du Bois (1918).
35 Small (1979) 389.
36 Small (1979) 381.
by their colleagues at white institutions. And these teachers, whatever
their own social background, or quality of training, once they associated
themselves with black schools, vanished almost entirely from white
society and from the white academic world at large.

Of such a kind was Sarah Ann Dickey (1838–1904). Dickey was born
near Dayton, Ohio and graduated from Mount Holyoke College in South
Hadley, Massachusetts in 1869. She hoped to build a replica of Mount
Holyoke in the south, and to that end in 1875 she opened the Mount
Hermon Female Seminary in Clinton, Mississippi, in order to train
newly freed African American women to be teachers. There she was
ostracized by whites, threatened by the Ku Klux Klan, and one of her
black friends, Charles A. Caldwell (1831–75) was murdered by a mob of
white people on Christmas Day in 1875. As a result, her grand plan
collapsed, but her school endured, and after her death in 1904 was taken
over by the American Missionary Association.

More successful was Helen Clarissa Morgan (1845–1914), who taught
earned her B.A. degree at Oberlin College in 1866. She joined Fisk’s faculty
in 1869 and spent the larger part of the next four decades teaching there.
Founded by the American Missionary Association, Fisk had only opened
three years before and conditions were poor. ‘There in rude barracks,
which had been built for the soldiers of the Union, she lived...with her
fellow teachers, in the face of hostile public sentiment and enduring social
ostracism.’

Morgan wrote a letter recommending Du Bois, who had earned his
B.A. degree from Fisk in 1888, to the admissions’ office at Harvard
University. To quote David Levering Lewis:

Morgan’s description of Willie’s work in Latin was as detailed as it was enthu-
siastic, speaking of Willie’s ‘manliness, faithfulness to duty and earnestness in
study’. Morgan’s careful comments track[ed] her student’s progress through the
twenty-first book of Livy, [5/5ths (sic) of] the Odes of Horace, 3 satires, 3 of the
shorter Epistles and the entire Ars Poetica, and the Agricola of Tacitus.

Du Bois’s Greek professor, Adam Knight Spence (1831–1900), a gradu-
ate of the University of Michigan, supported him as well, and Du Bois
was admitted. Du Bois went on to earn his B.A. in history in 1891 and his

doctorate in 1895, which was the first earned at Harvard University by a person of African descent.

In 1911 Morgan received an honorary degree from Oberlin College. The official declaration stated:

It is eminently fitting that Oberlin College which first among institutions of learning opened the doors of college halls to the negro should recognize the scholarship which, through a long period of years, has been dedicated with unselfish devotion to the advancement of the negro race. Such honor we gladly pay today [to Helen Morgan]... thirty seven years professor of Latin in Fisk University... an unflinching soldier of the common good.40

Cut from similar cloth was Sarah Cordelia Bierce Scarborough (1851–1933). Born in Danby, New York, in 1851, after suffering through a disastrous marriage made at the age of fourteen, she went on to earn her B.A. in 1875 from the Oswego Teaching Institute in Oswego, New York, where she studied four years of Latin and two of Greek. Although white, she taught at Wilberforce University from 1877 to 1921, and was principal of the Normal School which exists today as Central State University, part of Ohio’s state university system. In August of 1901 she visited London with her husband, the black classicist and former slave William Sanders Scarborough (1852–1926), to attend the Third Methodist Ecumenical Conference, and later on a side trip to Italy she collected rocks, flowers, and ferns gathered inside the Colosseum for her students.41 Fluent in French, she helped her husband translate Jean-Baptiste Racine’s dramatic portrayal of Iphigénie (1674) for Professor Scarborough’s comparative study of the character of the Tauric Iphigenia in the plays of Euripides and Goethe.42

This system of classical education not only produced generations of black teachers, scholars, and students, but also shaped the work of black artists and writers from later periods. We have, for example, Gwendolyn Brooks (1917–2000), Chicago-born poet and novelist, who in 1950 became the first black woman to receive a Pulitzer Prize for her 1949 poem Annie Allen. The centrepiece of the poem, called the ‘Anniad’, consists of the heroine’s reworking of the Aeneid. Like the epics of Homer and Virgil, Brooks’ work, which was dedicated to her fellow poet, Edward Bland, who

40 Anon. (1911) 378, 380. 41 Scarborough (2005) 15, 139, 169. 42 Scarborough (1898) and Scarborough (1899).
was killed in Germany in 1945, described the effects of love and death in a time of war. The poem, according to Carl Phillips (1959–), presents a ‘not-so-subtle argument, via punning, that Annie’s is no less of an epic journey than was that of Aeneas as told in Vergil’s Aeneid.  

Brooks studied Latin as a young girl, and later, in 1934, as a senior at Englewood High School in Chicago, wrote an eight-line mock lament entitled ‘To Publius Vergilius Maro’. Brooks addressed Virgil directly, saying that although she saw ‘the mild, concordant beauty in [his] lines’, they were puzzling. She ended her lament by saying: ‘I translate/And every word seems but a set of signs.’ In the same time she also made translations of Aeneid 3.1–444 and Aeneid 3.472–7. These juvenile exercises which moved between prose and verse were excellent training for her later work, including In The Mecca (1988); its central poem’s original outline once included a character named Virgil.

Another black writer from the twentieth century was Audre Lorde (1934–1992), who was a lifelong advocate for the rights of women, lesbians, and African Americans. She saw herself as a revisionist myth-maker whose life moved at will between the polarities of race, gender, and sexuality. The cover of her 1982 autobiography, Zami: A New Spelling of My Name, declared that the book was a ‘biomythography’. Lorde in fact invented names for herself. She took out the letter ‘y’ from her given name ‘Audrey’, and designed the more symmetrical name Audre Lorde. At one point she called herself ‘Afrekete’, an Afro-Caribbean trickster goddess. Another name was the nom de plume found in one of her earliest works, a short story from 1955 entitled ‘La Llurania’. Lorde, then wrestling with the question of authorial identity, signed the story ‘Rey Domini’, a name that looks like a modern name of Hispanic origin, but sounds like classical Latin.

Such unusual elements of ‘classicizing’ by a writer whom few would expect to show classical knowledge has its source in her school days. As a student at St. Catherine’s School in New York’s Harlem, Lorde was subjected to racism. The head of the school, Father John J. Brady, who was known to have fondled some of his young white pupils, told Lorde’s mother that ‘he had never expected to have to take Colored [sic] kids into his school’. Lorde was not personally concerned about his paedophilia,

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which did not affect her, but she did ‘care that he kept me every Wednesday afternoon after school to memorize Latin [sic] nouns’. She wrote:

I came to loathe Wednesday afternoons, sitting by myself in the classroom trying to memorize the singular and plural of a long list of Latin [sic] nouns, and their genders. Every half-hour or so, Father Brady would look in from the rectory, and ask to hear the words. If I so much as hesitated over any word, or its plural, or its gender, or said it out of place on the list, he would spin on his black-robed heel, and disappear for another half-hour or so. Although early dismissal was at 2:00 p.m., some Wednesdays I didn’t get home until after four o’clock. Sometimes on Wednesday nights I would dream of the white, acrid-smelling mimeograph sheet: agricola, agricolae, fem., farmer. Three years later when I began Hunter High School and had to take Latin [sic] in earnest, I had built up such a block to everything about it that I failed my first two terms.45

Nonetheless, Lorde learned her Latin lessons. In inventing the pseudonym Rey Domini, she used Latin with a sense of play to turn her given name up into a trilingual pun. In Spanish, rey is a masculine noun meaning ‘king’. Re is of course the ablative singular of the noun, res, and domini is the genitive singular of the noun dominus. Together the words reveal that the author of ‘La Llurania’ is involved in the business of a Lorde. She took the cruelty experienced as a young student studying Latin, and transformed it into a witty and scholarly jest for polyglots and clever classicists to enjoy.46

Jesmyn Ward (1977–) is another American writer of African descent whose work forms a creative response to the classical tradition. Her novel Salvage the Bones won the National Book Award for fiction in 2011, and in 2012 an Alex Award from the American Library Association. One aspect of the novel’s plot turns on repeated reference to the myth of Medea, which the young, disadvantaged protagonist named Esch has learned from reading Edith Hamilton’s Mythology in school.47 As Hurricane Katrina moves on to the Mississippi coast and destroys a small, deeply impoverished African American town named Bois Sauvage, Esch struggles to make sense of the grim world surrounding her. Ward’s many references to Medea were purposeful, a point made clear by comments she made in an interview published in the Paris Review Daily:

It infuriates me that the work of white American writers can be universal and lay claim to classic texts, while black and female authors are ghetto-ized as ‘other’. I wanted to align Esch with that classic text, with the universal figure of Medea, the antihero, to claim that tradition as part of my Western literary heritage.48

On the academic side of things, another woman whose classical education informed her later achievements is Helen Maria Chesnutt (1880–1969 [FIG. 9.1]). Born in December of 1880 in Fayetteville, North Carolina, she was the second daughter of acclaimed African American novelist Charles

Chesnutt (1858–1932), and is known today mainly for the biography she wrote about her father, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt: Pioneer of the Color Line* (1952). Her parents were of mixed race. They moved to Cleveland in 1883, where she attended primary school. She and her elder sister Ethel attended Central High School, Cleveland’s leading high school. Both girls took the classical course. Helen graduated in June of 1897, and followed her sister to Smith College where Ethel had matriculated three months earlier.

Documents from Smith College’s archives show us that Helen and Ethel each took four years of Latin and one of Greek. Helen took upper level courses in French and Italian as well. Their stay at Smith was not without trouble, however. A diary notation dated 9 January 1899 and written by Professor Mary Augusta Jordan (1855–1941), which was recently located by Nanci Young, Chief Archivist at Smith College, tells us that all was not well.49 Jordan was one of Smith’s leading English professors and did not hesitate to voice her opinion. ‘Then I had a sad interview with the younger Miss Chesnutt. They are experiencing the color line in a place where they ought to be secure. I appealed to the President [Laurenus Clark Seelye (1837–1924)] who proposes to take a hand himself.’ The outcome is not known, for there is no mention of this incident in Seelye’s papers.

What is known is that Helen and Ethel had four different residences during their years at Smith. About this Nanci Young notes: ‘While boarding students off campus was not unusual at this time… I do think that it is unusual to have students reside in four different places over the four years. Whether the “colorline” the Chesnutts [were] was experiencing was within the Smith community or the town community, I am afraid I can’t determine.’ Letters home reveal that the girls were concerned with social activities. Helen’s father, an autodidact who had spent much time in his youth teaching himself Latin and some Greek, jestingly told Helen, in a letter dated 28 February 1898, ‘It pains me to learn that you haven’t time to learn how to skee. I haven’t the faintest idea of what skeeing is, but it is a keen disappointment to me that you don’t learn everything in the curriculum. Can’t you take up skeeing in your second or third year? Is it harder or easier than Latin?’50

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49 Nanci Young, Private communication (16 December 2003).
50 Chesnutt (1952) 26, 30, 90.
Ethel graduated in 1901, and Helen received her bachelor’s degree in 1902. After a brief period teaching in Baltimore she returned home and joined the faculty at Central High School as a Latin teacher. Central High School was not only Cleveland’s oldest school, but it was also the first free public high school west of the Allegheny Mountains. College preparatory work was its focus. In 1918, the school had four full-time Latin teachers. Some of its students achieved fame: John D. Rockefeller (1839–1937), who left before graduating, is one; the jazz poet Langston Hughes (1902–1967), who studied Latin with Chesnutt, is another. Her younger sister, Dorothy K. Chesnutt Slade (1891–1954), also studied classical and modern languages, but did this at the Western Reserve University in Cleveland. A photograph owned by the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland shows her dressed as the Greek goddess Themis in May 1911.51

In the summer of 1921, Helen taught Latin at the Foreign Language School at Western Reserve University. Then she entered the graduate school of Arts and Sciences at Columbia University. On 28 October 1925, she graduated with an MA in Latin. She was forty-five years old. In 1925, Helen published an article in the School Review entitled ‘The Story of the Fasces at Central High School’. In it she described her students’ interest in the fasces on the American dime, and how her students drafted a letter on the chalkboard to send to Adolph A. Weinman (1870–1952), the coin’s designer. They were delighted when he replied. Helen wrote: ‘Then the Olympian Club... composed of eleventh and twelfth grade Latin students... acquired a romantic and thrilling interest in the beauty and significance of the fasces [and] decided to adopt it for its symbol.’ With some parents’ help, the students made a life-size model of the fasces and put it up on a classroom wall. They decided that new initiates to the Olympian Club would have to wear pins of fasces, in miniature, and that they would make them out of twine, gold-coloured safety pins, and twigs. These little pins and the club were wildly popular, and Helen noted that ‘one little boy from the junior high school came in to ask: How long does a fellow have to take Latin before he can wear one of those things?’ Helen’s principal suggested that the club make 200 of the pins to ‘send as souvenirs to the members of the Ohio Latin Conference which was soon to meet at Oberlin’. At the end of two weeks of hard work, Helen said

51 Charles W. Chesnutt Collection, MS 3370, Container 2, Folder 6, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.
'200 little fasces had been made. They were tagged with ribbon that said “Compliments of the Olympian Club, Central High School” and packed into a five-pound candy box for shipment to Oberlin.'

In 1932, she co-authored with Martha Olivenbaum and Nellie Price Rosebaugh a beginning Latin textbook titled *The Road to Latin*, published by the John C. Winston Company. The book was a success. It received favourable reviews, and was published again in 1938, 1945, and 1949. In 1933 a workbook was issued and in 1940 she and her co-authors published a fifty-page pamphlet, *The Cleveland Plan for the Teaching of Languages with Special Reference to Latin*. This book is just one of the many pieces of evidence which prove that the study of Greek and Latin by women of African descent in the United States has a rich, even though heretofore little known history tradition. Amongst black classicists of both sexes, in terms of textbook design, publication, and pedagogy alone we can point out a tradition running from William Sanders Scarborough’s 1881 *First Lessons in Greek* to Chesnutt’s 1932 *Road to Latin*.

Although conditions were not easy for men like Scarborough, for women both black and white, social doctrines of the day prescribed very strict standards of conduct which were intended to keep their sexual and social behaviours in check and put pressure on their freedom to enjoy fulfilled private lives. Female teachers in many parts of the US could not marry, smoke, ride in cars, wear bright colours, dye their hair, or wear dresses shorter than two inches above their ankles. Of the nine black women mentioned in this essay, four married (Taylor twice, Cooper once, Brooks once, and Brown who had one divorce and one annulment) and three remained single. Lorde, from the mid-twentieth century, was a self-declared lesbian and the verdict is out on Ward, who is a twenty-first century writer. Of the three white teachers, Dickey and Morgan remained single while Scarborough, a teenage divorcée, later married across the colour line. Of the seven black women teachers, only three married and of the three white teachers only one. Perhaps the most poignant statistic is that only three women out of the entire group of eleven had children (Taylor, Brooks, and Scarborough).

This self-selected elite was also a marginalized minority. Anna Julia Cooper, who declared women’s conditions to be ‘one and universal’, at

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52 Chesnutt (1925).
53 White (1933) and Mitchell (1936).
54 Johnson (2013) 81.
one point described her vocation as ‘the education of neglected people’.\textsuperscript{55} She viewed learning as a means of true liberation and wanted women to take an active role in freeing themselves, and others, from racism and sexism in order to realize their potential. She felt that all avenues of social and intellectual life were under the auspices of women. But Dr Cooper and the other women discussed in this essay did not broadly have, to use words expressed by the acclaimed classical scholar Jacqueline de Romilly (1913–2010) in 2007, ‘the luck of being part of a generation where women could get up on the podium for the first time, where the gates opened at last’.\textsuperscript{56} But they would have well understood Dr Romilly’s lifelong belief that the ancient languages were not only the basis for contemporary ideas, such as democracy, but also essential to understanding what it means to be human. Allied in this common cause they would no doubt concur with Dr Romilly’s own call to arms: ‘Je n’abandonne pas mon combat.’\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{55} Lemert and Bhan (1998) 236.
10

Grace Harriet Macurdy (1866–1946)

Redefining the Classical Scholar

Barbara F. McManus

Standing at the podium of the lecture theatre in King’s College London on 25 May 1925, Grace Macurdy looked out over the audience. She was satisfied to see the large, diverse crowd who had come to hear her speak, although she suspected that the novelty of a woman lecturer was the primary attraction for many. She was very pleased to see in the front row two classicists whom she counted among her good friends, the distinguished Gilbert Murray, Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford, and J.A.K. Thomson, recently appointed Chair of Classics at King’s College, to whom she owed the invitation to speak this evening. She was sure of her topic and her ability to catch and hold the interest of the audience; she knew she would not let down her friend or herself. The

For more information about Grace Macurdy, see McManus (2009a). The only other published accounts of Macurdy’s life and work—Pounder (1999), Pomeroy (1994), and Erck (1971)—are very brief biographical sketches.

Records indicate that Grace Macurdy was the first and only woman to deliver such a public lecture in Classics at King’s College before at least 1946; her name appears among such distinguished scholars as Gilbert Murray, Arnold Toynbee, H.J. Rose, Cyril Bailey, and E.R. Dodds (K/LEC5 Public Lecture Lists, Complete Series from 1924 to 1955 UL, KCL, & KCW, King’s College, London Archives).

For more information on Gilbert Murray (1866–1957), a well-known humanistic scholar, translator of Greek plays, man of letters, and active participant in the League of Nations, see Stray (2004).

James Alexander Kerr Thomson (1879–1959), always known as J.A.K., published numerous books and articles on classical topics, but there is very little information about his life in print; see McManus (2007) and (2009b).
audience may have come to hear ‘a woman’, but they would leave remembering Grace Harriet Macurdy [FIG. 10.1].

In his introduction, Thomson described her scholarly background and her current position as Professor of Greek and Head of the Greek Department at Vassar College. He praised her new book on *Troy and Paeonia* as ‘a work of first-rate importance, full of curious and varied learning. There is in my belief hardly anyone at all who has contributed more to produce a new orientation of the whole question of pre-historic Greece.’ He noted that her subject for that evening’s lecture, ‘Great Macedonian Women’, marked a new direction in her scholarship, one that promised ‘a really important contribution to history’. As the audience would hear, ‘her statements of fact are exactly documented; her opinions are necessarily and delightfully her own’.5

5 The quoted statements of Thomson are very slightly adapted from a draft of his December 1923 letter to Columbia University Press in support of the publication of
In her lecture, Macurdy carefully unravelled the complex history and relationships of women in the royal houses of ancient Macedonia. She presented a strong and convincing argument that Macedonian queens who played an active role in politics did so because of their own characters and personalities, rather than because of a Macedonian tradition that conferred power on women. She revealed how stereotypes about women could cloud scholars’ reading of the ancient evidence; for example, calling Olympias ‘the Jezebel of a Queen’, ascribed to her a sexual license that was totally unsupported by the ancient sources. Macurdy did not diminish the cruelties and murders perpetrated by Olympias but put them into a new context by arguing that she shared many qualities with her husband Philip II and her son Alexander the Great. As soldiers and conquerors, however, they had an outlet for their genius and desire for power, while she, as a woman, had a much more confined theatre of operations, where her ‘weapons had chiefly to be intrigue, slander, and bursts of passion’. As she spoke, Macurdy was pleased to see that she was leading the thoughts of her audience in a new direction, and she included humorous anecdotes to hold their interest, such as Olympias’s witty rejoinder to her son’s claim that Zeus was his father: ‘Will Alexander never stop getting me into trouble with Hera!’

Exhilarated by the applause and compliments she received after the lecture, Macurdy reflected that this was a defining moment in her 58 years. During her study at the Harvard Annex, she had determined to win international recognition as a classical scholar, and this lecture marked her first experience of such recognition. Heady and sweet as this appreciation was, she realized that her experience at Vassar had expanded her life’s goal. She wanted to make a scholarly contribution as a woman, to be perceived as a woman who was a full, not marginal, member of the scholarly fraternity. This King’s College lecture was her first step toward achieving this goal. She had come of age at a time when women in America were just beginning to find opportunities for professional academic careers; now, she would demonstrate her own individuality as ‘a woman and a scholar’ by focusing her scholarship on ancient women.

_Troy and Paonia_ (GM 175.252–3). The abbreviation GM will be used throughout to refer to MSS. Gilbert Murray, Bodleian Library, Oxford University, with box and folio number.

6 Macurdy (1932), Ch. 1 ‘Queenship in Macedonia’, 13–76.
Grace Harriet Macurdy was a woman of surprising contrasts. The audience in King’s College lecture theatre saw a woman of unprepossessing appearance whose grey hair was unfashionably piled on top of her head, yet her vitality and compelling presence made them attend to her words and respond to the force of her arguments. Her students at Vassar paid tribute to these contrasts by affectionately dubbing her ‘the Drunken Duchess’, although everyone on campus knew that she was a teetotaller. There was something regal in her bearing and presence, yet she was famous for her infectious humour and effervescent joie de vivre. She often wore large hats, jewellery, and dresses made of beautiful fabrics, yet her clothing was never in fashion and her appearance was always slightly dishevelled, with hat or skirt askew and abundant hair forever escaping from the pins that vainly struggled to keep it in place. Later in her career this nickname morphed into ‘the Mad Queen’, a sobriquet explained by one of her successors in the Greek Department: ‘Often outspoken and sometimes a little outrageous, Miss Macurdy dearly loved and was loved dearly by most of Vassar. The students called her “the Mad Queen,” because of her great mass of hair and her fondness for fantastic hats.’

These affectionate nicknames testify to the many anomalies in Grace Macurdy’s life. Like most academic women of her era, she remained single all her life, but she nevertheless experienced a kind of motherhood and also a sort of marriage. She was a pioneering feminist scholar, yet her career was almost destroyed by another feminist pioneer who waged a twelve-year campaign to have Grace Macurdy dismissed from Vassar. She experienced a severe hearing loss in her early fifties, yet her years of almost total deafness were rich with international friendships, adventurous travel, and productive teaching and scholarship. Her academic training was in philology and literary studies, yet her major contributions to scholarship were in the field of history. Finally, despite the poverty of her immediate family and the fact that she was the first member of her extended family for several generations to earn a college degree, she forged a successful academic career in an era when professors, female as well as male, came from cultured families of the middle and upper.

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8 Erck (1971) 481.
classes. The woman who inspired such intriguing nicknames as the Drunken Duchess and the Mad Queen was, in actuality, neither drunk nor mad, but she was fascinating, a woman of contrasts who became one of the leading classical scholars of her generation and arguably the first woman to achieve international recognition as a professional classicist. By exploiting opportunities offered in the American classical community while drawing inspiration and support from British classicists, Macurdy expanded the definition of classical scholar to include a woman of working-class background who spoke authoritatively in her own voice and composed her most enduring work on the lives of ancient women.

The first of many contrasts in Grace Macurdy’s life can be found in her unusual family background. Her ancestors had deep roots in the New World; she and her siblings were descended from eight of the twenty-two Mayflower passengers who left offspring, including Governor William Bradford. However, four of her more immediate ancestors were British Loyalists, who had lost everything when they fled the American colonies and had to start over in the wilderness of New Brunswick, Canada. Her maternal grandfather was a Baptist minister; her paternal grandfather, a farmer. Her parents, Rebecca Thomson and Simon Angus McCurdy, had little education beyond basic reading and writing. In 1865, when Angus could no longer find work as a carpenter in St. Andrews (New Brunswick), he gathered his meagre belongs and crossed the St. Croix River with his parents, his wife, and his four children to the tiny town of Robbinston, Maine. They came without benefit of any official papers; at that time the border between the United States and Canada was more fluid and there were few immigration controls. When Grace was born in Robbinston on 12 September 1866, she was the first member of her family with United States citizenship. Life in Robbinston was difficult; the shipbuilding industry had decreased precipitously, and Angus had to seek work in Massachusetts, leaving Rebecca and her mother-in-law Harriet to manage five rambunctious young children in a tiny rented cottage for long stretches of time.9

In 1870, the McCurdy family made the difficult journey to Watertown, Massachusetts, where three more children were born, though the last

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9 There is no published information on Macurdy’s early life; my forthcoming full-length biography, The Drunken Duchess of Vassar: Grace Harriet Macurdy, Pioneering Feminist Classical Scholar (Ohio State University Press, 2017) presents a much more detailed account.
died in infancy. Watertown was a rough factory town, with a military arsenal and huge stockyards. A large immigrant Irish population settled in Watertown to work in the numerous factories, leading indirectly to a change in the spelling of the family’s surname from McCurdy to Macurdy: ‘Uncle Warren . . . was so afraid of being taken for Irish that he changed the spelling of our name . . . . It was very foolish of him and he made my poor father follow him.’ The family lived hand to mouth on Angus’s earnings as a freelance carpenter; according to the tax records, Angus never owned real estate or had a taxable personal estate. Given her gender and social and economic situation, it is truly remarkable that Grace Macurdy was able to obtain a college education, especially in Classics. She happened to be in the right place at precisely the right time, and she had the talent and determination to take advantage of this favourable convergence of circumstances. Because of its proximity to Boston and Cambridge, Watertown had an affluent, cultured minority who promoted the cause of education; accordingly, the state-funded public high school offered not only a three-year course, but also a four-year college preparatory course whose curriculum was geared to the Harvard entrance requirements. Only a small percentage of students, particularly boys, remained in school long enough to complete even the three-year course, but the high school stubbornly continued its four-year course and even offered an additional year of intensive tutorials provided by the teachers to prepare students for the college entrance examinations. Furthermore, there was a burgeoning interest in the higher education of women in Massachusetts at this time; Harvard College began offering the Harvard Examinations for Women in 1874 and the ‘Harvard Annex’, a private programme offering women the equivalent of collegiate instruction by Harvard professors, was established in 1879, the year Grace Macurdy entered high school.

10 Grace Macurdy to her nephew Ernest Macurdy, 24 September 1943, private collection of June Macurdy Landin.
11 Watertown Assessors (1898–1905).
12 Dwelley (1884) 14–17. In 1884, for example, the school superintendent noted that less than a fourth of the graduates of the grammar school entered the high school, and even fewer of these graduated. When Grace Macurdy graduated in 1883, there were only ten graduates of the college preparatory course, and eight of these were females.
13 The programme was officially named the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women after 1882 and was chartered as Radcliffe College in 1894; for further details on the founding of this college, see Schwager (1982).
By this time three of Grace’s older siblings, two sisters and a brother, had completed the three-year high school course and immediately begun working in order to contribute to the family finances. Due primarily to her mother’s influence plus what can only be described as her own passion for learning, Grace was allowed to complete the four-year course and to take advantage of the additional year of concentrated study provided by the high school, an indispensable benefit since her family would never have been able to pay for private tutoring. Grace passed the three-day Harvard examinations in 1884 without conditions of any kind, earning honours in Classics, and was admitted to the Harvard Annex. For the Macurdy family, the $200 annual tuition fee was a very steep investment to make in their youngest daughter, and it is difficult to know how they afforded it. At this time the Annex had no official scholarship programme, but occasionally wealthy Massachusetts women privately paid the fees for promising young women who would otherwise be unable to attend the Annex, and this may have been the case for Macurdy, though there are no extant records to prove it.14

Unlike her more prosperous classmates, who either lived or boarded with families in Cambridge, Macurdy commuted from Watertown on a horse-drawn trolley, an uncomfortable journey of approximately an hour each way. She studied intensively, with little time for any other activities, and surpassed all her classmates in academic honours, winning highest second-year honours in Classics in 1887 and graduating with final honours in Classics in 1888.

Macurdy had developed a different sort of ambition from that of most of the women at the Annex, who were planning to teach or were already teaching in the schools; she was determined to win recognition as a classical scholar with a professional career like her Harvard mentors. Although she had no female role models for this ambition, she was apparently not plagued with the kind of self-doubt and lack of self-confidence that afflicted classmates like Annie Ware Winsor Allen, who relinquished her early ambition to pursue graduate study at Bryn Mawr and become an English professor; instead she taught in secondary

14 This tuition was higher than that of Harvard at $150, Smith and Vassar at $100, or Wellesley at $60; Schwager (1982) 244. Of the seventeen candidates accepted for admission to the Annex’s full four-year programme in 1884 based on their examination scores, only four actually enrolled, perhaps because of inability to pay the $200 tuition; Gilman (1885) 7.
school and ‘suffered intermittently from deep depressions and conflicts about her intellectual and professional ambitions and the role she was expected to fulfill as a woman’. 15 Ironically, Macurdy’s social background may have contributed to her resistance to this kind of self-doubt and ambivalence, since she had never experienced a genteel life. She grew up in a family waging an unremitting struggle for economic survival; through hard work and tremendous determination, she was able to master the Harvard examinations and persuade her parents to allow her to attend college. She could not afford ambivalence; she had been given an advantage unavailable to her older siblings, and success was her only option. She aimed for the highest success, a professional academic career and recognition as a classical scholar. In Macurdy’s family, there were no separate spheres or pedestals for women; everyone pitched in, and the women worked as hard as the men. In high school, Macurdy had discovered her talent for languages and research, and she saw her male professors at the Annex as representatives of the scholarly life she intended to make her own. Their paternalism, benign neglect, or negative attitudes did not undermine her confidence that she could achieve this goal. 16 In fact, Macurdy was the first Annex graduate to earn a doctorate and the first to make a career as a college professor (Abby Leach had been a special student at the Annex and did not receive a degree certificate 17). Immediately after graduation, Macurdy took a job teaching Latin and Greek at the Cambridge School for Girls in order to begin contributing to the family income, but she continued to take graduate courses at the Annex. In 1893, at the age of twenty-seven, she achieved her dream of a college position when Abby Leach hired her as Instructor of Greek at Vassar College. Had Macurdy not graduated from the Annex, it is doubtful whether the class-conscious Leach would have chosen her, but Leach herself had strong connections with the Annex. She had

15 Schwager (1982) 282. Schwager (262–91) hypothesizes that the lofty reputation of the university and of the Harvard professors, combined with their ambivalent attitudes toward the higher education of women, was responsible for the lack of self-confidence and absence of driving professional ambition in many of the Annex students.

16 See Heilbrun (2002) for a similar attitude.

17 Abby Leach (1855–1918) was hired as Teacher of Latin and Greek at Vassar in 1883; in 1885 Vassar conferred on her the degrees of BA and MA by examination, based on the work she had done at the Harvard Annex. She founded Vassar’s Department of Greek in 1889 and served as its head until her death. For more information, see Zwart (1971), Briggs (1996–7), and Halporn (1999).
persuaded the famous Greek and Latin professors at Harvard to give her paid private instruction right at the time that Arthur Gilman and others were attempting to create the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women in Cambridge, and Leach’s success with these professors helped to convince them to agree to Gilman’s proposal. Thus Abby Leach was celebrated as ‘the nucleus of Radcliffe’, and this became a very important part of her professional identity.\footnote{Briggs (undated), 2–3.}

Leach assigned her new instructor all the lower-level Greek courses, reserving the advanced electives and graduate courses for herself; she stated this as a policy in her departmental report for 1894: ‘I think that fourteen hours is a fair requirement [for a teacher]... If teachers are given elective work of an advanced grade, dissatisfaction is likely to ensue. The distinction in title should carry with it distinction in the line of work.’\footnote{VC Archives 3.53. The abbreviation VC will be used throughout to refer to Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries, with collection name, box, and folder number (if applicable).} Macurdy taught fourteen or fifteen credits per semester throughout her first six years, while adapting to Vassar’s diverse student body by tempering her ‘Boston intellectuality’, as described by one of her early students.\footnote{Adelaide Claflin ‘97 to her mother, 19 May 1895, VC Student Materials.} Macurdy was used to hard work and never complained about this heavy teaching load, but she also never relinquished her scholarly aspirations. In 1899 she applied for and won a fellowship for foreign study from the Woman’s Education Association of Boston and spent a year studying at the University of Berlin, where the most famous Greek scholar of the time, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, taught along with many other distinguished classicists; Macurdy was the only woman attending Greek literature courses at the time.\footnote{Macurdy (1900), 138.} When she returned to Vassar in the autumn of 1900, she was rehired as Instructor of Greek, but she also enrolled in the doctoral programme in Greek at Columbia University, commuting to classes in New York by train while still teaching a full schedule of courses at Vassar. She completed all her courses, examinations, and dissertation in two years, receiving her PhD in June 1903, the third woman, and the first American woman, to receive a PhD in Classics at Columbia. At 127 printed pages, her dissertation, \textit{The Chronology of the Extant Plays of Euripides}, was considerably
longer than most Classics dissertations of the time.\textsuperscript{22} Macurdy was now one of a small number of women who had earned the highest academic credential, and she was immediately promoted to Associate Professor of Greek at Vassar. She was also hired to teach undergraduate and graduate Greek courses in the summer session of Columbia University, making her the first woman to teach in Columbia’s academic programme.

Paradoxically, these scholarly achievements precipitated a major crisis for Macurdy, one that threatened to derail her career before it was truly launched, for Abby Leach began a relentless campaign to oust Macurdy from Vassar. Leach’s hostility to Macurdy, which did not cease until her death in 1918, reveals how fissures could arise in the female solidarity promoted by the early feminist movement. Having once been lauded as a ‘first woman’, Leach perceived the academic success of her younger colleague as a threat to her own, which she inadvertently revealed when she wrote to the Vassar president that it was a mistake for Macurdy to earn a doctorate: ‘In fact the work is better suited to a younger teacher for it must be to a large extent supplementary. In a small department the work must have a homogeneity if the best results are to be obtained.’\textsuperscript{23}

Over the course of twelve years, Leach used every means in her power to dismiss Macurdy or to harass her after Macurdy received a permanent appointment to full professor in 1916—repeated petitions to the Vassar president and trustees to fire Macurdy, open criticism of Macurdy in classes, restriction of courses she would allow Macurdy to teach, blocking students from Macurdy’s classes, even writing letters criticizing Macurdy to Vassar alumnae and to Columbia professors.\textsuperscript{24}

From her youth, Abby Leach had always gone her own way and created her own rules. Although she could have attended one of the women’s colleges, she did not consider these good enough for her; she must be privately tutored by eminent Harvard professors. When she received disproportionate praise and fame for her independence and persistence, this solidified these traits to the extent that she could not break free of them later, when they became liabilities rather than assets. It is important to take these qualities into consideration when attempting to understand why a committed suffragist and strong advocate for women’s education,

\textsuperscript{22} Knapp (1934), Heidel (1907), and Macurdy (1905).
\textsuperscript{23} Abby Leach to James Monroe Taylor, 17 January 1908, VC Taylor Papers 8.33.
\textsuperscript{24} For more information, see McManus (2009a) 115–18.
a woman who boasted of opening doors for others, would try to slam one of those doors in the face of a younger woman scholar. What seems most remarkable about Leach’s attempt to remove Macurdy—that she went to such lengths and continued for so long despite clear evidence that she could not succeed—can be understood in this context. Having been praised so highly for her persistence, Leach literally could not comprehend that she would not prevail if she just kept on trying. Every defeat only escalated her attempts, so that her behaviour became increasingly unprofessional and alienated most of her friends in the faculty. Although she certainly caused Macurdy a great deal of anxiety and distress, Leach ultimately injured herself the most.

During the years when her faculty position at Vassar was under attack, Macurdy developed her scholarship with fierce determination, publishing twenty-one scholarly articles and six reviews from 1907 to 1918. She assiduously sent offprints of her work to well-known male scholars in the United States and Britain. A copy of her dissertation sent to Gilbert Murray began a correspondence that blossomed into friendship when she met him during his American lecture tour in 1907. Murray’s approbation and support were extremely important to Macurdy during this difficult time in her life, not only as concrete evidence against Leach’s charges (she used two of his letters to demonstrate her scholarly reputation), but also as psychological validation for Macurdy herself. She visited him in England, and her many letters (thirty-six during these twelve years) reveal both dependency and hero-worship. The strength of these emotions made her uneasy, as revealed in many letters like the

25 One of Leach’s students, Sarah Morris (Vassar BA 1906, MA 1908), described her as ‘an entirely different character’ from Grace Macurdy: ‘Miss Leach had been the first student at the Harvard Annex, which later developed into Radcliffe College, and she never let anyone forget it! [in a pretentious voice] “I have opened doors, and they have not been shut behind me.” It’s too bad when somebody might have developed into a good teacher but was so absorbed in herself and what happened to her’ (Oral interview by Elizabeth Daniels, taped 23 October 1980, VC Audio Tapes).

26 Leach’s biographers seriously downplay this part of her life. Briggs calls it ‘the single, if minor, blemish of Leach’s life and career’; Briggs (1996–7) 105. Halporn relegates the whole conflict to a footnote; although he notes Leach’s ‘strong personal animus’ toward Macurdy, he lists her academic charges against Macurdy as though they were true; Halporn (1999) 130, n.6. Zwart chooses to minimize the conflict by calling it an ‘inability to get along’, though she acknowledges that Leach ‘could be distressingly inflexible’; Zwart (1971) 380.

27 Grace Macurdy’s correspondence with Gilbert Murray is available at Oxford’s Bodleian Library, MSS. Gilbert Murray 157.1–194.
following, written to thank Murray for sending her a copy of his book *The Four Stages of Greek Religion*:

If I say what I think of it, it sounds so like ‘Schwärmerei’ when written down in my poor words. But I get an understanding of things from you unlike anything else....I am ashamed of emphasizing always what your work is to me in a religious way. I can think of no other name for it, but of course I do not mean “religious” but the thing that takes the place of it when all religion goes.

In calling her attitude toward Murray’s work ‘religious’, Macurdy was also acknowledging the development of her own position on religion. Although she had been raised as a strict immersionist Baptist, Macurdy’s classical studies, plus her admiration for Murray, had led her to eschew organized religion in favour of liberal progressivism; as she wrote in a letter to Murray, ‘It seems dreadful that people who have studied and thought can still believe in bartering with God.’ During World War I, however, her anxiety made her nostalgic for the consolation of a religion in which she could no longer believe: ‘It would be a comfort to me to be able to use the terminology of my childhood and say I pray for you. Whatever is the equivalent of that I do. I wish always that you and your family and your country may be safe.’

Although Macurdy viewed Murray as the ideal classical scholar, his influence on her scholarly development was indirect, through Jane Ellen Harrison, whom Macurdy initially adopted as a role model in part because of Harrison’s close association with Murray. Harrison did not have a professional academic position, but she was a woman who had earned distinction in some quarters as a creative and innovative thinker and scholar. Under her influence, Macurdy began in 1912 researching and publishing work on early Greek myth and religion, etymology of names, and ethnology. This phase of her work culminated in her book *Troy and Paeonia* (1925), which she dedicated to Harrison, much to the latter’s delight.

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30 5 November 1914, GM 157.87–90.
31 Jane Ellen Harrison (1850–1928) published several influential, though controversial, books on the development of Greek religion and was a leading figure among the group known today as the ‘Cambridge ritualists’; she studied at Newnham College and for a time held a research fellowship there. See Beard (2000), Robinson (2002), and Lloyd-Jones (2004).
32 For more information, see McManus (2009a) 118–21.
After Leach’s death Macurdy’s letters to Murray lessened in number and changed in tone as she came into her own at Vassar. As head of the Greek department, she formed a very effective coalition with the Latin faculty, mentored younger colleagues, increased course enrolments, strengthened the offerings in both language and civilization courses, and continued her prodigious schedule of scholarly publications. However, this freedom from the animosity of Abby Leach, which Macurdy later described to Vassar president Henry Noble MacCracken as a ‘liberation of my work and of my spirit’, coincided with another daunting obstacle, a severe hearing loss that began in 1919 and progressed rapidly until Macurdy was, for all practical purposes, deaf by her mid-fifties. Although this disability might have posed a major impediment to her effectiveness as a teacher, lecturer, international traveller, and member of professional committees, she never allowed it to do so. Instead, without any fuss or fanfare, she utilized every available device to aid her hearing no matter how inadequate it was or how awkward it might appear, and she also learned to lip-read. Just as she never let poverty or social disadvantages stop her, Macurdy would not succumb to self-pity because she could no longer hear nor to vanity because some might call her ‘old Miss Macurdy with her ear trumpet’.

One of the most surprising contrasts in Macurdy’s life was the way she managed the delicate balancing act between personal and professional life required of women. At the same time as she began coping with her loss of hearing, Macurdy became the head of an unconventional family. When her widowed sister Edith Skinner died in 1918, Macurdy brought Edith’s three orphaned children to live with her at Vassar. The eldest, Theodosia, was 22, but Richard at 18 and Bradford at 12 were still minors, so Macurdy became their legal guardian. She suddenly had a household to run, something she had never before done, since she had lived with her parents and then in one of the Vassar dormitories. She

33 26 October 1936, VC MacCracken Papers 43.46.
34 Mary McCarthy tells an amusing story about Vassar president MacCracken’s role as Theseus in Vassar’s 1931 Greek production of Hippolytus that illustrates how well Macurdy handled her hearing loss: ‘Prexy forgot his lines. But he was a born actor, full of resource: in his head he hastily translated "to be or not to be," which was about the right length, into Greek, spoke the resulting lines, and nobody noticed a thing. Except old Miss MacCurdy [sic], whose ear trumpet could not be fooled by Hamlet, in Greek or English. She did not let on till after the performance was over and Prexy was receiving congratulations. Then she added her own’; McCarthy (1987) 225.
assumed this responsibility cheerfully, commenting to President MacCracken that ‘she had prayed for a family when she was a girl, and the Lord had certainly responded!’ In fact, one former student claimed that Macurdy believed that ‘every woman, married or not, should be allowed one child, no questions asked.’ The Vassar students promptly dubbed Bradford ‘the Duchess’s Indiscretion’ and made him a college pet, but all the Skinners were well known on the campus. Macurdy cared for her nephews and niece as though they had been her biological offspring, always referring to them as ‘my children’, and they greatly enriched—but also complicated—her life.

Macurdy’s unorthodox family life was not limited to her single motherhood, however; she also became part of an unconventional couple. In 1912, Macurdy had begun corresponding with J.A.K. Thomson at the behest of Gilbert Murray, and she brought him to speak at Vassar in 1920, during his term as a visiting lecturer at Harvard. Thomson later wrote to Murray that Grace Macurdy was ‘the most living person’ he had met in America. At the age of 55, Macurdy developed a close friendship with the 42-year-old Thomson when he spent a year teaching at Bryn Mawr College in 1921–22. When Macurdy began her sabbatical year in 1922, she sailed from Montreal so she could first visit Thomson, who had returned to his native Scotland, and from 1924 to 1938 she rented a flat right next to his during her annual summers and two subsequent years in London (leaving Bradford at her home in Poughkeepsie under the care of his older sister until he came of age). She and Thomson frequently travelled together throughout Europe, jointly collected Greek vases and other artefacts, attended social functions together, were accepted by their friends as a couple, and clearly shared a mutually satisfying personal

36 Interview with Mrs Allardyce; Zwart (1969).
38 26 August 1921, GM 172.21–2.
39 An odd illustration of the close association of Macurdy and Thomson in the minds of their friends appears in a letter of Peter Giles, Master of Emmanuel College in Cambridge, to Macurdy: ‘Your young relative Norman Meldrum has settled down satisfactorily, I think. He was here on Sunday to lunch; he was, as you told my wife, he would be, rather shy; but he will no doubt get over that’ (31 March 1929, VC Biography Files, Macurdy 2). Norman Meldrum was Thomson’s nephew, no relation to Macurdy.
relationship, although one that was probably not sexual. When they were apart, Macurdy and Thomson wrote many letters to each other, but none of their correspondence has survived. Perhaps Macurdy herself, or her executor, Theodosia, destroyed their letters. In the beginning of 1946, Macurdy and Thomson had arranged to loan their collection of Greek artefacts to Oxford’s Ashmolean Museum, and after Macurdy died later that year, Thomson offered them to the museum as a permanent gift, with Vassar receiving any that the Ashmolean did not want. Their joint collection, which he had kept and displayed in his flat, was a symbol of their togetherness, and now that she was gone he did not want to keep it. As he wrote to D.B. Harden, Keeper of the Department of Antiquities, “The only thing I really care about is that her name should attach to the gift.”

40 With Thomson, Macurdy forged an egalitarian intellectual partnership that promoted the confidence and independence of both individuals, something neither could achieve with the Olympian Gilbert Murray, however supportive he undoubtedly was. At one point they even began writing a book together, ‘A Chapter in the History of Pity’, a subject that Macurdy eventually incorporated in her book *The Quality of Mercy* (1940). Ironically, this relationship with a male scholar ultimately helped Macurdy find her own voice as a woman scholar. Harrison’s model was not sufficient; Harrison was writing ‘as a woman’ to the extent that she used a more enthusiastic, affective voice than was typical of scholarship, but she did not write about women, and that affective voice tended to alienate many traditional scholars.42 Harrison had won a place on the periphery of the scholarly community, but Macurdy was seeking a place at the centre. Moreover, having marched for women’s suffrage and believing fervently in education’s capacity to empower women, Macurdy wanted this scholarly recognition to include explicit acknowledgement of her womanhood. At Harvard and Berlin, Macurdy had been trained as a careful and exacting philologist, and she was determined to demonstrate that she could effectively utilize these

40 30 May 1947, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford University. For more information about the relationship between Macurdy and Thomson, including a comparison to that of Jane Ellen Harrison and Francis Cornford, see McManus (2009a) 121–4.
41 Grace Macurdy to Henry Noble MacCracken, 7 October 1926, VC MacCracken Papers 32.9.
42 For more information, see Arlen (1996) and Robinson (2002) 169–70 and 227–32.
skills without suppressing or downplaying her gender. Thomson understood and supported this ambition, as indicated by his invitation to lecture in King’s College on Macedonian women and by his retirement tribute for Macurdy, emphasizing her status as a woman scholar who has achieved parity with males: ‘I think that on this side of the ocean it is the general impression that Miss Macurdy is the first American woman to meet the Greek scholars of Europe and America on something like equal terms.’ By comparison, Murray’s tribute praised Macurdy as a ‘true scholar’ but made no mention of her distinction as a woman.

Macurdy came to realize that there were no models for what she wanted to achieve; she would have to create her own path, one that no classical scholar, male or female, had trodden before. To achieve this goal she began to develop a new approach to the study of ancient women. On her first sabbatical in England, Macurdy’s ire had been aroused by an article in the Pall Mall Gazette by Charlotte Cowdroy, anti-feminist headmistress of the Crouch End High School for Girls. Cowdroy cited the scandalous case of Edith Thompson, hanged for inciting her young lover to murder her husband, as proof that women should give up paid employment after marrying. In an anonymous reply, ‘Shall the Married Woman Work?’ (1923), Macurdy ignored the sensational case and published a judicious rebuttal of Cowdroy’s position about employment, complete with references to ancient Greek writers. The core argument of this article foreshadowed an essential feature of Macurdy’s new approach to women:

This is all very primitive, treating women as a species and not as individuals. It is very notable in the, as a whole anti-feminist, Greek literature that the expression “race” or “tribe” of women begins to be used very early. I have yet to see the same expression applied to men in that literature.

Modern studies of ancient women had been marred by the same bias as the ancient Greeks, treating women as a species rather than as individuals.

43 Thompson (1937).
44 Murray (1937); see also McManus (2009a) 127–8.
45 Cowdroy (1923). Cowdroy’s article, published on the day of Thompson’s hanging, argued that Edith Thompson was ‘an abnormal woman’ because she worked outside the home, earning more money than her husband, and she did not want children. I am grateful to Patricia Auspos for locating this article.
46 Macurdy (1923). Here the author of the previous article is called ‘Charlotte Cowdray’.
affected by differences of socioeconomic class, culture, and time period. Macurdy chose to counter this bias by studying the lives of individual women in a context where there was enough evidence to permit meticulous research—ancient monarchies.

Macurdy published two books, *Hellenistic Queens* (1932) and *Vassal-Queens* (1937), and many related articles on women in the Macedonian, Seleucid, and Ptolemaic monarchies and in the later client-kingdoms under Rome. In these works Macurdy brought to bear all the traditional scholarly methods—objective tone, comprehensive research, copious citation of primary and secondary sources—to challenge the consensus of previous scholars on ancient queens. Through a careful study of each queen as an individual, she demonstrated the falsity of generalizations about ‘woman-power’ or ‘wicked queens’. Although she never explicitly mentioned her own sex, it was abundantly clear that Macurdy was speaking as a woman scholar seeking to cut through stereotypes:

I have not attempted to give a romantic reconstruction of the lives of any of the queens, but have stated the chief facts that have been preserved about each of them… I have confined myself to the matters which involve the lives and characters of the queens and their political positions. In the Introduction I have stated at some length the points on which I differ from prevailing views.47

In studying the lives of ancient women, Macurdy recognized the need to move beyond the confines of traditional, text-based scholarship, so she employed many types of material evidence, including coins, sculpture, vases, inscriptions, and papyri. She noted the biases of ancient primary sources and weighed their evidence accordingly. She emphasized the importance of discussing these ancient women in the context of the specific social conventions of their culture and time period, remarking, for example, that modern concepts of humility and altruism ‘would have seemed imbecility’ to the Hellenistic rulers.48 In these methods, Macurdy anticipated many features of later feminist scholarship. Although Macurdy turned to other topics in the 1940s, she continued to write articles whose subjects reflected her interest in women, challenging stereotypes and negative attitudes about women with increasing authority.49

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47 Macurdy (1932) x.
48 Macurdy (1932) 234; for more information, see McManus (2009a) 124–7.
49 Macurdy (1942), (1944a), and (1944b).
Unlike Abby Leach, Grace Macurdy put her feminist convictions into practice, serving as a friend, mentor, and strong supporter of all her younger colleagues. She privately interceded with President MacCracken on behalf of Elizabeth Hazelton Haight’s long-delayed promotion to full professor, not claiming that Haight was ‘distinguished in the line of pure research’, but making a masterful case for promotion on the basis of her teaching and extraordinary service.\(^\text{50}\) From the beginning, she recognized that Lily Ross Taylor was an exceptional scholar, and she fostered her career even after Taylor had left Vassar for Bryn Mawr.\(^\text{51}\) When Cornelia Coulter accepted a position at Mount Holyoke College, Macurdy privately asked Mount Holyoke’s president, Mary Woolley, to make sure that Coulter did not ‘burden herself so heavily that she will have no time for research and publication’.\(^\text{52}\) Macurdy never perceived the success of another as a diminishment of her own. As she wrote to MacCracken on behalf of another colleague, ‘I, “non ignara mali”, desire to say what I can in favor of the younger teachers and against any unjust use of power and influence’.\(^\text{53}\)

Grace Harriet Macurdy’s scholarly achievements were truly formidable, both in quality and quantity: five scholarly books, including four with university presses; fifty-seven scholarly articles in all the major American and British classical journals of her time; sixteen reviews of scholarly books; and several poems and articles in more popular venues. In her own lifetime, she had successfully broadened the definition of a classical scholar. Despite her working-class background and her deafness, she achieved international recognition as a scholar of Greek. Most significantly, she earned this distinction as ‘a woman and a scholar’ in such a way that neither side of the equation diminished the other. In the case of her early role model, Jane Ellen Harrison, gender was accentuated at the expense of recognition as a ‘sound scholar’, while the womanhood of Macurdy’s younger colleague Lily Ross Taylor was ignored in her achievement of scholarly status as an ‘honorary male’.\(^\text{54}\) Unfortunately,

\(^{50}\) 7 January 1922, VC MacCracken Papers 27.47.

\(^{51}\) In a letter to Ida Thallon Hill, Macurdy states that she has been helping Taylor with her research on Hellenistic ruler-cults (31 January 1929, Ida Thallon Hill Papers, box 2, folder 5, Blegen Library Archives, American School of Classical Studies at Athens).

\(^{52}\) Mary Woolley to Grace Macurdy, 15 March 1926, VC Autograph File Woolley.

\(^{53}\) 5 February 1937, VC MacCracken Papers 43.46.

however, Macurdy’s redefinition of the woman classical scholar, with all its contrasts and anomalies, did not survive her death. Taylor’s example, which fit so neatly—albeit brilliantly—into the traditional definition, eclipsed Macurdy’s model, and female classicists had to reinvent the woman scholar all over again in the 1960s and 1970s.

Appendix: Barbara F. McManus—a Biography

Barbara Frances Wismer McManus, an inspirational and transformational presence in classical studies, was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, on October 5, 1942. For four years, her remarkable life overlapped with that of Grace Harriet Macurdy, whose ground-breaking role as an American female classical scholar McManus explores in this essay. Although Barbara McManus’ birth postdates Macurdy’s by three-quarters of a century, and opportunities for women in American society expanded dramatically over the seven decades of McManus’ lifetime, the two had much in common.

Macurdy studied at Harvard University, as an undergraduate in its all-female Annex, graduating with honours in classics; McManus received her MA in 1965 and PhD in 1976 in Comparative Literature from Harvard, writing her dissertation on a classical topic, ‘Inreparabile Tempus: A Study of Time in Vergil’s Aeneid’. Both taught at women’s colleges in New York State: Macurdy at Vassar, McManus at her own undergraduate alma mater, the College of New Rochelle. Macurdy spent several summers in New York City, teaching, as the first female faculty member, at Columbia University while earning her doctorate there. McManus, long resident in the New York City suburbs, served in leadership positions in two New York City professional and scholarly organizations: the New York Classical Club, as vice-president and centennial historian; the Women Writing Women’s Lives Biography seminar, as webmaster.

Within the mid-Atlantic region where the two women taught and studied, McManus was president in 2005, webmaster from 2005 through 2010, and on the programme and awards committees of the Classical Association of the Atlantic States. Owing to McManus’ assiduous labours, CAAS became legally incorporated as a non-profit organization in New York State a decade ago. Upon her retirement from CNR in 2001, CAAS celebrated her career with an ovatio; ten years later, in 2011, it honoured
her rare combination of dedication and vision by establishing the Barbara F. McManus Leadership Award.

Both women overcame formidable physical challenges. Macurdy struggled with deafness for the last twenty-eight years of her life; McManus with polio and its after effects for nearly all of hers. Both also enjoyed family life, managing its responsibilities while coping with the demands posed by their careers as teachers and scholars. Most significant, Barbara McManus, like Grace Macurdy, expanded the definition of classical scholar. This category now embraces a woman who taught for her entire career at a small, all-female Catholic undergraduate liberal arts institution; made pioneering contributions to classical studies through her efforts at integrating technology into teaching and research as well as her interdisciplinary, cutting-edge feminist research; and immeasurably enriched the classics profession itself by gathering, interpreting, and sharing information about its current and past practitioners such as Grace Macurdy.

Her research includes three books: a study of women in early modern England, *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England 1540–1640* (Illinois 1985), co-authored with Katharine Usher Henderson; *Classics and Feminism: Gendering the Classics. The Impact of Feminism on the Arts and Sciences* (New York, 1997), nominated by Choice as an Outstanding Academic Book of that year; and a biography of Macurdy completed and accepted for publication by the Ohio State University Press shortly before McManus’ death on June 19, 2015, entitled *The Drunken Duchess of Vassar: Grace Harriet Macurdy, Pioneering Feminist Classical Scholar*. She also published and lectured widely on an array of important topics, with book chapters and articles in learned journals, invited lectures and refereed papers in the US and abroad. At the spring 2000 CAAS meeting, she and two undergraduate honours students memorably re-enacted a scene from Macurdy’s own life: her self-defence when threatened with dismissal from her teaching post by her department chair Abby Leach. McManus herself played Vassar’s male president James Monroe Taylor, ‘the voice of reason’. In 2012, the Women’s Classical Caucus, for which McManus toiled as co-chair and secretary-treasurer, inaugurated the Barbara McManus award—for the best article published in gender studies each year—to recognize her scholarly achievements.
McManus won major grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities: her NEH-funded Teaching with Technology Initiative developed into the VRoma project, a virtual city and community for classics students and teachers worldwide, on which she closely collaborated with her CNR Classics colleague Ann Raia. She altered the face of the CNR academic landscape by teaching innovative courses in classics, comparative literature and women’s studies; directing the Writing Program in its School of Arts and Sciences; and advancing initiatives to make technology central to the college’s pedagogical practices. The CNR Alumnae Association bestowed its Ursula Laurus award upon her in 1994, and its Woman of Achievement award—as a shining example of ‘Wisdom for Life’—ten years later. In 2012, the Classics Department at the University of Maryland, College Park recognized her scholarship and teaching by hosting an international interdisciplinary conference in her name.

On the morning of her death, Adam Blistein, Executive Director of the Society for Classical Studies, formerly the American Philological Association, movingly hailed Barbara’s valuable contributions to that organization from 1983 onwards. Meriting special commendation are her service on its Committees on the Status of Women and Minority Groups, ad hoc Committee on Outreach and the Outreach Prize as well as on its Board of Directors. He singled out, however, her work as its Vice-President for Professional Matters, in which capacity she created the APA census on classics department staffing and enrolments in North America. In 2009 the APA presented her with its Distinguished Service Award for her extraordinary achievements on behalf of the discipline and profession.

On multiple occasions, in connection with the ‘Representing Our Ancestors’ project, Barbara McManus impersonated Grace Harriet Macurdy herself. Joining colleagues who performed the roles of other illustrious nineteenth and twentieth-century classicists, she shared Macurdy’s story, illustrating the impact of Macurdy’s life and work upon classical studies in America and abroad. Her performance imbued the personality of Macurdy with her own memorable qualities: inquiring analytical mind; disciplined, meticulous work habits; principled, ethical, and inclusive approach to dealing with professional duties and her fellow professionals; caring support of colleagues, especially as mentor to younger scholars and teachers; generosity of spirit, unforgettably evinced
in her sharing of her knowledge, time, and talents. Her essay on Macurdy in this volume documents and justifies her decision to identify so closely with the beneficiary of her research, and enables its readers to appreciate both author and subject more deeply.

Judith P. Hallett
11

Greek (and Roman) Ways and Thoroughfares

The Routing of Edith Hamilton’s Classical Antiquity

Judith P. Hallett

The classical education of Edith Hamilton—whose best-selling books about ancient Greece and Rome include *The Greek Way* (1929) and *The Roman Way* (1932)—merits attention in the contexts of both classical reception and the education of women in nineteenth and twentieth century Anglophone society. The word reception pertains to her work in more ways than one. American readers have accorded a warm welcome to the taste of classical antiquity that Hamilton, who lived from 1867 to 1963, offered up in her role as authoritative guide to the Greco-Roman past.1

My paper explores the topic of Hamilton and classical education much as Hamilton’s two famous books approached the ancient classical world: in two ways. It examines not only the education in the classical languages that Hamilton received, the thoroughfare on which she herself was directed, but also the education about ancient Greece and Rome that she provided, and which her popular writings continue to provide, the thoroughfare that she constructed for the directing of others. This examination of both Hamilton’s learning experiences in the classical

languages and Hamilton’s didactic representation of classical civilization accords special attention to her distinctive family and social background. It also foregrounds how her portrayal of the ancient Greco-Roman world, and her apparent motivations for sharing her insights with a diversely constituted audience, resemble and differ from comparable efforts by other classically educated women in the first half of the twentieth century. Here I focus on Hamilton’s work on ancient Greek drama, and respond to research by Yopie Prins.²

Like previous studies of Hamilton’s work, my discussion confronts some evidentiary challenges posed by our major source on Hamilton’s life: Edith Hamilton: An Intimate Portrait. This posthumous memoir bears the imprimatur of W.W. Norton, the family-owned house which published all of Hamilton’s books, save for Mythology in 1942. It was affectionately and reverentially penned by her lover and life companion, Doris Fielding Reid, a student at the Bryn Mawr School in Baltimore during Hamilton’s twenty-six year tenure as its headmistress.³ [FIG. 11.1] Whatever their factual shortcomings, Reid’s autobiographical recollections can at times be verified, supplemented and corrected by other testimony, among them the autobiography of Edith’s sister Alice Hamilton. They also illuminate what Hamilton sought to achieve as an interpreter of classical antiquity, and how Hamilton prepared herself, under extraordinary circumstances, in her mid-to-late fifties, for assuming this role.

Situating Edith Hamilton: Three Problematic Words of Identification

Standard works of reference tend to identify Edith Hamilton with one or more of the following words: ‘American’, ‘classicist’, and ‘educator’. Each term, however, problematizes attempts to situate her as a cultural and intellectual voice and presence. In reviewing some pertinent biographical

² Prins (forthcoming), on translations of Greek tragedy by women in Victorian England and America.
³ Reid (1967). For its unreliability, see Bacon 1980; Sicherman 1984, 420–1; Hallett 1996–1997, 11 and 118 n.19 (challenging the publisher’s note to Reid, and its claim that Hamilton’s correspondence to and from others had not survived’), ‘Anglicizing’, 156 and passim (which observes that Reid never mentions Hamilton’s long association with Lucy Donnelly, or formal adoption of Dorian Reid), ‘Mythology’, 115–16, and 2015.
information about Edith Hamilton, and sampling her writings, we should first, and at greatest length, consider how well the term ‘American’ applies to her.

Hamilton spent nearly all of her ninety-five-plus years in the United States, living in several different regions of the country. After growing up in Fort Wayne, Indiana (and regularly summering in Mackinac Island, Michigan), she attended Miss Porter’s School in Farmington, Connecticut, returned to Fort Wayne for four years, and then studied at Bryn Mawr College in suburban Philadelphia from 1890 until 1895. She took up her post at the Bryn Mawr School, the first all-female college preparatory institution in the US, in 1896.4

Upon retiring in 1922, Hamilton left Baltimore for ‘Sea Wall’, an oceanfront cottage in the tiny town of Manset on Mount Desert Island, Maine. With her were Doris Fielding Reid; Reid’s parents Harry Fielding Reid, a professor of geophysics at the Johns Hopkins University, and Edith Gittings Reid, a biographer and playwright; and the senior Reids’ four-year old grandson Dorian Fielding Reid, whom Hamilton had adopted in March of that same year. Edith, Doris, and Dorian stayed on in Maine, enduring a rough coastal winter, until they took up residence in New York City during the fall of 1923. They occupied ‘Sea Wall’ for several months each summer, initially while the three of them—and at times two of the other Reid grandchildren, Elizabeth Fielding Reid and Mary Fielding Reid—lived in New York, and then after Doris and Edith relocated to Washington, DC. In 1943 Doris’ employer, the Wall Street investment house of Loomis, Sayles, appointed her head of their office in the US capital. The couple, joined for several years by the widowed Edith Gittings Reid, resided in a house on Massachusetts Avenue, NW, in the heart of Embassy Row, until Edith Hamilton died two decades later.5

Both Edith Hamilton and Doris Fielding Reid are, moreover, buried in the town cemetery at Hadlyme, Connecticut, residing for eternity alongside of Hamilton’s mother Gertrude Pond Hamilton, her three younger sisters—Alice, Margaret, and Norah Hamilton—and Margaret’s life-companion Clara Landsberg. In 1916 the four Hamilton sisters together purchased a house in Hadlyme, originally as a summer home, but with the intention of retiring there. Their widowed mother came from Indiana to live in the house, but died the next year, in December 1917. Three years later, in 1920, three of their female Hamilton cousins and their own mother also moved from Fort Wayne to nearby Deep River, Connecticut.6

Longstanding ties to this area of Connecticut chiefly prompted the decision to resettle there. Like the four Hamilton sisters, all three cousins,


6 Alice Hamilton 1943, 405–14; Reid 1967, 56–7; Sicherman 1984, 195–6, 411 and 2010, 84–5. The youngest and fifth Hamilton child, Arthur, nicknamed ‘Quintus’ owing to his birth-order, was eighteen years Edith’s junior. A professor of Romance languages at the University of Illinois, he died in 1967. For his ‘nickname’, see Alice Hamilton 1943, 18; Reid 1967, 25; and Sicherman 1984, 12–13.
following in the footsteps of three Hamilton aunts, had spent their formative educational years at nearby Miss Porter’s, retaining strong and favourable memories of their time in Farmington as well as abiding friendships with schoolmates still in Connecticut. Although Edith did not eventually retire to Hadlyme, or even reside there with her sisters, she made lengthy visits at intervals.  

By 1920, Hadlyme’s relative proximity to Boston had added to its appeal as a permanent base for Alice Hamilton, two years Edith’s junior. After studying at the University of Michigan’s medical school, undergoing further clinical training in Minneapolis and Boston, and doing an additional year of research at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, Alice Hamilton moved to Chicago in 1897, where she lived at Jane Addams’ Hull House. Modelled on Toynbee Hall, a residential community of university-educated men in London’s East End established in 1885 as a centre for social reform, Hull House was founded in 1889 by Addams and her close friend Ellen Gates Starr as a ‘settlement house’ with similar goals. A community of university-educated women, most of them unmarried, it sought to provide educational as well as social opportunities for Chicago’s poor, most of them recent European immigrants.

Clara Landsberg, who had been Margaret Hamilton’s classmate at Bryn Mawr College, was a Hull House resident at that time as well. The daughter of a Reform Jewish rabbi, she was employed as a secondary school teacher of Latin and German. After arriving at Hull House, Alice Hamilton initially earned her living as a pathology instructor at a medical school for women. She also worked with Addams for global peace and other social reforms, and undertook a series of pioneering studies in the area of industrial medicine. Alice was recognized for her ground-breaking research with a part-time appointment to Harvard Medical School in the fall of 1919, as Harvard’s first female faculty member.  

While Edith Hamilton remained close to her sisters Alice and Margaret, as well as to her ‘sister-in-law’ Clara, throughout her life, after she and Doris Fielding Reid became a couple in the early 1920s, her personal and intellectual priorities increasingly diverged from their progressive values.

In addition to inhabiting different regions of the varied American landscape, Edith Hamilton has numbered among her major devotees many individuals prominently and differently positioned on the American cultural and political scene. They range from the playwright Mary Zimmerman, who credits Hamilton for fostering the fascination with Greek mythology informing her award-winning *Metamorphoses* (2002) and *Argonautika* (2006), to Senator Robert F. Kennedy (D-NY).9

In his posthumously published *Journals*, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr testifies to Hamilton’s powerful appeal for RFK when recounting a visit to Hyannis Port on 14 August 1966. Schlesinger states:

At one point in the weekend I came into the living room as [Robert F. Kennedy] was...reading a book...It was Edith Hamilton’s *The Greek Way*. He then showed me the passage he was reading...about the quality of life in Periclean Athens, and he mumbled diffidently something to the effect that Edith Hamilton’s description could apply to Washington under JFK (‘under President Kennedy’, as he nearly always puts it, even in the most intimate circumstances). Then, almost shyly, he pulled out of the briefcase a copy of a paperback entitled *Three Greek Plays*—a well-thumbed volume, with pages loose and falling out—and asked me to read two passages from [Hamilton’s translation of] *The Trojan Women*, one describing the horrors of war, the other the importance of friendship and loyalty. They are both powerful passages and clearly had great meaning for him. He apparently carries these two volumes with him always.10

RFK engraved the contents of these volumes upon his heart, spontaneously incorporating two quotes from Hamilton’s writings in perhaps his most memorable speech from the perspective of American political history. He delivered it while campaigning for the US presidency, on 4 April 1968, in Hamilton’s home state of Indiana, upon learning that the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr, had just been murdered in Memphis. The first quote is: ‘Let us dedicate ourselves to what the Greeks wrote so


10 Schlesinger 2007, 252–3; for references to Hamilton and her writings in Kennedy’s own day book, see Kennedy 1998, xvii, 90–1, 180; see also Thomas 2000, 285–7 and Hallett ‘Anglicizing’, 162–5, on how Kennedy became familiar with and indebted to Hamilton’s work.
many years ago—to tame the savageness of man and to make gentle the life of this world.\textsuperscript{11}

In an address to the Classical Association of the Atlantic States in 1957, first published that same year in \textit{Classical World}, then reprinted (without acknowledging either CAAS or \textit{CW}) in both the \textit{Saturday Evening Post} and a 'Norton anthology' of her short pieces called \textit{The Ever-Present Past}, Hamilton claimed that these were words found in an 'old Greek inscription'. However, as Joseph Cassazza has convincingly argued, it is an inscription from Roman republican times, a decree from Delphi dated to 125 BCE, blended with a statement from the Greek historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who chronicled Roman history during the Augustan era. Hamilton's rendering of this inscription—whose component parts she apparently took from two totally different sentences in Gilbert Murray's 1907 \textit{The Rise of the Greek Epic}—also transforms an indicative verb in the perfect tense into a purpose clause.\textsuperscript{12}

The second Hamilton quote in Kennedy's speech is: 'He who learns must suffer. And even in our sleep pain that cannot forget, falls drop by drop upon the heart, and in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom to us by the awful grace of God.' This is Hamilton's translation of lines 179–183 of Aeschylus' \textit{Agamemnon}, which shares the pages of her \textit{Three Greek Plays}, the dog-eared paperback beloved by Robert Kennedy, with another Aeschylean tragedy—\textit{Prometheus Bound}—and Euripides' \textit{Trojan Women}. In considering the education in the classical languages that Hamilton received, and the instruction on Greco-Roman antiquity that her books furnished, we should note that hers is an extremely loose translation. For example, the Greek words that she renders 'awful grace of God', with the name of the deity capitalized and in the singular, are \textit{daimonon charis biaios}, 'the violent grace of divine spirits' in the plural.\textsuperscript{13}

Yet although Hamilton spent most of her life on US soil, and although her sphere of influence was largely limited to her fellow Americans, many of them influential figures in their own right, she distanced herself

\textsuperscript{11} Hallett 1996–1997, 144–7; 'Anglicizing', 155. The quote is also inscribed on Kennedy's grave in Arlington National Cemetery.

\textsuperscript{12} Edith Hamilton 1957/1964, 34; Cassazza 2003, 197–9; Hallett 'Anglicizing', 157.

\textsuperscript{13} Schlesinger 1979, 617–18; Hallett 1996–1997, 144–7; Hallett also quotes her translation of this passage in her chapter on Aeschylus in \textit{The Greek Way}, using the words 'in our own despite' rather than 'in our own despair'.
from her American cultural surroundings in several important regards. Edith Hamilton was born not in the US, but in Dresden, Germany, to American expatriate parents who had gone abroad owing to the Civil War. Her maternal grandfather Loyal Pond, a New York sugar merchant, had taken his wife and eleven children overseas because of his support for the Confederate cause. Her father Montgomery Hamilton had fled for rest and recreation to Europe after emotionally traumatic experiences, first studying at Princeton University and then fighting in the Union Army; it was there that he met and married Pond’s eldest child.14

After returning to live with his affluent extended family in Fort Wayne, Montgomery Hamilton filled his household with German-speaking servants. He also provided Edith with instruction in German as well as French and Latin, from an early age. Alice Hamilton’s account of their childhood in her own autobiography—Exploring the Dangerous Trades, published in 1943 by Little, Brown and Company, which had issued Edith’s Mythology the year before—suggests that German was fraught with special meaning, and practical value, for her and her sisters. Though raised as Presbyterians, every Christmas morning, accompanied by the family’s ‘German maids, an elderly German manservant and a much-loved German nursemaid’, the girls went to the German Lutheran Church, to hear ‘a simple sermon in German addressed to the children’ and to sing Christmas hymns in German.15

Edith eventually returned to Germany after completing her MA degree at Bryn Mawr in 1895, as the recipient of a Mary E. Garrett European fellowship. These funds enabled both her and Alice to spend a year pursuing post-graduate studies, first in Leipzig and then in Munich. For the rest of her life Hamilton harboured deep sympathies for German literature and music, even writing an essay in passionate praise of Goethe’s Faust for Theatre Arts Monthly—which was edited by a Jewish woman, Edith Rich Isaacs, the first person to publish Edith Hamilton’s work—in June 1941, as Hitler’s armies raged through Europe. While the anti-Teutonic feelings stirred by two World Wars against Germany made it difficult for Edith to identify conspicuously as a disciple of German culture, a vision of classical antiquity that she had imbibed

15 Alice Hamilton 1943, 30–3; quoted virtually verbatim by Reid 1967, 26–7.
and thoroughly absorbed during her one year in Germany permeated all of her writings. Hellenophilic and Athenocentric in the extreme, it disparages Rome as an inferior, bloodthirsty, repressive society awash in Oriental influences, and impervious to the idea of freedom so precious to the Greeks.\(^{16}\)

What is more, Edith Hamilton routinely sought to legitimate herself as a knowledgeable spokesperson for the timeless relevance of classical Greek ideals by identifying with Britain in her words and work. This ‘Anglicizing’ strategy included the adoption of an accent that, if not technically British, was nonetheless a far cry from the customary vocal inflections of properly spoken Hoosiers, and even well-educated denizens of the mid-Atlantic region.\(^{17}\) More important, Hamilton constantly cites British, and rarely mentions American, authors, especially as parallels to and examples of Anglophone literary phenomena that help illuminate ancient Greek writings.

For example, in *The Greek Way*, she bemoans the absence from Aristophanes’ *dramatis personae* of ‘the company of courteous gentlemen with their pleasant ways and sensitive feelings and fastidious tastes’ portrayed by Plato. She then remarks: ‘To place them in the audience is much more difficult than to imagine Spenser or Sir Philip Sidney listening to Pistol and Doll Tearsheet.’ In the foreword to *Mythology*, she asserts that to bring all the accounts of classical mythology together ‘in one volume is really somewhat comparable to doing the same for the stories of English literature from Chaucer to the ballads, through Shakespeare and Marlowe and Swift and Defoe and Dryden and Pope

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\(^{16}\) Alice Hamilton 1943, 43–51; Edith Hamilton 1984, 89–106; Reid 1967, 35–7; Sicherman 1984, 88–97; Hallett 1996–1997, 108–10, 128, and ‘Anglicizing’, 161–2; Along with Clara Landsberg, Alice returned to Germany on a humanitarian mission in 1933; she later attended a scientific meeting there in 1938, and had made earlier visits in 1910, 1912, 1915, 1919, and 1924. As Sicherman documents, Alice laboured to rescue and resettle Jewish colleagues under the Nazis, a project which had no interest for Edith. See Alice Hamilton 1943, 360–86 and 395–404; Sicherman 1984, 332–4, 338, 340–4.

\(^{17}\) As Hallett, ‘Anglicizing’, 158 n.10, notes, during Hamilton’s tenure as Bryn Mawr School headmistress, Samuel Arthur King, an Englishman who taught elocution at Bryn Mawr College, was engaged to visit Baltimore each month so as to improve the girls’ accents. Hamilton’s voice has been preserved for posterity by e.g. the Edward R. Murrow/‘This I Believe’ project: for the text of her radio address on this programme, delivered in 1954, see Edith Hamilton, 1964, 183–4.
and so on, ending with, say, Tennyson and Browning, or even, to make the comparison truer, Kipling and Galsworthy’.  

So, too, while Hamilton’s writings acknowledge the work of few professional classics scholars, most of those she mentions are British, first and foremost Gilbert Murray. In her 1957 *Classical World* essay, she does describe an encounter she once had with an American classicist, Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve, encomiastically introducing him as ‘the greatest Greek scholar our country has produced’. But she then notes that he had just returned from ‘a celebration held for him at Oxford’; in so doing, she spells ‘honoured’ in the British fashion. In contrast, later in that essay, when extolling the Athenians because ‘no one told them what they must do or what they should think—no church or political party or powerful private interests or labor unions’ she employs the American spelling for ‘labor’.  

British classicists in turn gave their stamp of approval to Hamilton’s writings. Curiously, Gilbert Murray, whom Hamilton idolized, worshipfully reviewing and quoting and misrepresenting his writings, never seems to have written or even referred to her. But another British classics luminary, C.M. Bowra, wrote a fulsome if sexist blurb for *The Greek Way* in 1963, asserting: ‘with this knowledge [of the actual texts of Greek literature] she was able to turn her feminine intuition in many directions, to adapt herself easily and almost unconsciously to the writers whom she studied, and to extract from their work what appealed most deeply to her and seemed to be the most significant.’ Murray’s protégé Gilbert Highet, an Oxford-trained Scottish émigré who, while holding the Latin chair at Columbia, became a popularizing celebrity with a following similar to that of Hamilton’s, never mentions her in his scholarly writing. Nevertheless, he composed a blurb for the *Ever-Present Past*, she contributed a blurb to his *Poets in a Landscape*, and he seems to have been engaged in the relentless promotion of her work by the Book of the Month Club, on whose board he served.  

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18 Edith Hamilton 1963, 108; Edith Hamilton 1942; the foreword to *Mythology* is quoted in abridged form by Reid 1967, 62.

19 Edith Hamilton 1957, 29–32; see also Hallett and Stray 2009, 158.


21 Edith Hamilton 1963, xxi–xxii; Hallett ‘Anglicizing’, 161. Reid 1967, 156, quotes extensively from Bowra’s blurb without identifying it as a blurb, omitting the sentence that I have quoted.
Many of those who advised Hamilton and promoted her work evidently encouraged her associations with ‘the best of Britain’, owing to their own deep-seated Anglophilic inclinations, Doris and the Reids in particular. In 1911 Edith Gittings Reid had permanently withdrawn Doris, at the age of sixteen, from the Bryn Mawr School, so that they could spend the fall and winter in Cambridge, England, while her brother Francis Fielding Reid, who had dropped out of Princeton, started another undergraduate degree at Magdalene College. The entire Reid family frequently visited the family of Harry Fielding Reid’s colleague, the Nobel Laureate Sir Joseph Thomson, in Cambridge; Doris maintained a close, lifelong bond with his son, Sir George, also a Nobel prize winner in physics. Edith Gittings Reid published biographies of two Johns Hopkins medical professors—including Sir William Osler, who later occupied the Regius chair of medicine at Oxford—with Oxford University Press, and wrote a play in 1922 about a renowned woman in the British medical world, Florence Nightingale.22

Yet Edith Hamilton’s other intimates also enjoyed strong links with England, and admired the British people and their culture. The theatre critic John Mason Brown, probably Edith Hamilton’s most fervent champion throughout her career as a popular writer, served as a British naval officer in World War II and accompanied the British forces as an observer during the invasion of Italy. The Washington, DC lawyer Huntington Cairns, with whom Hamilton collaborated in 1961 on *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, was the son of a Scottish immigrant, proud recipient of an honorary degree from St. Andrews, and a close confidant of Paul Mellon in the years when Mellon amassed his major collection of British art.23

Most striking, when testifying to the glories of ancient Greece as a counterpart to, and model for, American democracy, Hamilton’s writings often express sharp, and somewhat naïve and unjust, criticisms of

22 Hallett ‘Anglicizing’, 159–60. Reid 1969, 9, evinces her own as well as Edith’s Anglicizing ways to justify Edith’s unconventional methods of historical inquiry, she quotes from the preface to *The Roman Way*: ‘A people’s literature… shows[s] the quality of the people as no historical reconstruction can. When we read Anthony Trollope or W.S. Gilbert we get an incomparably better view of what mid-Victorian England was like than any given by the historians…’

23 Hallett ‘Anglicizing’, 160–1. For Cairns, who was instrumental in founding the Harvard University Center for Hellenic Studies, see also Hallett 1996–1997, 120–5.
American social institutions that protected, nurtured, and offered opportunities for self-advancement to those lacking material and other inherited advantages. Her implication in ‘The Ever-Present Past’ that labour unions, like churches and political parties, tell their members what they must do and think furnishes a case in point. Elsewhere in this same essay, written in the year that the Russians launched Sputnik, she severely faults American public schools for imposing ‘exactly the same kind of education being applied from the Atlantic to the Pacific’, making ‘the individual . . . less easy to find’, and ‘geared to mass production’. ‘We seem,’ she lamented, ‘headed toward a standardization of the mind, what Goethe called “the deadly commonplace that fetters us all.” That was not the Greek way.’

In contrast, she asserts that ‘the Athenians in their dangerous world needed to be a nation of independent men who could take responsibility, and they taught their children accordingly. They thought about every boy. Someday he would be a citizen of Athens, responsible for her safety and glory.’ Earlier in this essay, she justifies the patent inequality among allegedly independent Athenian men, not to mention the inequality between them and the other human beings on whom they depended, by observing, ‘Athens treated her slaves well. A visitor to the city in the early fourth century BC, wrote, “It is illegal here to deal a slave a blow. In the street he won’t step aside to let you pass. Indeed you can’t tell a slave by his dress; he looks like all the rest. They can go to the theatre too. Really, Athenians have established a kind of equality between slaves and free men.” The Athenians did not practice crucifixion, and had no so-called slave’s punishment. They [vs. the Romans] were not afraid of their slaves.’

It is tempting to explain and excuse Edith Hamilton’s pronouncements on US workers, mass public education, and inequality resulting from race-based slavery as commonplace sentiments among even enlightened Americans in the decade prior to the civil rights movement. Yet it bears emphasis that her views have little in common with the ideas expounded, over a decade earlier, by her own sister Alice in Exploring the Dangerous Trades. After applauding industrial organizations such as unions for improving the conditions of workers, particularly exploited
and underpaid immigrants, Alice states: 'Labor too has changed. It is no longer willing to submit to preventable ills. Workmen are now graduates of our public schools, where they have been taught that all men are created equal, that any boy has a chance to be President, that America is the land of opportunity and all the rest. Naturally such a lad faces his employer with a different spirit from that of his peasant father from the Old World. He steps from a world of democratic ideals in school to a feudalistic industrial world, and takes the adjustment with difficulty.'

Both Edith and Alice had been educated at home by their father and private tutors before entering Miss Porter’s, and did not attend public primary or secondary schools. Although ‘Fort Wayne had only public schools’, as Alice reports, their ‘mother objected to the long hours from nine in the morning to four in the afternoon’, and their father ‘to the education—too much arithmetic and American history, neither a subject which interested him’. But Alice’s matriculation at the University of Michigan, a co-educational public institution of higher education, and her involvement with Chicago municipal institutions through Hull House, afforded her a ‘coign of vantage’ on the benefits of state-funded schooling for all, or at least all ‘boys and lads’. While she presumably read her sister’s autobiography, Edith did not espouse the values it professes.

Labelling Edith Hamilton an ‘American’, therefore, is not without its complications. Nor is terming her a ‘classicist’. Hamilton did, of course, study the classical languages for a great number of years. As Alice testified, and we have noted, Edith received tutoring in Latin from her father long before entering Miss Porter’s in 1884; she also seems to have studied Greek by the time she reached adolescence. Records at Miss Porter’s document that Edith Hamilton was not apparently enrolled in, or at least been billed for, any classical language courses during her first year there—only general literature, moral science, astronomy, chemistry, singing, piano, and music. In her second year, however, she is recorded as having taken Lucretius as well as moral science and political economy between January and May, and Catullus and the Adelphoe of Terence as well as Trig and Tables, singing, and music between May and September.

Alice furnishes a glimpse of what studying classical languages at Miss Porter’s entailed. She relates that in the spring term ‘old Professor Seymour, grandfather of Charles Seymour of Yale, came to stay at Miss Porter’s and to lecture on Shakespeare and take over the classes in Greek and Latin. He was a delightful scholar, to whom the beauty and loftiness of the classics were everything—not the second aorist or the uses of the subjunctive.\(^{29}\) A 1992 history of Miss Porter’s School features a photograph of an aloof-looking Professor Seymour and the six girls in his Latin class, presumably the class on Catullus and Terence, from summer term 1886. Edith sports a jaunty neck scarf and is identified as having become ‘a classics scholar and author’, with ‘Seven of her books on Greece and Rome . . . still in print’.\(^{30}\)

From 1890 until 1895, Edith studied Greek and Latin at Bryn Mawr College, earning both BA and MA degrees in both languages in 1894, and spending 1894–1895 as a graduate fellow in Latin, under the supervision of Gildersleeve’s former student and then-collaborator Gonzalez Lodge. During 1895–1896, while funded by the Mary E. Garrett fellowship in Germany, she attended classics lectures in Leipzig and Munich, sponsored at the latter by Eduard Woelflin, editor of the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. But the year in Germany brought her formal study of classics to an end.\(^{31}\)

Furthermore, during her years as headmistress of the Bryn Mawr School, Edith Hamilton’s only apparent forays into the classroom were to teach Vergil’s *Aeneid* to the senior girls; she never taught Greek (or Latin after her retirement) in a formal institutional setting at all. She ‘home-schooled’ her adoptive son Dorian until he turned ten in 1927, and again on a trip that she, Doris, and Dorian took to Greece and Egypt for several months in 1929; she also tutored Doris’ niece Elizabeth, then attending the Nightingale Bamford School, in Latin a few years later. Nevertheless, these were informal, individualized endeavours wholly dissimilar to the daily routines that occupy the time and demand the dedication of professional secondary school classics teachers.\(^{32}\)

\(^{29}\) Alice Hamilton 1943, 36–7.  \(^{30}\) Davis and Donahue 1992, 18.


\(^{32}\) Bacon 1980, 307; Hallett 1996–1997, 119–20 and ‘Mythology’, 109, 114–18; personal correspondence of Elizabeth Fielding Reid [Pfeiffer] with Clare Beirne [Dewart]. I would like to thank Pfeiffer’s daughter Dorrit Pfeiffer Castle for sharing this correspondence with me.
So, too, even in her final year at Bryn Mawr and during her studies in Germany, Hamilton does not appear to have undertaken serious independent research in classics. Her only publication in a learned classics journal is the text of the 1957 address at CAAS. Four pages long, it contains only one footnote: by the editor of CW, identifying the circumstances in which Hamilton spoke, and referring the reader to an interview in the New Yorker about how she managed to deliver her 20-minute talk in ‘Nineteen and a Half Minutes’.33

Edith Hamilton, then, can hardly be regarded as a ‘classicist’ in the ordinary sense of the word. Indeed, she single-handedly redefined the term as one who represents classical antiquity to the world at large without necessarily acquiring such standard credentials as a doctoral degree or secondary school teaching certification; without holding a full-time academic position that entails accountable participation in planning and assessing student performances for several different classes, at multiple levels of learning, each year; without undertaking, presenting or publishing original research in a documented scholarly format. Hers was authority on Greco-Roman antiquity claimed and achieved without the ordinary processes of authorization.

In commenting upon Edith’s few months of study in Leipzig, Doris quotes a passage from an article that Alice wrote in the 1965 Atlantic Monthly: ‘Edith,’ says Alice, ‘was deeply disappointed in her Greek and Latin courses. The lectures were very thorough linguistically but most uninspiring. Instead of the grandeur and beauty of Aeschylus and Sophocles, it seemed that the important thing was their use of the second aorist.’ Doris continues, ‘The paragraph is illuminating. It seems that by that time Edith had realized what was and what was not important to her in her exhaustive study of the Greek language and the Greeks. The reasons for her lifetime convictions of the importance of ancient Greece were by then formulated. They had nothing to do with the use of the second aorist or the subjunctive, and the glamour and authority of the famous classicists at the University of Leipzig affected her not at all.’34

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33 Hamilton 1957; see also Hallett ‘Anglicizing’, 152.
34 Reid 1967, 36–7; she concludes this chapter, however, by commenting, ‘I am sure she would have liked to continue her studies in Germany a little longer, but, typically, she never seemed to care whether she had a Ph.D. or not.’
Doris, therefore, claims that by the time Edith had done some graduate work at Bryn Mawr College, work—which Doris, who had not formally studied classics (or even completed high school) herself, characterizes as ‘exhaustive study of the Greek language and the Greeks’—Edith did not need further academic training. Indeed, Doris characterizes Edith’s ‘study’ as a privileged endeavour for rare beings who understood instinctively what mattered about ancient Greece, and for that reason superior to the professionally licensed mode of classical learning. The academic way of earning, and confirming, credentials in classical philology was, Doris implies, a grammatically obsessed pursuit overseen by self-regarding control freaks. Presumably she expresses Edith’s own opinion.35

Finally we come to the question of how well the term ‘educator’ applies to Edith Hamilton. Here we stand on less contested ground. Yet such a question requires us to consider the different kinds of educating in which she actively engaged as an adult, and their relationships to her corresponding, passive, childhood role as ‘educatee’. It warrants emphatic repetition that until Hamilton entered Miss Porter’s in 1884, at the age of seventeen, she had not attended an American educational institution. Furthermore, after her two years at Farmington, she spent four more years in Fort Wayne, being privately tutored so that she might pass the Bryn Mawr College entrance exams; Alice also needed several years of make-up work before she went on to medical school at Ann Arbor.

*Exploring the Dangerous Trades* supplies a rationale, and some background, for the decision by the two sisters to seek further education: that with ‘family finances . . . rapidly diminishing’, they needed to train themselves to earn their living. ‘Our only hope,’ Alice relates, ‘of a wide and full life, of going out into the big world lay in our own efforts. There seemed to be only a few careers open to us—‘teaching, nursing, the practice of medicine’. Edith chose teaching, and studied ‘mathematics and botany’. Alice selected medicine, and studied ‘physics and chemistry with a high school teacher’, ‘not because [she] was scientifically minded,

35 Since Doris herself was not born until 1895, the year that Edith and Alice went to study in Germany, she could not have witnessed Edith’s ‘extensive study’ first hand, and only had Edith’s word for it. Reid does not provide full details about Alice’s article, ‘Edith and Alice Hamilton: Students in Germany’, *Atlantic Monthly* (March 1965), 215.
for [she] was deeply ignorant of science . . . but because as a doctor [she] could go anywhere she pleased’. Edith’s choice of subjects not only indicates that she knew more about science than Alice at this point in their lives, but also reminds us that she had acquired some knowledge in these areas—with courses on astronomy, chemistry, and Trig and Tables—at Miss Porter’s.36

The remedial studies needed by both sisters obviously points to the serious gaps in the education furnished by Miss Porter’s. There, Alice confesses, ‘some of the teaching we received was the world’s worst’ and, owing to a ‘purely elective system’, students ‘were not made to study so hard or so many hours as we should have done’.37 But it also attests to the inadequacies of their schooling at home in Fort Wayne. Both Alice and Doris (the latter largely on the basis of Alice’s autobiography) provide more details about the curriculum Montgomery Hamilton designed for his daughters, an unconventional plan of learning to say the least.

Alice recalls: ‘So we did not go to school and we could be out of doors during the sunny hours. We had a smattering of mathematics, taught by a governess, but I never got beyond the beginning of algebra. We learned what our parents thought important: languages, literature, [European] history. We had formal teaching only in languages; the other subjects we had to learn ourselves by reading, and we did. My father taught us Latin . . . Of science we had not even a smattering . . . Yet in a way we were trained in habits of scientific approach. We were not allowed to make a statement which could be challenged unless we were prepared to defend it . . .

‘The habit of doing one’s own searching for the knowledge one wanted was valuable, but the field that attracted me was too limited. As I reached my teens, instead of turning to the natural sciences, of which I was completely ignorant, I taught myself Greek and Italian . . . Of American literature I knew little. My father had a great impatience with what he

36 Alice Hamilton 1943, 38. The Hamilton family finances had diminished because Montgomery Hamilton’s wholesale grocery business had failed, and he had been unsuccessful in his bid for a bank presidency; he had retreated to his library and become a serious alcoholic. See Sicherman 1984, 89–97 and Hallett 1996–1997, 109.
37 Alice Hamilton 1943, 35–6. See also Reid 1967, 31: ‘As Farmington was the first school Edith had ever attended, I once asked her how it struck her and what was she taught there. “Oh, we weren’t taught anything,” she answered. “The courses were purely elective and if a girl was weak in any subjects, she could just decide not to take them.”’
considered the woolgathering of the New England school and I knew nothing of Emerson, little of Hawthorne. Poe was the only American poet he respected. He liked clarity and definiteness—Macaulay and Froude, Addison, Pope. He read us Macaulay’s *Lays of Ancient Rome* and Scott’s poems, and he made Edith and me learn the whole of “The Lady of the Lake”… “to train our memory.”

These details do much to account for Edith Hamilton’s ‘Anglicizing’ practice of citing, and quoting from, works mainly by English writers as *comparanda* to classical texts. Alice’s phrase ‘one’s own searching for the knowledge one wanted’, with an emphasis on the ‘one wanted’, may throw light on Edith’s own, selective, investigative methods in gathering material for her books. Alice’s testimony about her own classical education also may imply that Edith, too, taught herself ancient Greek.

In *An Intimate Portrait*, Doris never mentions how Edith inaugurated her ‘intensive study’, only that Edith’s cousin Jessie wrote ‘that she would always remember Edith at the age of thirteen combing her hair and reading a book written in Greek that lay open on her dresser’. In her introduction to another Norton anthology of Hamilton’s writings, published in 1969, Reid merely reports, ‘At the advanced age of eight, her father started her on Greek. The Greek language and ancient Greek then became a lifelong absorption.’ Prior to recalling Jessie’s memory of the thirteen-year-old Edith in *An Intimate Portrait*, Doris also contends that ‘While most of us can remember some person or persons who inspired us—who opened doors—I do not think this was ever the case with Edith. Her passion for the classics was in spite of, rather than because of her father. Her inspirations came from the impact of what she read on her own original and gifted mind.”

To judge from Doris’ memoir about the couple’s rearing of Dorian, it also appears that Edith drew heavily on her own childhood educational experiences to home-school the young boy, at least in imparting information about literature and history. When distilling the complex body of narratives and traditions about classical and Biblical antiquity, so as to present this material both comprehensibly and inoffensively to him,

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38 Alice Hamilton 1943, 29–31; Reid 1967, 22–3, includes some of these details as well. See also Sicherman 2010, 87–8.
39 Reid 1967, 30.
40 Reid 1969, 7; Reid 1967, 30.
Edith often seems to have selected as her vehicle an English poem she had memorized as a child—such as Macaulay’s ‘Horatius at the Bridge’ or Byron’s ‘The Isles of Greece’. At other times, though, she merely shared, and sanitized, what she regarded as the salient points of a story or episode in her own, simple words.41

By all accounts, Edith prepared Dorian well for the academic rigours that lay ahead. After attending a series of New England boarding schools, he went on to Amherst College, from which he graduated in 1938, at the age of twenty, with a degree in chemistry.42 More important, Edith Hamilton’s education of her adopted son prepared her for a new métier as a popular writer. Her development of highly effective, ‘mass’ communications skills—abilities previously not displayed, or at most underutilized, in her long career as a headmistress—in order to teach Dorian about the ancient past enabled her to captivate a wide audience in elucidating the classical world.

Yet Alice’s recollections of Edith’s girlhood, many of them echoed by Doris, further testify to Edith’s visible display, at an early age, of talents that not only served her well in educating Dorian and writing for a general audience but also must have contributed to her success as an educational administrator. ‘She was a passionate reader while I was a reluctant one,’ Alice remembers, ‘a natural storyteller [and summary-writer who] would give us résumés of Scott and Bulwer-Lytton and DeQuincey . . . and who could not understand my childish tastes in books, [insisting that I tackle more challenging material] . . . She also loved to learn poetry by heart.’ In addition, Alice’s memories of the games that Edith and her sisters played with their Hamilton cousins, re-enacting such time-honoured tales as Robin Hood and his band, the Knights of the Round Table and the siege of Troy illuminate Edith’s later interest in myth and legend. These re-enactments required the girls to perform, exclusively in male roles, in situations demanding group leadership and rapid responses to crises. Consequently, they provided a good grounding for what Edith later had to do in her position as headmistress.

41 Hallett ‘Mythology’, 115–18.
42 My thanks to Nicholas Rauh and Alice Reid Abbott, daughter of the late Dorian Fielding Reid, (who died in January 2008 at the age of ninety), for making it possible for me to interview him in March 2006 and March 2007.
43 Alice Hamilton 1943, 18–19; see also Reid 1967, 29.
But while Edith Hamilton apparently excelled at educating her Vergil students and family members in the classroom and home respectively, and at shouldering educational responsibilities for a community of young learners at the Bryn Mawr School, she chiefly educated others through her writings: books, essays, and reviews which reached, and touched, a wide reading public. Her writings played a key role in launching the study of classics in translation in American colleges and universities after World War II, at a time when various social and political developments, including the GI Bill funding college education for military veterans, were transforming the demographics of higher education. By re-imagining the classical world and its legacy for a general audience, they helped re-authorize Greco-Roman antiquity as a source of intellectual prestige, artistic inspiration, and even, for individuals such as Robert F. Kennedy, emotional sustenance.

**Contextualizing Edith Hamilton: Expertise and Audience**

But what was distinctive and memorable about the thoroughfare that Edith Hamilton constructed for the readers she sought to educate about the classical world? What special knowledge did she claim to possess as a guide? And what was the readership that she, and those who fostered and publicized her and her work, had in mind? Since, as has been observed, Hamilton’s writings strongly favour Greek over Roman antiquity and lavish much attention on Athenian drama, she is often credited with particular expertise on the ancient Greek theatre as well as on Greek philosophical thought and Greek mythological lore.

Hamilton accrued authority in the area of Greek drama primarily through her translations of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* and *Prometheus*, and Euripides’ *Trojan Women*, in *Three Greek Plays*, the volume cherished by Robert K. Kennedy, which was published in 1937. These translations represent the culmination and completion of work begun a decade earlier, some of which she also incorporated into *The Greek Way*. For Hamilton originally published the *Prometheus* translation in Edith Isaacs’ *Theatre Arts Monthly* in 1927, and contributed several other

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essays on Greek comedy and tragedy to the same publication in the late twenties.45

Owing to the persistent popularity of *Three Greek Plays*, Hamilton sustained her stature as an expert on Greek drama through and beyond her long lifetime. In 1957, her translation of the *Prometheus* was performed in Athens, at the ancient theatre of Herodes Atticus, when she was named an honorary citizen of Athens on the occasion of her ninetieth birthday. The Greek director Michael Cacoyannis used her translation of *The Trojan Women* when he staged the play on Broadway in 1963 and filmed it in 1971. Hamilton frequently privileged the evidence of drama, tragic drama, when asserting special access to 'what was important' about the ancient Greeks. Her engagement with dramatic texts as both translator and interpreter is central to what she thought deserved to be communicated about 'the Greek way'.46

In pondering what, and to whom, Hamilton sought to communicate through and about Greek drama, we should note that *Theatre Arts Monthly* illustrated Hamilton’s *Prometheus*-translation with photos from a 1927 production at Delphi, directed, choreographed, and orchestrated by Eva Palmer Sikelianos. Sikelianos had briefly attended Bryn Mawr College a year after Hamilton completed her studies there in 1895; the Benaki archives in Athens contain correspondence between Hamilton and Sikelianos from the 1930s. In one of these letters, Sikelianos associated both herself and Hamilton with 'the lunatic fringe' in their approaches to re-creating Greek tragedy for a contemporary audience.47

Sikelianos’ autobiography pays tribute to Hamilton in recounting how she first met the dancer Ted Shawn.

I had been reading different translations of the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, with the whole great Trilogy set as my next goal ahead. One above all was incomparable, the one by my deeply admired friend Edith Hamilton, who has written very noble words about Greek drama:

> Only twice in literary history has there been a great period of tragedy, in the Athens of Pericles and in Elizabethan England. What these two periods had in

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45 Reid 1967, 66–9; Hallett ‘Mythology’, 114–18; some of these early writings were reprinted in Hamilton 1964.


common . . . may give us some hint of the nature of tragedy, for far from being periods of darkness and defeat, each was a time when life seemed exalted, a time of thrilling and unfathomable possibilities. They held their heads high, these men who conquered at Marathon and Salamis, and these who fought Spain and saw the Great Armada sink. The world was a place of wonder; mankind was beauteous; life was lived on the crest of the wave. More than all, the poignant joy of heroism has stirred men’s hearts. Not stuff for tragedy, would you say? But on the crest of the wave one must feel either tragically or joyously; one cannot feel tamely. The temper of mind that sees tragedy in life has not for its opposite the temper that sees joy. The opposite pole to the tragic view of life is the sordid view. When humanity is seen as devoid of dignity and significance, trivial, mean, and sunk in dreary hopelessness, then the spirit of tragedy departs.

And about translations she wisely says, ‘Until the perfect, the final, translator comes, the plays should be perpetually retranslated for each generation.’ For, as she amusingly points out, translations follow the spirit of the age of the translator, and quickly become dated. But perhaps her own Agamemnon forms the exception to this excellent rule. It is more starkly near the Greek than any other, and, at times, it is also great English poetry:

‘Drop, drop—in our sleep, upon the heart/sorrow falls, memory’s pain,/ and to us, though against our very will,/even in our own despite/comes wisdom/ by the awful grace of God.’

One night, saying these beautiful words in the resounding house, I was wandering about rather late . . . suddenly the telephone stated ringing . . . only this chance walking about to the tune of Edith’s lines made me hear it.48

Prins argues that in their re-presentations of Aeschylus’ Prometheus both Hamilton and Palmer-Sikelianos did not ‘claim the authority of professional philology’, working instead on the border between amateur and professional. Indeed, Prins would view both women in the context of the early twentieth century female ‘high amateurism’ described by Bonnie G. Smith in The Gender of History. Such women—among them Julia

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48 Anton 1993, 199–200. In a note he dates this event, undated by Sikelianos, to January 1939, when Shawn’s company performed at the Washington Irving High School in New York. He identifies the first quote as from pages 143–4 of the 1930 edition of The Greek Way, but cannot identify the source of the second quotation about translation (from the introduction to Three Greek Plays). In quoting Hamilton’s translation of Agamemnon 179–81, for which Anton provides the Greek, Sikelianos has obviously made some alterations; she, too, uses ‘despite’ rather than ‘despair’.
Cartwright, Martha Lamb, Alice Morse Earle, and Ricarda Huch—‘articulat[ed] liminality that worked to mark the boundaries, spaces, and locations of femininity’ and ‘expand[ed] cognition to include aesthetic, emotional and kinetic registers’ within ‘a historical knowledge . . . beyond the horizon of the professional’.49

I would concur with Prins that Hamilton’s re-creation of ancient Greece, and particularly her translations of its dramatic texts, did not claim the authority of professional philology. Doris Fielding Reid’s memoir asserts that Hamilton proudly denigrated that very authority. I would agree too, that Hamilton’s ‘historical knowledge’ of the classical world is best situated ‘beyond the horizon of the professional’. Indeed some of it—such as the ancient Greek inscription that she concocted, on the basis of two sentences in a book on the Greek epic, published by Gilbert Murray fifty years previously—is pure imagination and flies in the face of the facts. Helen Bacon has aptly characterized Hamilton’s work as ‘idiosyncratic’, ‘personal readings of ancient texts’ highlighting what Hamilton considered ‘eternal truths of the spirit’. As I have written elsewhere, Hamilton’s ‘statements frequently lack documentation from ancient texts, rarely if ever cite modern scholarly authorities, and rely on highly arbitrary selections of evidence’.50

But in view of the route that Hamilton travelled in becoming what her close friend, the drama critic John Mason Brown, called an ‘ambassador’ of ancient Greek civilization, I would distinguish Hamilton from Sikelianos and the other female amateurs discussed by Smith.51 As I have argued elsewhere, although she did, late in life, identify with earlier efforts to obtain ‘a fuller share of life’ for women, women did not figure in her idea of what mattered about classical antiquity, to herself or to her readers.52 ‘To be sure, Edith Hamilton shared her life and bed with two women: first, Sikelianos’ Bryn Mawr College English teacher Lucy Donnelly; later Doris Fielding Reid, who was twenty-eight years her junior. She also relied on generous professional support from such women as Isaacs, Rosamund Gilder of Theatre Arts Monthly, and Mary D. Herter Norton, wife of W(illiam) W(arder), in the early stages of her writing

52 Hallett ‘Mythology’, 128.
career. She only attended, and was employed by, all-female institutions of learning.  

Nevertheless, Hamilton’s writings do not evince much interest in the women of Greek antiquity. Admittedly, she chose to translate two tragedies in which strong female personalities command centre stage. Her *Mythology*, which retells numerous stories from Greek and Roman authors, also, and perforce, features numerous female figures. Yet Edith Hamilton’s other books on the Greeks and Romans themselves, which adopt an analytical approach and sermon-like style of exposition, do not analyse, sermonize or say much if anything about historical women. As the excerpts from her work previously cited make clear, Hamilton was constantly characterizing the Greeks as males, singular and plural. In *Exploring the Dangerous Trades*, as we have observed, Alice devotes much space to the plight of working men in US factories, and in this connection states that ‘any boy’ has a chance to be president. But Alice also talks about workingmen’s wives, and the problems that she herself faced as a woman in her field.  

It is fair to say that Hamilton’s idiomatic prose translations of Greek tragedy lend themselves to dynamic performance in ways that those in archaizing verse do not. Nonetheless, in her writings about classical Greece, Edith Hamilton does not dwell upon the aesthetic, emotional, and kinetic aspects of the Greek dramas, nor of other literary works foregrounding human interaction, that she endeavours to illuminate. As Sheila Murnaghan has underscored, Hamilton even took pains to dissociate Greek mythology from ‘irrationality’.  

Furthermore, one can only conclude from her published writings, private correspondence, and Doris Fielding Reid’s biographical retrospective about her that Edith Hamilton sought validation from a

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53 Reid 1967, 65–9, 79–80. Although Doris only mentions W.W. Norton, letters and diaries by his wife, whom Doris acknowledges along with her second husband as ‘Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Crena de Iongh’, document the power that she wielded within the publishing firm and the support that she afforded Edith Hamilton, in the 1920s and 1930s. I would like to thank her granddaughter, Alexia Norton Jones, for sharing this material with me.  

54 Alice Hamilton 1943, 4–17. Indeed, her introduction begins with some ‘striking pictures’ from what she calls ‘that anarchic period’, before the changes that she fought to institute in Illinois factories had taken place, including the narrative ‘of a Hungarian woman at Hull-House, telling me of a terrible accident in a steel mill on the South Shore in which her husband had been injured’ (4).  

55 Murnaghan 2005; see also Hallett ‘Mythology’, 126–8, and 2015.
middle-brow, mainstream, politically conservative Protestant reading public, particularly male readers. Her mistranslations of Greek—such as rendering plural pagan gods into an individual Christian God—furnish evidence to that end as well. So do her comments on the contemporary American scene, such as her gratuitous if veiled criticism of American workers and public education, and innuendos, in the guise of praising Athenian treatment of slaves, about government-sanctioned racial inequality in reaction to race-based slavery.

I realize that my analysis of Edith Hamilton’s intellectual stance and intended audience necessitates that I account for the magnetic sway that Edith Hamilton’s writings exerted over the highly intelligent and reflective mind of Robert F. Kennedy. A devout Catholic, humanitarian, and political progressive, in his campaigns for public office he reached out to precisely the demographic constituencies that she disparages in her essay on ‘The Ever-Present Past’. But what I have called her ‘Anglicizing’ way of writing seems to have charmed RFK, himself an Anglophile from a hard-core Anglophilic family. More important, through the sheer power of her lucid and lapidary language, and through her compelling readings of brief passages from Greek authors (more often than not ripped out of context), she wove a mesmerizing narrative about, *inter alia*, human fate, that brought him emotional solace and made his existence more meaningful in deeply painful, truly tragic personal circumstances.56

In calling attention to Hamilton’s perceived shortcomings as an American, classicist, and even educator, we must not lose sight of what an impressive figure she cut, and genuinely was. Above all, we can only admire the unorthodox trajectory of her writing career, and the risks she ventured in her ambitious project of sharing what she viewed the lessons of classical antiquity for a broadly constituted American reading public. It entailed, figuratively speaking, swimming far beyond her academic (and intellectual) depths.

But she managed to succeed brilliantly nonetheless, in part because of her great and good fortune. Not only have her books sold, and keep on selling. In contrast to other popularizing writers about the classical past,

56 Hallett ‘Anglicizing’, 162–5; see also the excellent analysis of Thomas 2000, 286–7, who uses ‘despite’ rather than ‘despair’ in quoting from her translation of the *Agamemnon*. He also quotes her translation of the line preceding ‘God, whose law it is that he who learns must suffer’, also a loose translation of *ton pathei mathos thentakyrios echein*. 
such as I.F. Stone, she was not publicly and seriously taken to task by classical scholars for her misrepresentations and eccentric ideas.\textsuperscript{57} And it is nothing short of extraordinary that Hamilton did not begin to write about the ancient Greco-Roman world for \textit{Theatre Arts Monthly}, and thence a wide reading public, until the age of nearly sixty.

The ‘preferential treatment’ accorded Greek antiquity in Hamilton’s writings is especially striking in the light of her educational background before she published \textit{The Greek Way} in 1929. As my summary of her classical training and teaching was intended to signal, her academic focus in both was Latin. In describing the education at Miss Porter’s, Doris states that ‘Latin and Greek, German conversation, drawing and music were well presented’, and proceeds to mention the annual visits of ‘Old Professor Seymour, father of Charles Seymour, the president of Yale’ to ‘take over the Greek and Latin classes’. She thereby implies that Edith studied Greek there.\textsuperscript{58}

But according to the records at Miss Porter’s, Edith only studied Latin there. Alice, however, did study Greek; in \textit{Exploring the Dangerous Trades}, she relates that she ‘read Tacitus, Horace and Lucretius with [Professor Seymour], and Aeschylus and Sophocles—not Euripides, for to Mr. Seymour that was only “Silver Greek.”’\textsuperscript{59} The Edith Hamilton materials archived in the Princeton University library include several notebooks from the years between Hamilton’s retirement from the Bryn Mawr School and the start of her writing career. Valuable evidence for how she ‘reconnected’ with the classical world after a long period away from formal classics study, they are largely filled with her translations of passages from Latin authors, Catullus chief among them, as well as excerpts from several secondary scholarly works.\textsuperscript{60}

Again, Doris Fielding Reid reports, Edith Hamilton claimed, on the basis of ‘extensive study’, to possess a close familiarity with the Greek language, and special insight into Greek culture for that reason. But

\textsuperscript{57} For a comparison between the generous reception accorded Hamilton and the harsher treatment handed out to (the in many ways similarly situated) Stone, see Hallett ‘Anglicizing’, 157–8.
\textsuperscript{58} Reid 1967, 32. Alice’s account of Seymour’s visits to Farmington correctly identifies him as ‘grandfather of Charles Seymour of Yale’.
\textsuperscript{59} Alice Hamilton 1943, 36–7.
\textsuperscript{60} Edith Hamilton Collection, Princeton University Library. The Catullus-translations, which employ Catullus’ Latin meters, were published in the chapter on Catullus in \textit{The Roman Way} (1932).
although she did pass muster in Greek by the high standards of Bryn Mawr College, earning two degrees there, Edith Hamilton did not do as much formal study of Greek, or undergo as much testing of her Greek, as she did in Latin. It is hardly surprising, then, that a learned Greek scholar and translator such as Helen Bacon, herself a Bryn Mawr College graduate, emphasized the mistranslations of Greek in Hamilton’s writings.

It bears repetition, too, that the individuals encouraging and promoting Hamilton’s efforts at writing about classical Greece—Doris and the Reids, John Mason Brown, Rosamund Gilder and Edith Isaacs—were not themselves knowledgeable about the language or its literature. The destination that they, and she, wanted her to reach through her explications of classical antiquity was commercial success. Consequently, the vision of the classical Greco-Roman world that they urged her to share with her audience, including her representation of Greek drama, differed drastically from that conceived and championed by utterly iconoclastic ‘female amateurs’ such as Eva Sikelianos. This classical vision, however, has had a powerful impact on the Americans that Hamilton’s writing educated, notwithstanding her complicated status as American, classicist, and educator.61

61 My thanks to Alice Reid Abbott, Clare Beirne, Dorrit Pfeiffer Castle, Edith Hall, Alexia Norton Jones, Donald Lateiner, Artemis Leontis, John McLucas, Maura McKnight, Wayne Millan, Beth Pfeiffer, Yopie Prins, Nicholas Rauh, Dorian Fielding Reid, Amy Richlin, Barbara Sicherman, Christopher Stray, and Susan Tracy for their assistance on this essay.
Margaret Alford (5 September 1868–29 May 1951)
The Unknown Pioneer

Roland Mayer

The year 1887 is remarkable in the annals of the Faculty of Classics at the University of Cambridge, since in that year a woman, Agnata Ramsay, was unofficially listed as having secured the highest first class result in the Tripos examination. This famous event generated a respectful cartoon in the magazine *Punch* on 2 July 1887.¹ In May of that same year the subject of this chapter, Margaret Alford, matriculated at Girton College, after having spent two terms, Michaelmas 1886 and Lent 1887, at Bedford College, London, where she was a Trustees Scholar. (She changed colleges because of weak lecturing at Bedford.)² At Girton, J. P. Postgate, a fellow of Trinity College and a champion of the higher education of women, supervised her Latin prose composition (a problem area for women classicists that will be discussed later); Alford always acknowledged her great debt to him.³ In 1890 she was in a way similar to Ramsay listed informally as equal with the best male candidate, the senior classic, in the first division of the first part of the Tripos (few men or women advanced to the second part of the Tripos in those days, as it was not necessary for

¹ The cartoon is reproduced in Breay (1999), 48 and can be accessed via Google Images.
² So according to Taylor (1951).
³ She notes his assistance, for example, in the preface to her first publication; Alford (1892), vi.
securing a degree).\(^4\) Once again Mr Punch noticed in the issue of 8 June 1890 a woman’s academic achievements, not with a cartoon but in verse:\(^5\)

'A Dream of Fair Women’—who shine in the Schools,
The Muse should essay ere her ardour quite cools.
Come, bards, take your lyres and most carefully tune ’em,
For Girton in glory now pairs off with Newnham.
Miss Fawcett the latter with victory wreathed,
And now, ere the males from their marvel are breathed,
Miss Margaret Alford, the niece of the Dean,\(^6\)
As a Classical First for the former is seen.
Let Girton toast Newnham, and Newnham pledge Girton,
And let male competitors put a brisk ‘spurt’ on,
Lest when modern Minerva adds learning to grace,
Young Apollo should find himself out of the race!

At the prize-giving in her old school, Maida Vale High School (a Girls’ Public Day School Company [later Trust] institution), on 12 December of that year she was presented with ‘a splendid bouquet [...] in commemoration of her distinguished success in the Cambridge Classical Tripos.’\(^7\) Since those heady celebrations, however, her name has been rather overshadowed and so it is my purpose to bring her into the light and to argue that she earned a place as a pioneer female classicist as much as any of her more dazzling contemporaries.

Let me first list her academic positions and functions after her non-graduation (women were not awarded degrees at Cambridge until just within my own lifetime, in 1948). From 1891–1917 she was a visiting lecturer at Girton, and held a similar post from 1894–1919 at Westfield College, London, an Anglican foundation for women. Something of a pluralist, Alford returned to Bedford College, where from 1904–9 she was Head of the Department of Latin. From 1918 to 1943 she managed the periodicals for the joint library of the Hellenic and the Roman Societies in London, and she served on the Council of the former society. I have not yet

\(^4\) The students of Girton were also required to keep pace with the men of the university in the taking of exams; Newnham recognized the need for extra time to catch up, see Breay (1999), 55.

\(^5\) My warmest thanks go to Chris Stray for providing me with the verses, and with a number of citations to come.

\(^6\) The Dean of Canterbury Cathedral, Henry Alford (1810–71), was the half-brother of Alford’s father.

\(^7\) The quotation is taken from Taylor (1951).
discovered when she left the university service in London, but from 1942–5 she served as the only woman on the editorial staff of the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*.\(^8\) She had already provided yeoman service for the Oxford University Press in the copy-editing of the ninth edition of Liddell—Scott—Jones (1940). Her assistance was moreover warmly praised by an impressive number of the German émigré scholars who had settled in Oxford (see Appendix). What is remarkable is that so much of this aid, usually with their English style, was on books on Greek subjects, demonstrating that Alford’s linguistic mastery was not limited to Latin prose literature, on which her published work was centred. She also worked on Lampe (1961–8) and the Index to Allen’s monumental edition of the letters of Erasmus (1906–58). In 1943 she was elected to an honorary fellowship of Girton and awarded an honorary MA by the University of Oxford (noted in *The Times* newspaper on 3 August of that year).

Well before assisting other scholars however she had published throughout her career as a university lecturer and into her retirement a number of books, chiefly commentaries on Latin prose works by Livy (1892 and 1933), Tacitus (1912), and Cicero (1929). Apart from the commentaries she published two works on translation (1902 and 1910), both of which received praise in reviews,\(^10\) and she reviewed a number of historical textbooks for the *Classical Review* between 1899 and 1903.\(^11\) Her concentration on Latin prose is immediately striking, since women were generally felt to be at a particular disadvantage in that medium. Girls started to learn Latin at school later than boys, who mastered at least its elements in their preparatory schools. The late start meant that they spent less time on the then crucial skill of prose composition, which was at the core of the

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\(^8\) Chris Stray, who had access to the Oxford University Press’s papers relating to the history of the publication of the dictionary, informs me that she was apparently sacked by J. M. Wyllie. ‘Miss Alford is a wonderful old lady, selflessly devoted to work on the Classics, and unwilling to take anything for what she does’, wrote Kenneth Sisam, Assistant Secretary and Secretary to the Delegates of the Oxford University Press to Wyllie, 28 March 1945, regarding Wyllie’s plan to reject her draft of the verb *facio* for the OLD.

\(^9\) Her translations and vocabularies suggest that she was particularly adroit at identifying the range of meanings a Latin word might possess.

\(^10\) The first, of which there were ten reprints up to 1956, was favourably ‘noticed’ by E. H. Blakeney in the *Classical Review* 16 (1902), 329, and the second anonymously in *The Spectator*, 4 June 1910, p. 29.

\(^11\) Postgate edited the journal from 1899 to 1907, so it may be supposed that he commissioned her reviews.
university curriculum.\textsuperscript{12} As a teacher Alford was alive to the problem, which she tackled when she was head of the Department of Latin at Bedford College. In a letter of 19 October 1908 to the Principal, Miss Tuke, she asked that a third hour of instruction in grammar and basic composition be added to the two hours per week devoted to the set books by the intermediate students.\textsuperscript{13} So Alford’s scholarly commitment to Latin prose authors is remarkable and suggests to me at any rate that she had an agenda. This is the point at which to provide some contextualization in order to strengthen the case for Alford as a significant pioneer in the academy.

Let me return first to the illustrious Agnata Ramsay. What became of her? She aspired to scholarship as her 1891 edition of Herodotus VIII in the Macmillan ‘Red’ series indicates. But the surname on the title page tells its own tale: she was no longer Miss Ramsay but Mrs Butler. She had married the Master of Trinity College, Henry Montagu Butler, and at a stroke thus found herself at the apex of the university’s social life. She had also become a mother.\textsuperscript{14} For our present purposes that is the end of her story. Scholarship and an academic career were no longer practicable.

Let me secondly recall two slightly older women who had also studied at Cambridge, and who were beginning to make names for themselves in classical scholarship, Jane Ellen Harrison and Eugénie Sellers (also known as Mrs Arthur Strong). Both women were undeniably at the scholarly cutting-edge, since they introduced and developed areas of research either new or new to British academia (Greek religion and Roman art history, respectively). But there was a fundamental reason why they directed their research interests into such untraditional (in British terms) fields: neither Harrison nor Sellers was much good at what passed for scholarship in the Cambridge of their day, namely the deployment of linguistic skills in translation and above all in composition, both

\textsuperscript{12} For the generally inadequate preparation of girls for the Classics programme at university see Breay (1999), 50–4.

\textsuperscript{13} The letter is the only one of hers to be found in the Bedford College archive, now kept in Royal Holloway, University of London. We see something of her generous spirit in that she asks that the students not be charged for the extra hour; she goes on to praise the teacher who looked after the intermediate group in her absence. I am assured that her correspondence, preserved in the Hergest Trust, Kington, Herefordshire, UK, provides ample evidence of her quiet generosity.

\textsuperscript{14} For details of her life see Delamont (2004).
verse and prose.\textsuperscript{15} Sellers, whose education on the European continent did little to prepare her for the Cambridge curriculum when she matriculated at Girton College in 1879, had only secured a third-class in the first part of the Tripos, Harrison a second.\textsuperscript{16} That is one reason why Harrison was passed over in 1880 when her college, Newnham, was appointing a classical lecturer; a woman who had fared better on the linguistic side got the post, because linguistic expertise was what needed to be taught if the ‘sweet girl graduate’ was to make her mark in a male-dominated discipline.\textsuperscript{17} A further point about Harrison and Sellers may be made: they developed their interests and secured their reputations outside the academy, or at any rate as exceptions to the normal career path. Sellers was based at the British School at Rome, and Harrison made her mark initially as a free lance lecturer in London. That indeed was another reason why she was not made college lecturer in 1880: it was felt that her interest was chiefly in archaeological research, whereas Newnham needed hands-on supervision. Even when Harrison returned to Newnham in 1898 it was as a special lecturer; day-to-day teaching was not, and never had been her function. A final consideration: neither Harrison nor Sellers ever managed a university department.

It is time to return to Alford. Her career looks entirely normal nowadays, but at the time she was exceptional, if compared to the more high-profile Harrison and Strong. Alford held teaching posts for over twenty years of her academic life; she was a head of department in a university college; she had a respectable record of steady publication. In short, she looks just like us (except that in those days one did not need a doctorate—or even a degree!—to teach in a university). How can that ordinariness justify her as a pioneer? First of all, she could not have had such a career in Oxford or Cambridge, which did not appoint female lecturers, though their women’s colleges did. So running a department in a London University college gave

\textsuperscript{15} Breay (1999), 53 describes in detail the classical curriculum in girls’ schools, in which, compared to boys’, less class-time was given to the languages and it was spent on translation rather than composition.

\textsuperscript{16} For Sellers’s education see Dyson (2004), 12 and 22, and for Harrison’s time at Cambridge Breay (1999), 60–1. Harrison took the old, undivided Tripos, which had papers in philosophy and history, thus somewhat diluting the emphasis on linguistic command. Sellers was the victim of the new, divided Tripos, the first part of which concentrated on translation and composition, the very areas in which female students were at a distinct disadvantage.

\textsuperscript{17} The quotation is the title of Meade (1891).
Alford considerable administrative responsibilities, which she managed very well. Margaret J. Tuke in her history of Bedford College reckoned that Classics, during Alford’s tenure as Head of its Latin Department, enjoyed a Golden Age; the number of students rivalled that of the English department and formed one-third of the total number of honours graduates. What Tuke does not say, though it is clear from her list of heads of department, is that Alford was the first woman to hold the post; hitherto it had been in the hands of men. This is important: a woman had to be seen to be as competent as a man at running the show. Alford achieved this; Ramsay, Harrison, and Sellers never had to demonstrate whether or not they could have managed it.

But much more important is her scholarship, produced, it needs to be stressed, in the time left over from teaching and administering (not something Harrison or Sellers had to contend with). Alford’s focus was exclusively on the prose of Livy, Tacitus, and Cicero, and her work convincingly demonstrated that a woman could master that elaborate medium as well as any male scholar. The issue may be defined as the ownership of philology. Harrison and Strong had staked no claim in that traditional territory, for the compelling reason that they would have fallen at the first fence. But if women were to be taken seriously as scholars they had to make their mark in the traditional sphere of philological activity. Opening up new territories of research was undeniably commendable and it brought British scholarship up to date, but Greek religion and Roman art were never going to be at the heart of a classical education, either in school or in university. Alford showed that a woman could not just survive, but succeed in a traditionally male preserve, mastery of Latin prose, which was still the cornerstone of classical training at every educational level. It is therefore arguable that Alford chose a more hazardous path than her older contemporaries, because everything she published would be scrutinized critically by a much wider and well-informed readership of (male) dons and schoolmasters, for whom and for whose students she was expressly writing. Unlike Harrison or Sellers, she challenged male academics on their own ground, and in my opinion she surpassed

18 Tuke (1939), 251. 19 Tuke (1939), 343. 20 What’s more, after 1903 when her father retired from his parish she took on the traditional role of the unmarried daughter and looked after her parents. Her father died in 1914 so she cared for her mother until 1927.
many of them in her achievement. She is also I believe unique among women of the period, since I do not know of any other British female classical scholar who published as much in this line as she did; this again suggests to me the existence of an agenda.21

Let me now offer an appreciation of that scholarship. It was noted earlier that Alford’s published books were all commentaries, with one exception, the collection of passages for unseen translation (1902) and its follow-up volume of 1910, the Versions of the passages; a word may now be said about that book of translations. Alford provided it with a brief introduction in which she set out her principles for the production of translation into ‘English that is English’.22 This aim remained a leading feature of the guidance and glosses she provided in her annotations on prose texts. She also says in the introduction that she secured advice from K. Jex-Blake, T. E. Page, and J. Duff, the latter two themselves able commentators. The striking feature of the presentation is that the versions are equipped with notes elucidating particular points of grammar (with reference to standard books) or meaning; historical and other matters are also explained. So in effect Alford produced a mini-commentary on the Latin texts and the versions. We may now turn to the commentaries proper.

Alford’s commentaries have a number of common features. She was alive to the difficulties both students and their teachers, especially if female, had with understanding and unravelling the intricacies of Latin art-prose. She was therefore scrupulous in explaining syntactical issues and she helpfully directed her readers to more than one of the standard Anglophone grammars.23 In her first publication (1892) she used only two, Postgate (1888) and Allen (1874) Elementary Latin Grammar. In her Tacitus (1912) she dropped Allen (it was designed only for use in schools), loyally kept Postgate and added Roby (1889), Gildersleeve—Lodge (1895), and Hale—Buck (1903); clearly nothing was being left to chance and the reader could not complain of lack of guidance. Finally, for her second commentary on a book of Livy, she reduced the number of grammars

21 Indeed, it is worth mentioning that the average male academic in the British universities of the day did not publish much.

22 Alford (1910), v–ix.

23 She later also referenced specialist grammars in German and French, but that only shows the care she took to understand the syntax herself; not many of her readers can have followed her down that route.
cited, probably because this volume appeared in the elementary classics series;\textsuperscript{24} Postgate is the hardy perennial, with the fresh support of Kennedy—Mountford (1930), which had opportuneley appeared in that year. Thanks to her command of the available grammars she was in a position to recognize when they gave inadequate coverage. For instance, in her Cicero commentary she noted that the use of the present tense referring to the future in conditionals was far more extensive than the grammars let on.\textsuperscript{25}

It has already been noted that Alford was equally alive to the persistent problem of encouraging students to translate Latin into ‘English that is English’.\textsuperscript{26} Two features of her work address the issue. Her Livy volumes are both equipped with vocabularies, and the later of them shows much greater variety of possible renderings. For instance in 1892 forte was glossed simply ‘by chance’, whereas in 1933 Alford set out alternatives: ‘by chance; at a hazard; as it happened or fell out; often to be rendered by using happen to’. Secondly, she regularly offered both a literal translation and a more refined English version (in no fixed order). This practice becomes a principle in her final work on Livy, in which she consistently offers two translations, one in idiomatic English, and, within square brackets, an alternative closer to the Latin and so illustrating either the core meaning of the word glossed or the construction of the phrase. For instance at 2.5.1 res integra refertur ad patres she glossed integra as follows: ‘for reconsideration’, ['untouched', 'in its original state']. The student is thus reassured that the literal sense of the adjective, as provided in the Vocabulary, would be inappropriate in the translation of this particular expression. At 2.3.2 there are two glosses for the phrase tenui loco orti: 'of undistinguished birth' ['born in an und. Position']; the reader is given a literal translation which sorts out the syntax, but is encouraged to a freer but more idiomatically English expression. At 2.15.2 in vicem animi sollicitarentur is first translated thus: 'we should not distress each other'; then within square brackets the literal rendering is provided thus: 'our feelings should not be distressed by reciprocal action'. This strategy, consistently pursued, helps the student with clues to the correct analysis of the original syntax, whilst insensibly making the tyro recognize that the idioms of Latin and of English are so different that

\textsuperscript{24} Alford (1933). \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{25} Alford (1929), 128. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{26} Alford (1910), v–ix.
literal rendition is actually unsatisfactory translation. Finally, at the end of this outstanding little volume, there is a series, in fifty-three sections, of ‘Remarks on translating and on syntax’, to which I now turn.\(^{27}\)

The initial series of remarks is focused on the core differences between English and Latin sentence construction. Alford is at pains to reassure the student that abandoning the run of the Latin original is often the only way to produce acceptable English. She provides ample illustration of the principles to be followed, and these often justify her own glosses provided in the commentary, as outlined earlier. After the general observations there follow numbered paragraphs on Livy’s style (often with an eye to its differences from Ciceronian practice)\(^{28}\) and on Latin usage more generally, with advice on the best ways to render the Latin into English. The notes in the commentary are in fact cross-referenced to these Remarks; for example, vadentem at 2.12.8 is given no fewer than three cross references, so that the diligent student will learn from the Remarks that there is a general stylistic practice or principle of which the particular passage is only an instance.\(^{29}\)

Alford followed these principles in her commentaries on Tacitus (1912) and Cicero (1929), but some adjustment was needed to introduce the student to the peculiarities of Tacitus’ style and of Cicero’s in his letters. In her Introduction to the Tacitus, she offers nearly thirty pages by way of elucidation of his usage, noting his debt to poetry.\(^{30}\) For Cicero, she provided both Additional Notes and an index, the second of two, on Latin words, syntax, and usage, sometimes supplementing the commentary.\(^{31}\) For instance, such issues as ‘ellipse’ or ‘epistolary tenses’ or that tricky adverb *tamen* are all either discussed in the notes or information on them is brought together within the index. The Cicero also has another and peculiar feature: the commentary to each letter is prefaced with a paraphrase of the contents, so detailed that it sometimes serves as a translation. This is helpful given the unfamiliar conversational style of

\(^{27}\) Alford (1933), 166–81.

\(^{28}\) This was important for students working at Latin prose composition, in which imitation of a particular model author was often required.

\(^{29}\) One of the more refreshing observations is to be found on p. 167 where Alford allows that ‘Livy himself seems to have become slightly confused’ in the composition of the sentence at 12.2; Alford (1933), 167. It is indeed an instance of anacoluthon, and so can be added to the rogues’ gallery of such bungled periods assembled by Mayer (2005), 199–204.

\(^{30}\) Alford (1912), xxii–li.

\(^{31}\) Alford (1929), 261–71.
the writing. From these general matters I can now turn to some special features of the commentaries.

Alford’s first work of scholarship was the elementary commentary on Livy, Book 5.\textsuperscript{32} This little book, to which illustrations were added in 1902, had twelve reprints up to 1953. In the preface Alford warmly acknowledged the assistance of her teacher, J. P. Postgate. The Introduction includes four pages describing ‘emendations and various readings’,\textsuperscript{33} a feature perhaps unusual in a work at such an elementary level, but which immediately marks it out as a piece of genuine scholarship: the reader, even at this ‘elementary’ stage, is being alerted to the fragility of the transmission of classical texts. When she uses and describes technical terms, such as dittography, she refers the student to the once popular \textit{Companion} of Gow (1888).

Alford’s second commentary, on Tacitus, \textit{Histories} Book I, was much more ambitious.\textsuperscript{34} This valuable work was unfortunately never reprinted, perhaps because the University of London press was always a second-string publisher. This may also account for his ignorance of her commentary when Irvine (1952), 1 and 4 was preparing his own for Methuen. The Preface states her aim to make the work useful to the teacher as well as the student reader (all accounts of Alford note what an excellent teacher she was: patient and supportive).\textsuperscript{35} She further highlights in the Preface an interest to explain ‘the method [Tacitus] follows in telling his story’.\textsuperscript{36} Her notes to §39.1 and §41.3, \textit{trunco iam corpori}, exemplify this aim, particularly in the way Tacitus deploys what we would now call narrative ellipse (Cynthia Damon agrees ad loc.).\textsuperscript{37} Likewise her note on §72.3 \textit{donec Tigellinus, accepto apud Sinuessanas aquas supremae necessitatis nuntio, inter stupra concubinarum et oscula et deformes moras sectis nouacula faucibus infamem uitam foedauit}, shows how alert she is to both Tacitus’ characteristic narrative compression and his moralizing: ‘they clamoured

\textsuperscript{32} Alford (1892).
\textsuperscript{33} Alford (1892) xiv–xvii.
\textsuperscript{34} Alford (1912).
\textsuperscript{35} I rely here on Taylor (1951), whose brief appreciation is based on a number of personal letters now kept in the archive of Girton College, Cambridge.
\textsuperscript{36} Alford (1912) v.
\textsuperscript{37} Alford (1912) 167–8 and 173. Damon (2002). I should like to say here that it was Damon’s frequent citation of Alford that wakened my interest in this neglected scholar. Like Irvine I had never encountered her work on Tacitus, which is clearly significant. It is deplorable to record that the copy of her commentary which I finally secured for myself had been de-accessioned from the Girton College library: it was Miss Alford’s gift to her, not ‘alma mater’, but ‘ingrata noverca’ (thankless stepmother).
till Otho yielded and sent word to Tigellinus that he must die; but Tacitus includes in the donec clause his account of the death and his judgment upon it; the principal verb of the donec clause expresses not any outward act of Tigellinus, but the moral quality of his act.38

Alford devised her own format to produce an innovative layout of the Latin text: each section of Tacitus’ narrative is prefaced with a résumé of its content including cross-references to other historical sources (Plutarch and Suetonius, chiefly).

Her feel for Tacitean prose style is manifest throughout the commentary; a straightforward example is her note to §40.2, where she stresses ‘the effect of the succession of two-word phrases in suggesting the sudden intrush’.39 But the refinement of her observations on his style is best seen in points neglected by subsequent commentators. For instance at the end of §46.5 Tacitus recorded the execution of some of Galba’s supporters, in particular that of the freedman Icelus, whom Galba had elevated to equestrian status: in Marcianum Icelum ut in libertum palam animadversum. Alford reckoned that ‘the dignified cognomen is added to emphasize how little knighthood availed’.40 Or again, her note on the sense of exprobratur at §37.5 strikes me as absolutely right, though her successors have not followed her: the soldiers are not being ‘reproved’ for demanding a donative, rather the donative is ‘being mentioned in speeches as though it constituted a claim on them . . . a benefactor who dwells on his good deeds is said exprobrare, without any idea of reproach being suggested’.41 So her translation ‘which you never hear the last of’ is spot on.

But the refinements of Tacitean narrative and prose style are not her sole interest. In the Preface Alford drew attention to her use of the Prosopographia Imperii Romani and of inscriptional evidence generally.42 On p. 142 she encouraged her reader to visit the ancient life room of the British Museum, since Realien make a historical text come alive. On pp. 181–2 she drew attention to the then recently discovered funeral urn of Piso and Verania. This physical object is not mentioned by subsequent commentators, but its existence brings the narrative to life: these events happened in a real world and material evidence supports the tale. Similarly she was alert to recent excavations in Rome which revealed

structures referred to in the historical narrative; in general she strove to provide the reader with a sense of the actual appearance of Tacitus’ Rome.

Alford’s third commentary was on Cicero’s Letters to Atticus, Book 2, which she dedicated to Postgate, who had died in 1926.\textsuperscript{43} She had published some preliminary notes on the book in the Classical Review,\textsuperscript{44} which itself was reviewed by Vesey (1931) in the same journal.\textsuperscript{45} In this work, more than in any other, Alford engaged closely with textual problems. For instance, in the Preface, she drew attention to some improvements, viz the retention of \textit{transire} at 19.3, and at 24.3 the removal of \textit{publica} suggested by Manutius (Shackleton Bailey agrees with both proposals).\textsuperscript{46} At 12.3 she printed \textit{desederit} (the context suggests wine lees settling), a reading only finally accepted by Shackleton Bailey in his Loeb edition (1999). In the commentary proper she sometimes offers an explanation in palaeographical terms for a corruption and for the restoration of the correct reading.\textsuperscript{47} Most interesting is her own conjectural addition at 24.4 of \textit{et salutem} before \textit{et dignitatem}; in his Cambridge edition of the letters to Atticus Shackleton Bailey (1965), 270 was unaware that his own addition of \textit{salutem et} between those two words had in effect been anticipated. W. S. Watt, however, did at least record the conjecture in his Oxford Classical Text (1965), and Shackleton Bailey subsequently noted it in his Teubner (1987) and Loeb editions (1999).

\textsuperscript{43} Alford (1929).
\textsuperscript{44} Alford (1927). Shackleton Bailey (1965) regularly engaged with these notes in his own monumental Cambridge edition of the Letters to Atticus, though as will become clear he was not aware of the separate edition of the second book for some time. It is worth recording that in his notes on 21 (II.1) 9 \textit{tulit}, he merely drew attention to a suggestion of Alford’s, but in his Addenda to Volume I, published in the seventh and final volume (1970), 85, he noted that her suggestion had been revived and developed by Lily Ross Taylor.
\textsuperscript{45} Vesey’s review is favourable overall, but he was particularly exercised by Alford’s interpretation of the phrase \textit{nihil esse tanti} in 2.13.2, and he went to considerable pains to refute her; Shackleton Bailey takes the expression exactly as she did. Like her he also explains without recourse to alteration the somewhat oddly phrased alternative expression at 2.21.6, which Vesey found unintelligible as it stood. Vesey faulted Alford’s acceptance of the conjecture \textit{bonos for nos} at 2.22.1, but Shackleton Bailey accepted it too. On balance then a number of Vesey’s criticisms appear to miss the mark. Beard (2002) 114, n.34 recognized this commentary as a work of serious scholarship.
\textsuperscript{46} Alford (1929) viii.
\textsuperscript{47} See, for example, Alford (1929) 133–4, 142 (on \textit{Atti}), and 151.
The layout of the material in the book demonstrates Alford’s experimental approach to presenting information in the most user-friendly way. There are twenty pages of Additional Notes, fourteen in number, on such issues as sending letters, book-publishing, the broader political situation, and, as already mentioned, some peculiar features of Ciceronian epistolary style. She decided to produce two indexes, the first of which, devoted to proper nouns, provides full information not found in the commentary on people and places.

Finally, Alford seems to have had now sufficient confidence in her status as a commentator that she sometimes enlivened her notes with contemporary allusions. For instance, she noted that Cicero frequently found that the political boni did not show themselves to be good rather as British political Liberals proved illiberal and Conservatives rash.48

Alford’s final work was the commentary on Livy, Book 2.49 Its format is much the same as that of the earlier commentary on Book 5, but here ‘hanging’ notes in the margin of the text identify briefly the content of the narrative. Discussion of textual variants is now included in the commentary rather than in the introduction, so that it is less easily ignored. Alford’s judgment of the text to be printed deserves comment. It would have been easy simply to reprint the Oxford Classical Text of Conway and Walters (1914), but it would have been academically irresponsible not to assess independently the available readings. It is noteworthy that in a number of cases where she prints a text different from that of the then current Oxford Classical Text her opinion is corroborated in the second edition of Ogilvie (1974).

I have concentrated on Alford as a scholar, since it is her scholarship above all which justifies her claim to be a pioneer, but something should briefly be added about her upbringing and personal life.50 Her father, Bradley Hurt Alford, was, as hinted earlier, a Church of England clergyman, whose parish church in London, St Luke’s, Nutford Place, off the Edgware Road was destroyed in the Second World War (she is said to have shown great sang froid during the Blitz). The social reformer Octavia Hill

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48 Alford (1929), 161. 49 Alford (1933).
50 My information is based on an unsigned obituary in The Times, 5 June 1951, and on Taylor (1951) 3–4. I here gladly express my thanks for assistance to Hannah Westall, archivist at Girton College, to Annabel Gill, archivist at Royal Holloway, University of London, and most particularly to Heather Pegg, archivist of the Hergest Trust (Alford family documents) and Alford’s relative, Lawrence Banks.
was one of his parishioners. Alford taught his daughter ancient Greek, and family legend claims that she spoke it at the age of four. Thus it is not surprising that when Alford arrived at Cambridge the formidable Katharine Jex-Blake said she was the only Girtonian to know more Greek than herself. Alford attended a London day-school (mentioned at the beginning of this chapter), the educational aim of which was to enable girls to take their place in wider society. When Cambridge was getting round to considering the award of degrees to women, she engaged, uncharacteristically, in a serious row with her uncle, the eminent orientalist Sir Charles James Lyall, who opposed the innovation (he was a Balliol man, and Oxford had already decided ‘non possumus’ (‘we cannot’)). Given the advanced circles in which Alford was reared it is no surprise that she was a supporter of women’s suffrage and of the Workers’ Educational Association (an institution founded in 1903 and strongly supported by her father). In later life she aligned herself with the Christian Socialists. A committed Christian, who held Bible classes, she moved in the direction of Anglo-Catholicism at St Matthew’s, Bayswater, where she was a regular worshipper. Her social concern is manifested in her edition of Livy Book II, where she compared the debt-burdened smallholders of ancient Rome to contemporary Indian peasants. Her family were prosperous and great travellers, ranging as far afield as Japan; I would guess that Alford’s references to objects to be found in museums, for instance, in Palermo, are based on autopsy. By the same token in her translation of Cicero, Tusculan Disputations 5.64–6, she provides a very learned note on the portas Agragentinas (sic), in which she controverts the most recent archaeological reports in both the Italian and the German versions; this must be based on her own knowledge of the site. Ascetic in her personal habits, she preferred walking to the use of public transport because it gave her time to think. She had a wide range of interests. She was a photographer, and developed her own films; she was a violinist and had played in the Cambridge University Musical Society orchestra. She never married.

Let me now draw my argument to a close. My purpose has been straightforward, to promote recognition of Margaret Alford as a pioneer.

51 It may be worth observing that Jex-Blake is not included among our pioneers because she published only one piece of scholarship, the translation in the volume co-authored with Sellers; Jex-Blake and Sellers (1889).
52 Alford (1933), xiv. 53 Alford (1912), 196. 54 Alford (1910), 158.
female classicist in Britain. It would be reasonable to ask why she has not been recognized before now. A partial answer is that her first three books gave her name as M. Alford, with no indication of her gender. That she was identified in some printings of the title pages as lecturer at Westfield College would not necessarily have given the game away, since men were hired to lecture at women’s institutions. Furthermore two of her commentaries, the ones on Livy, appeared in the humblest of Macmillan’s series, the Elementary Classics (though to my mind there is nothing very elementary about either), and might as such be dismissed as lightweight. It was also unfortunate that she chose the less than energetic University of London press as the publisher of her major commentary on the first book of Tacitus’ Histories. It was never reprinted, whilst Macmillan kept all her other books in print. It is therefore not so surprising that Irvine (1952) was unaware of its existence, though there is less excuse for D. R. Shackleton Bailey to have been unaware of her full-scale commentary on the second book of Cicero’s letters to Atticus. What with one thing and another Alford has quite simply been overlooked, perhaps most of all because she was not an exotic like Jane Ellen Harrison or Eugénie Sellers Strong. Those women deservedly made their mark by advancing English classical scholarship into new territory. Alford on the other hand appears altogether less impressive, because her genre, commentaries on standard authors, is so traditional and mainstream. It must therefore be emphasized just how remarkable that achievement was for a woman of her day. Additionally, the guess has been hazarded that she had, consciously or not, an agenda, to wrest traditional philology from the hands of men by demonstrating in a variety of volumes that a woman could master the intricacies of Latin Kunstprosa (art-prose) as varied as Cicero’s, Livy’s, and Tacitus’. Unlike some other academic women of her day she published regularly. Though she never published scholarly work on Greek literature it is clear from her later work for the Oxford University Press that she was fully competent in that department and she secured many accolades, printed in an appendix to this chapter, from the greatest male scholars of the day. Finally on her behalf a paradox has been advanced, that the very ordinariness of her career was crucial in establishing the female scholar in a male academic world: she did everything the men did—teach, administer, publish (and rather more) with a high competence. That was not glamorous, but it was essential if women were to take their rightful place beside men in traditional classical scholarship.
Appendix of Later Accolades for Alford

Liddell—Scott—Jones (1940), xiv, Postscript, June 1940: ‘Miss Margaret Alford, who bears an honoured name, helped Sir Henry Stuart Jones in the compilation of the Addenda, and since his death, with the collaboration of Professor Maas in the final stages, has performed the laborious duty of preparing the Addenda for Part 10 and for correcting the proofs of the whole.’

Jacoby, F. (1949), Atthis, Oxford, Preface p. vi: ‘Thanks... are due... more especially to Miss Margaret Alford, M. A. (Oxon.), who not only gave an unstinted amount of time to the stylistic presentation of the text, but also encouraged the author by her lively interest in the subject-matter, without which the formal task of correcting style would have been a rather soulless affair.’

Pfeiffer, R. (1949), Callimachus, Oxford: vol. 1, p. ix: ‘succurrit denique Margareta Alford, Artium Magistra, docta strenua indefessa, id summa cum patientia contendens et laborans ne quid erroris in afferendis testimoniiis ceterisque scriptorum locis relinqueretur neve typothetis nimia praebentur difficulftatem quae manu mea satis indistincte scripsisse.’ (Finally, Margaret Alford, Mistress of Arts, came to my rescue. Learned, hard-working, tireless, she most patiently strove with might and main to remove any errors in the citation of witnesses or of other textual references and to clear up for the printers the excessive difficulties my indistinct handwriting produced.)

Fraenkel, E. (1950), Aeschylus Agamemnon, Oxford: vol. 1, p. xiii: ‘In the last ten years the name of Miss Margaret Alford has appeared more than once in the prefaces of works of Greek scholarship published by the Clarendon Press... An indefatigable worker, Spartan in the austerity of her life, a rigid and accomplished grammarian, Miss Alford is at the same time the soul of gentleness. Of her genuine understanding of great poetry I have ample proof.’

55 My translation.
56 Chris Stray suggests Fraenkel meant ‘rigorous’.
57 Note her citations of Dryden and of Milton in her commentary to Livy 5.5.10 and 51.6 respectively. In her Tacitus commentary, Alford (1912), 118, she quotes Sheridan’s Critic for the ‘puff oblique’, on pp. 125 and 219: Byron’s Childe Harold, and on p. 188 Milton (a famous passage). She also referenced Byron’s poem in her notes to the translation of Servius Sulpicius’ letter to Cicero, Ad fam. 4.5.4; Alford (1910), 79. In the Cicero commentary, she
English version of my commentary, correcting errors of the translators and blunders of my own, and giving me, always with disarming modesty, all sorts of invaluable advice.

Cyril Bailey to E. Fraenkel, 24 Sept 1950 (Fraenkel papers, Corpus Christi College, Oxford): 'I was specially delighted to see your para about Miss Alford, which, if I may say so, I thought beautifully put. She has, as you say, done much for Oxford scholarship and received little recognition.'

compared his reference to the Chimaera to Bottom's 'sucking dove', 'had it been born'; Alford (1929), 162.

58 Thanks again to Chris Stray for this extract.
13

Eli’s Daughters
Female Classics Graduate Students at Yale, 1892–1941

Judith P. Hallett

The Eli of my title is literally Elihu Yale (1649–1721), from whom Yale University, in New Haven, Connecticut, took its name in 1718. Records suggest that this British merchant, born in the New England colony of Massachusetts, fathered biological sons on both sides of the blanket.¹ Yet the phrase ‘sons of Eli’ has for generations resonated as a figurative description of the undergraduate male enrollees at Yale University: most memorably in a football fight song written by the renowned American composer and lyricist Cole Porter, who graduated from Yale College in 1913. Its refrain begins and ends with ‘Bulldog, Bulldog, Bow wow wow, Eli Yale’, avowing, ‘When the sons of Eli break through the line, that is the sign we hail.’² Regrettably, Porter neglected to mention Eli’s daughters, women who graced Yale’s halls of learning long before he wrote ‘Bulldog’ in 1911. To be sure, Yale did not admit female undergraduates to Yale College until 1969, 58 years later.³ Nor were female faculty much in evidence before

¹ For the origins of Yale as ‘Yale College’, see Schiff (2000) and Oren (1985) xiii and 308–9; for the life of Elihu Yale, see Scarisbrick and Zucker (2014).
² For Porter’s ‘Yale football songs’, see Schwartz (1979) 24–5; ‘Bulldog’ is considered ‘the’ Yale ‘Fight Song’.
³ See Schiff (2000), ‘1969: 230 women entered the freshman class and 358 women transfer students registered in Yale College’; see also Oren (1985) 214, 224, who contextualizes the decision by Yale University to admit women undergraduates to Yale College at that time.
then. In his study of classical scholars forced to flee from their native Germany upon the Nazis’ rise to power, Hans-Peter Obermayer documents that in 1935 the accomplished Etruscologist Eva Lehmann Fiesel only succeeded in obtaining work at Yale as a research assistant to its professor of classical linguistics, Edgar H. Sturtevant (whereas New York University’s Institute of Fine Arts offered her younger brother Karl Lehmann-Hartleben a professorship that same year). As Sturtevant’s colleague Eduard Prokosch, a German émigré himself, explained, ‘she cannot possibly be placed on the Yale faculty, since Yale does not employ any women except in the Medical School.’ According to the official list of ‘Milestones in the Education of Women at Yale’, Yale only began awarding tenure to individual female faculty members in the 1950s.

Nevertheless, other milestones listed in this volume include the admission of women to Yale’s graduate school in 1892, and the awarding of the first PhDs to women in 1894 in substantial numbers. The following year, 1895, Yale bestowed its first PhD in classics on a woman: Susan Dinsmore Tew, an 1892 graduate of the all-female Smith College in neighbouring Massachusetts. Tew completed her doctorate in three years, with a dissertation entitled ‘Notes on the Vocabulary of Aeschylus’; she later served as Professor of Greek at Sophie Newcomb Memorial College, the female division of Tulane University in New Orleans, from 1902 until 1938.

My discussion spotlights three exceptional females who followed Tew’s path—Barbara Philippa McCarthy, Margaret E. Taylor, and Hazel Barnes—by earning classics PhDs from Yale in 1929, 1933, and

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4 Obermayer (2014) 23, quoting a letter from Prokosch which is addressed to John H. Whyte of the Emergency Committee to Aid Displaced Foreign Scholars. See also Obermayer 108–32, on Karl Lehmann-Hartleben, and 130–1, on Fiesel’s career in the US at the all-female Bryn Mawr College, and her early death at age 46 in 1937.

5 Schiff (2000): ’1952: First woman received tenure, Bessie Lee Gambrill in the Department of Education; 1959: First woman received tenure in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.’

6 Schiff (2000): ’1892: Women admitted to the Yale Graduate School; 1894: First group of women awarded Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Yale. At the 1894 Commencement, seven out of the twenty-one Ph.D. recipients were women.’

7 For Tew, see Briggs (1994c); I would like to thank the staff at the Yale University Archives, especially Michael Lotstein and Judith Schiff, for making it possible for me to examine the materials in their collection about Tew and the other Yale PhDs in classics discussed in this essay (i.e. Hazel Barnes, John F. Latimer, Mitchell Levenson, Cora E. Lutz, Barbara P. McCarthy, Margaret E. Taylor).
1941 respectively. According to a volume published by the Yale University Office of Institutional Research in 1983, there were twenty-seven women who received PhDs in Classics from Yale during the time period covered by this study, from 1892 until 1941. Regrettably, this volume of vital statistics on Yale’s female graduate students only furnishes numbers, and does not provide the names of these women. The Yale Classics Department does not apparently keep a record of their names, either. Consequently, I have been able to identify only two others in this female cohort, Tew and Cora Lutz, Barnes’ own undergraduate teacher, both to be discussed again later. If and when more information emerges about the other twenty-two, enabling me to investigate a larger ‘cluster’ of women who earned Yale Classics PhDs during this half-century, I will be able to situate this trio in a larger institutional context, and consider other ways in which they both resemble and differ from the members of their cohort. The similarities among the five women I have been able to investigate, however, are striking, and will receive both emphasis and explanation as I examine the kind of research on classical antiquity that they undertook and published.

Two of the women I spotlight—McCarthy and Taylor—taught me from 1963–1966, when I was an undergraduate at Wellesley College, like Smith an all-female, private New England liberal arts institution in Massachusetts. The third, Barnes—who was employed for most of her career at a large, coeducational public institution, the University of Colorado at Boulder—was an admired personal acquaintance. Best known for introducing French Existentialist thought to the US through her translation of Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*, Barnes has facilitated my research by publicly sharing her Yale and other academic experiences in a 1997 memoir, *The Story I Tell Myself: A Venture in Existentialist Autobiography*.

My discussion looks at the educational, family, and social backgrounds of these three women along with their contributions to the discipline and profession of classics, considering how their experiences at Yale helped to shape these contributions. It concludes by pondering the applicability of the term ‘women classical scholars’, the topic of this volume, to these three women. First, however, let me situate their graduate training in

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8 See the section in Pierson (1983) on ‘Women PhDs in Classical Languages and Literature’.
classics at this storied Ivy League institution in a larger historical and academic context. In so doing, I will foreground Yale’s reputation as an elite, masculinist environment less than hospitable to women and minorities: an institution of higher learning with educational priorities besides (and indeed other than) academic excellence.

When coming of age more than a half-century ago, I, like many members of the American public, associated the name ‘Yale’ first and foremost with the sweet strains of their undergraduate a capella vocal group known as the ‘Whiffenpoofs’. In their celebrated self-identifying lyrics, crooned over the airwaves by such popular performers as Rudy Vallee (class of 1927), Bing Crosby, and Perry Como, these ‘gentlemen songsters’ helplessly proclaimed, ‘we’re poor little lambs who have lost our way... little black sheep who have gone astray.’ Nowadays, though, ‘Yale’ increasingly combines with the rhyming adjectives ‘pale’ and ‘male’ to evoke American purveyors of power: our white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, expensively educated, socially advantaged, testosterone-fuelled establishment, which wields a strong, conservative influence in business, politics, and academia. Some would even characterize Yale, at least before it admitted female undergraduates in 1969, as ‘misogynistic’.

After all, by the late nineteenth century its Ivy League ‘sister’ Harvard, in Massachusetts, had created a separate ‘annex’ for undergraduate women’s education, which evolved into the all-female Radcliffe College. In Yale’s defence, however, it did not lock its doors to women, nor close its eyes to their endeavours, like another ‘sister Ivy’, Princeton University in New Jersey. Indeed, unlike Princeton, Yale gradually expanded from...
an undergraduate college into a university incorporating professional
schools in fields—medicine, nursing, education, fine arts, law, drama—
more welcoming to women than Yale’s foundational ‘Collegiate’ unit of
Arts and Sciences, in which its Classics Department was located.13

Furthermore, ‘sons of Eli’ recognized, and supported, classically edu-
cated women, and the classical education of women. In her autobiog-
raphy, Alice Hamilton, MD, the first woman appointed to the Harvard
Medical School faculty, recalls that while she and her older sister Edith
attended the all-female Miss Porter’s School in Farmington, near
Hartford, Connecticut, from 1884 until 1888, they both studied Latin
literature, and Alice studied Greek literature, with Nathan Perkins
Seymour, quintessential ‘Old Blue’ (as Yale men are metaphorically
called). A retired classics professor at Western Reserve University in
Ohio who had graduated from Yale in 1834, Seymour was the father of
Yale Greek professor Thomas Day Seymour and grandfather of Charles
Seymour, Yale’s president from 1937 until 1951.14

Nathan P. Seymour’s courses spurred the Hamilton sisters to prepare
for serious academic study of the liberal arts and sciences respectively,
Edith at the all-female Bryn Mawr College, Alice at the University of
Michigan. Fittingly, Yale recognized Edith Hamilton’s writings on Greek
(as well as Roman) antiquity by awarding her an honorary degree in
1959, when she was ninety-two. It had first bestowed an honorary degree
on a woman in 1910: the classically educated Jane Addams, Alice
Hamilton’s colleague at the Chicago settlement Hull House, and in the
international peace movement.15

the next half century women instead made their presence known in unofficial positions’. It
was not until 1961 that Princeton accepted a woman as a full-time degree candidate in the
graduate school.

13 Schiff, ‘Milestones’ (2000) notes that the first coeducational school at Yale, The Yale
School of Fine Arts (later to include the School of Drama), opened in 1869 and awarded its
first degree to a woman in 1891; that women were first admitted to the Yale School of
Medicine in 1916 and the School of Law in 1919; that the School of Nursing was established
in 1923 (headed by the first female dean), and that the Yale Divinity School first admitted
women in 1934.

14 Hamilton (1943): 36–7; see also Hallett (2015) on Nathan Perkins Seymour, his son,
and grandson.

15 On the later careers of Edith and Alice Hamilton, including Alice Hamilton’s work
with Jane Addams and Edith Hamilton’s honorary Yale degree, see Hamilton (1943),
degree from Yale in 1910, see Schiff, ‘Milestones’ (2000).
What of the women who earned Yale doctorates in classics? The trio whom I spotlight, like Susan Tew, first matriculated at all-women’s liberal arts colleges, in Rhode Island, New York and Pennsylvania respectively. Barbara McCarthy [FIG. 13.1] graduated from the women’s college of Brown University in 1925; Margaret Taylor from Vassar College in 1923 (where her grandfather had served as president from 1886 to 1914); Hazel Barnes from Wilson College in 1937. Similarly, Cora Lutz—Barnes’ own professor at Wilson, who received her PhD in classics from Yale in 1935—graduated from Connecticut College for Women in 1927.\(^\text{16}\) Like Susan Dinsmore Tew, my two Wellesley professors, and Lutz, many of the first women to earn Yale doctoral degrees in various disciplines taught at all-female colleges. Some of them, albeit in

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\(^{16}\) On the educational backgrounds of Tew, McCarthy, and Taylor, see Briggs (1994c), Lefkowitz (1994), and Duclos (1994); on Barnes, see Barnes (1997) 57–69; on Lutz, see Evans (2003).
academic fields other than classics, had in fact already been teaching at
corrected. The opportunity Yale afforded
corrected female faculty at women’s colleges to acquire this, often ‘accelerated’,
research degree strengthened and credentialed the education that these
all-female undergraduate institutions could offer.17

Susan Dinsmore Tew was not an inspiring role model for the classic-
correctedally trained Yale female PhDs who followed her. While she founded and
sustained Tulane’s chapter of the prestigious national undergraduate
academic honorary society, Phi Beta Kappa, she does not seem to have
published any works of scholarship, produced any professionally visible
students, or assumed leadership roles in classical organizations.18 Cora
Lutz, Barnes’ teacher, set a more commendable scholarly example,
though chiefly in the field of medieval studies, with a series of books
and multiple articles about ninth-century glosses on the commentaries of
the fifth-century Martianus Capella. Still, Lutz also published three
articles on classical topics (one on dogs in Homer), and a 1947 book,
with *Yale Classical Studies*, on the first-century CE philosopher Musonius
Rufus, ‘the Roman Socrates’. Two-time recipient of Guggenheim Fellow-
ships, Lutz retired early from Wilson, to assume a half-time position
working with medieval manuscripts at Yale’s Beinecke Rare Book and
Manuscript Library. Along with Barnes, Lutz’s former Wilson students
include Barbara Shailor, a former Director of the Beinecke herself.19

But no word better describes the careers and characters of Margaret
E. Taylor and Barbara Philippa McCarthy than ‘inspirational’. Both
McCarthy, a Hellenist who joined Wellesley’s faculty in 1929, and
Taylor, a Latinist who arrived in 1936, brought high-energy pedagogical
presences to interdisciplinary courses in English translation—’Hellenic
Heritage’ and ‘Interpretations of Man in Western Literature’—as well as
to classes in the ancient languages, literatures, and cultures [FIG. 13.2].

17 See again the section in Pierson (1983) on ‘Women PhDs in Classical Languages and
Literature’, as well as those on ‘Women PhDs from Yale and Total PhDs, 1892–1960’ and
‘Women PhDs from Yale 1892-1960. By Institution Where They Received Their Under-
graduate Degrees (not broken down by individual departments)’ for some important
demographic statistics.

18 Materials on Tew from the Yale Alumni Records Office in the Yale University
Archive, including a December 1960 memorial announcement from the Tulane University
College of Arts and Sciences.

19 See Evans (2003) as well as the eloquent tribute by Barnes (1997) 60–1; there is no
Taylor, born in 1901, came from an affluent, privileged but unconventional white Anglo-Saxon Protestant background. Following his graduation from Yale in 1896, her father, son of the Vassar College president, headed for the western hills, becoming president of a bank and manager of a timber company in Coeur D’Alene, Idaho. Even though she was three years Barbara McCarthy’s senior, Taylor did not begin graduate work at Yale until 1925, after teaching Latin in Coeur D’Alene and studying in Munich. She also took eight years to complete her doctorate, spending a year at the American Academy in Rome, and teaching in secondary schools and at the all-female Mt Holyoke College along the way.20

20 In enumerating the accomplishments, and attempting to convey the personal charisma, of both McCarthy and Taylor, I draw on the entries by Lefkowitz and Duclos in Briggs (1994a), archival materials at both Wellesley and Yale, and memories, both my own and those of their colleagues and students. I would like to thank in particular Ian Graham and Jane Callahan of the Wellesley College Archives, Mary Lefkowitz, Katharine Geffcken, and Sheila Dickison for their help in this regard.

The ‘Vassar College Encyclopedia’ on the college website features a brief biography of Margaret Taylor’s grandfather James Monroe Taylor, who served as its president from
Only in 1951 did Taylor publish the research produced by her 1933 thesis, on the development of the Latin *quod* clause, in *Yale Classical Studies*. Yet her grammatical interest and expertise, and extensive secondary school Latin teaching experience, during her Yale years prompted her later selection as both chair of the Committee on Latin Examinations, and the Advanced Placement Latin Examination Committee, for the College Entrance Examination Board. Her three other published scholarly articles, which appeared in the *American Journal of Philology* between 1947 and 1962, dealt with Latin literary topics: progress and primitivism as concepts in Lucretius and Vergil respectively, and Horace’s ostensible praise of the past. Both Taylor and McCarthy, moreover, served as presidents of the Classical Association of New England, exactly ten years apart. Together they also produced numerous students who have left an indelible imprint on the field of classical studies, including my own Wellesley teacher Mary Lefkowitz.

Although Barbara Philippa McCarthy hailed from a working class, Irish, devoutly Roman Catholic family in Providence, Rhode Island, she attended the public, academically high-octane Classical High School and the private women’s college of Brown University. Immediately after earning her undergraduate degree, at age 20, in 1925, McCarthy studied for two years in Greece, at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. She departed from there in 1927, with a master’s degree in hand from the University of Missouri, without actually setting foot in that state. It remains unclear how McCarthy managed this academic feat.21 Or why she chose to attend Yale, from which she received her PhD in 1886–1914; a website entitled ‘Kootenai County, Idaho, Genealogy Trails’ provides biographical details about her father Huntington Taylor and his career in Coeur d’Alene.

21 McCarthy, it should be noted, encountered gratuitous criticism of a sexist nature during her time in Athens. A letter of 2 June, 1926 from Athens by Edward Capps of Princeton, Chairman of the American School’s Managing Committee, to Samuel Bassett of the University of Vermont, who headed the committee that selected fellows at the ASCSA, expresses his hope that the new fellows are a ‘satisfactory lot’. Capps immediately singles out one of the men, Alfred Schlesinger (who graduated from Oberlin in 1924, and later taught at Williams College for decades after receiving a doctorate from Princeton), saying, ‘Schlesinger certainly is—none better.’ He then mentions McCarthy, with the remark: ‘Those who have taught Miss McCarthy speak well of her intelligence.’ Yet Capps immediately adds ‘But she is queer looking’ (although he does not comment on Schlesinger’s appearance). McCarthy was under five feet tall, squarely built, with large piercing blue eyes and sharp features, but by no means physically unattractive. I would like to thank Barbara McManus for sharing this letter with me.
only two years, rather than, e.g., the all-female Bryn Mawr College, which enjoyed close ties with the American School.

One explanation is that both her Brown professor F.G. Allinson and her Yale dissertation director A.M. Harmon were specialists in Lucian, the topic of her own 1929 Yale dissertation.\(^{22}\) She summarized it in a 1934 article in *Yale Classical Studies*, one of her only three scholarly publications; the others were a 1932 article in *Classical Philology*, on line omissions in Homeric papyri, and an edited volume, from Yale Press in 1955, of the correspondence between Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Browning’s blind Irish Greek teacher Hugh Stuart Boyd. McCarthy may also have opted for graduate school at Yale in 1927 because her younger brother Charles Joseph entered Yale Law School that same fall. Charles later served as general legal counsel to the Tennessee Valley Authority, and sired Charles J. McCarthy, Jr—who, after changing his name to Cormac (Irish for Charles), has enjoyed merited acclaim as a Pulitzer and-other-prize-winning novelist and playwright, most celebrated for *All the Pretty Horses* and *No Country for Old Men*.\(^{23}\)

McCarthy completed all of her Yale doctoral course work in a single academic year, earning grades of ‘Honors’ or ‘Honors plus Excellent’ in all but one of her seven courses. The outlier was Cicero, which she merely passed. Her record warrants comparison to that of a male I also knew and admired: John F. Latimer, who received his Yale classics PhD the same year, and later enjoyed a notable career as professor of classics at George Washington University, and as a leader in both the Classical Association of the Atlantic States and the American Classical League.

Son of a Greek professor at his own undergraduate alma mater, Mississippi College, Latimer arrived at Yale with an MA from the University of Chicago, where he had studied with the eminent Hellenist Paul Shorey. Nevertheless, only one of his Yale coursework grades was even an ‘Honors plus Good’; the others were merely Passed-Fair or Passed-Low. His instructor in Greek and Roman sculpture characterized

\(^{22}\) For Allinson, see Briggs (1994b); for Harmon, see Latimer (1994) as well as the recollections of Barnes, see p. 271.

\(^{23}\) The biography of Cormac McCarthy, Cormacmccarthy.com, ‘The Official Web Site of the Cormac McCarthy Society’, includes details about Barbara McCarthy’s brother Charles and his legal career as well as extensive information about Cormac himself.
him as ‘laborious and plodding’. Among McCarthy’s Yale classics graduate student contemporaries, solely Mitchell Levensohn, who earned his BA from Yale College in 1929 and PhD from Yale Graduate School in 1932, with a dissertation on ancient criticisms of Herodotus, compiled an academic record superior to hers. He received exclusively grades of Honors, modified by either Excellent or Exceptional. Yale’s classics department proceeded to hire Levensohn in 1932, as the first Jewish faculty member of Yale College, only to fire him a few years later—and, reportedly, hound him out of the classics profession—for his left-wing political activism.

Upon arriving at Wellesley College in 1929, as the first American-born Roman Catholic hired by that incurably Protestant institution, Barbara McCarthy encountered visceral prejudices among its powers-that-were, aggravated by her accurate and misunderstood response to a patronizing question from a trustee about how she was doing. Her answer—‘I’m having trouble with mi-verbs in my elementary Greek class’—raised concerns that she still spoke like an Irish washerwoman. Yet she overcame doubts about her social suitability through her devotion to the college and its culture, launching, in 1934, annual Greek plays that drew audiences from all over New England. Usually her casts of female undergraduates, occasionally supplemented by an alumna or faculty member, performed tragedies in the elegant, outdoor Hay Amphitheatre each spring. But at intervals she would stage Aristophanes’ Frogs in the college’s swimming pool, assuming the role of Euripides’ landlady, and laughing at her own Irish washerwoman image by intoning Attic Greek with a strong Irish accent.

Dan A. Oren’s Joining the Club: A History of Jews and Yale furnishes a sobering historical backdrop to what I have facetiously termed the ‘paleness and maleness of Yaleness’, with insights that illuminate the experiences and treatment of women, Catholics, and blacks as well as

24 For Latimer, see Briggs (1994a); his academic record—like those of Barnes, Levensohn, Lutz, McCarthy, and Taylor—is in the Yale University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Student Records under ‘Student Transcripts’ (RU 830).

25 For Levensohn, see also Oren (1985) 357 n.26. My source for why Levensohn was dismissed from Yale and failed find another position in the classics profession is a letter published in the Yale Daily News on April 30, 2009, by his daughter Miriam Levensohn.

26 See Hallett and Pearcy (1991) for McCarthy’s misunderstood remark, and her successful, humorous efforts to deal with the reaction it occasioned.
Jews. Relating how Yale’s institutional values, policies, and practices took shape from 1878 until 1941, Oren underscores the patent preferences of its higher administrators and faculty for producing ‘gentlemen rather than scholars’, as part of an image-obsessed strategy that justified placing severe limits on the number of Jews admitted to the College (and hired in teaching positions, especially in humanities fields such as English). Oren reports, for example, that a 1903 faculty committee decried, but was at pains to counter, the ‘widespread disdain’ for learning that led ‘respect for the mind [to be] quashed by the glorification of athletic prowess and social achievement’.27

How did this pale, male, snobbish, and anti-intellectual, campus ethos affect a department such as classics, at the heart of Yale College and undergraduate liberal arts education, notwithstanding the presence of women in its graduate programme? This brings us to Hazel Barnes’ recollections of how she personally negotiated the almost exclusively male academic environment of the Yale classics department from 1937 until 1941. [FIG. 13.3] It is an account riddled with contradictions, and suggests that her survival entailed considerable ‘denial’ of its discriminatory attitudes, both at the time she was a student, and at the time she reflected on her student days over a half-century later.

For example, Barnes speaks affectionately of the men in her student cohort, most of whom eventually held senior posts, and trained future classicists, at prestigious PhD-awarding institutions throughout the US, enjoying professional opportunities never afforded her. She compares the Classics department favourably to other Yale departments, such as English, where a few ‘professors were known deliberately to exclude all females from their seminars’. Yet she describes a decision by Harmon, at that time chair of the department, to exclude her, alone among her fellow graduate students, from a series of undergraduate lectures on Aristophanes, on the grounds that the subject matter was inappropriate for her to hear discussed in male company. To be sure, she testifies that ‘except for the Aristophanes skirmish’, she never perceived ‘the slightest hint of injustice or condescension or differentiation in the attitude of the professors toward female as opposed to male students’. Nevertheless, Barnes reports that when her father asked her dissertation advisor, Erwin

27 Oren (1985) 17–37, especially 20–1.
Goodenough, himself a specialist in Hellenistic Jewish history, to help her find a teaching position, Goodenough replied, ‘I never promise to find jobs for women or Jews.’

Strikingly, while Barnes’ memoir exhaustively details both her friendships and romantic relationships with men at Yale, she does not describe herself as involved, or contemplating erotic involvements, with other women at this time of her life. Yet Barnes later shared her bed, and her life, with another woman. So, for that matter, did Margaret Taylor, with a Wellesley colleague in the English department. Still, a narrowly heteronormative definition of what constituted a socially acceptable Yale male,

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28 Barnes (1997) 69–87, especially 71 and 87; Oren (1985), curiously thrice refers to Goodenough—on 107, 219, and 329—and characterizes him as a ‘scholar of Hellenistic and Palestinian Judaism’ who, though a non-Jew, championed efforts to provide religious services and support for Jewish students.
as well as prejudices against same-sex relationships generally, continued
to prevail when Barnes penned her memoir in 1997. It may explain why
she does not identify herself as a lesbian in it, or discuss her erotic
attachments to other women.29

Finally, are we to consider McCarthy, Taylor, and Barnes ‘women
classical scholars’? Immensely learned as well as charismatic teachers,
both McCarthy and Taylor held their students to high standards of
linguistic and interpretive proficiency, and introduced my own under-
graduate cohort not only to difficult, non-canonical Latin and Greek
texts but also specialized scholarly studies by the time we were in our
third undergraduate year. They prepared me admirably to handle the
challenges of the Harvard graduate programme in classical philology,
and to complete my degree fairly quickly (if not in two years). But neither
McCarthy nor Taylor published very much in the way of classical
scholarship themselves, unlike my Wellesley female professors with
graduate training from Bryn Mawr, Chicago, Columbia, and Harvard.

It is noteworthy that Barnes, after writing a thesis on the Greek
philosopher Plotinus, made her academic mark in contemporary exist-
entialist philosophy, and her mentor Lutz worked in medieval studies.
Furthermore, it warrants emphasis that Dorothy Robathan, my female
Latin professor at Wellesley in 1962–1963, who received her MA from
Columbia in 1921 and PhD from Chicago in 1929, largely devoted her
scholarly energies to palaeography, the medieval and Renaissance history
of classical texts and Roman topography—topics well out of the scholarly
mainstream in classics.30 One might legitimately ask whether women
classical scholars in the first half of the twentieth century were attracted
to peripheral areas of classical studies because they were, or at least felt,

29 Indeed, Barnes (1997) 149, introduces her life-partner Doris Schwalbe as a graduate
student who enrolled in her beginning Greek and philosophy classes at the University of
Toledo after World War II; she then relates that in a subsequent summer she and Doris ‘met
frequently as friends, and developed a close relationship that is still central in our lives’.
Margaret Taylor’s life-long romantic partnership with Katharine Balderston, a distin-
guished English professor at Wellesley, is never acknowledged by Duclos (1994), or in
her obituary, although the two had retired together to an assisted living facility outside of

30 For the much-published Robathan (1898–1991), a Wellesley College alumna who—
unlike McCarthy and Taylor—served as President of the American Philological Association
excluded from the inner sanctum of male scholars working on ‘canonical’ major texts.

But might Yale’s own, limited definition of classical scholarship from 1892 to 1941 also help account for the scholarly shortcomings of these Yale female PhDs? I will give the last word to Hazel Barnes. In 1997 she reflected:

Classical scholarship at that period was itself restricted in a way that it is not now. When not concerned with the establishment of texts and purely historical questions, it too often concentrated on minutiae, on ringing one more change on wornout topics already over-debated. Naturally it could not provide the kind of excitement, enrichment, and opening up that the field has enjoyed—and suffered—in response to the recent challenge of feminist classicists, Deconstructionists and other iconoclasts. But American classicists then (certainly at Yale . . .) mostly looked on psychological interpretation and on literary criticism as suspicious—‘subjective’, not scholarly. The ideal was the pure Wissenschaft of German universities.31

To its credit, the cadre of feminist classicists challenging, energizing, and expanding our field at the time, and since the time, that Barnes wrote these words has numbered several recipients of PhDs in Classics from Yale. Towering high among them is Amy Richlin, who transferred in 1970 from the all-female Smith College to Princeton University for her undergraduate degree (where she founded and captained the women’s crew team) and rowed for the Yale women’s crew while a Classics graduate student.32 Along with students of female Yale PhDs in Classics such as Barnes, McCarthy, and Taylor, women classical scholars with Yale doctorates—Eli’s daughters and granddaughters—have helped to ‘break through the line’ by moving the goalposts of classical scholarship itself.33

31 Barnes (1997) 76–7. 32 Richlin (2014) 17. 33 Many thanks to Michael Lotstein and Judith Schiff at the Yale University Archives, Jane Callahan and Ian Graham at the Wellesley College Archives, and Victor Bers, Ward Briggs, Catharine Castner, Christine Kraus, my undergraduate research assistant Anna Johnson Lynam, and the late Barbara McManus.
Ada Sara Adler
‘The Greatest Woman Philologist’ of Her Time

Catharine P. Roth

In 1996, William Calder called Ada Adler (1878–1946) ‘incontestably the greatest woman philologist who ever lived’. He may have been alluding to the words of Franz Cumont, who said, in reviewing the first volume of her edition of the Suda, that if Adler succeeded in finishing the task, it would undoubtedly be the most important philological work that a woman had ever accomplished. I doubt that the title of ‘greatest woman philologist’ would now be incontestable, but we may consider what its basis is.

When I began to work on the Suda On Line, I heard about Ada Adler being assigned the project of editing the Suda, a Byzantine Greek encyclopaedia with over 30,000 entries. I was reminded of those women astronomers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Ada’s contemporaries, in fact) who were set to work cataloguing stars, because

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1 Calder and Hallett (1996) 83.
2 Cumont (1928) 1524: ‘ce sera sans doute l’oeuvre philologique le plus importante que jamais femme ait accomplie.’ All translations are the author’s own (assisted by Pia Hallenberg for translations from Danish).
3 I would like to thank the University of Cincinnati Classics Department for the privilege of a Tytus Fellowship in the spring of 2008, which gave me the time and resources to begin investigating the history of scholarship on the Suda. An earlier version of this chapter was published electronically by the Center for Hellenic Studies; see Roth (2012).
4 The Suda On Line is an online annotated translation of this work, see http://www.stoa.org/sol (accessed 17 February 2015).
that kind of tedious work was thought appropriate to women’s talents, requiring diligence and accuracy but not a high standard of creativity. As Pamela Mack writes, ‘A whole research area in astronomy came to be defined as women’s work. Most of this work required repetitive, painstaking attention to detail, but it resulted in important contributions to astronomy.’ For example, Williamina Paton Stevens Fleming (who began as housekeeper to Professor Edward Charles Pickering at Harvard), followed by Antonia Maury and Annie Jump Cannon, devised a system of classifying stars according to differences in their spectra. Henrietta Swan Leavitt discovered the relation between the luminosity and the period of variable stars, a discovery which allowed astronomers to measure the distance between the earth and distant galaxies. None of these women attained a regular university position, until finally in 1956 Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin became the first woman to be appointed full professor from within Harvard’s Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Perhaps Ada represents a similar instance of nineteenth-century men’s denigration of the scholarly potential of women and women’s ability to transform the routine tasks offered to them. I note that in the same review already quoted, Franz Cumont said, ‘On y sent quelque chose de plus que l’acribie du philologue: une application féminine à soigner tous les détails d’un ouvrage’ (‘One senses something more than the precision of a philologist: a feminine diligence in caring for all the details of a project.’). Six years later, he hinted that some people had thought the enterprise would surpass the strength of a woman. So was she applying housewifely skills to her editorial work, or was she demonstrating more-than-womanly powers?

Ada Sara Adler was born on 18 February 1878 into a notably progressive Danish Jewish family. The family had lived in Denmark for several generations; by Ada’s time, they seem to have been largely assimilated; earlier, their given names were more distinctively Jewish. Ada’s father Bertel David Adler was a banker and politician. Apparently she had two brothers and two sisters. Her aunt, Hanna Adler, one of the first

two Danish women to earn an advanced degree in physics, was a prominent educator. After visiting the United States to observe educational methods, she returned to Denmark to promote coeducational schools. At the age of 84, she was arrested by the Nazis but released after an outcry from the Danish public. Another aunt, Ellen Adler, married Christian Bohr and became the mother of Niels Bohr, the famous physicist, and his brother Harald, mathematician and Olympic football player. Reportedly Ellen Adler Bohr had her children baptized as Christians in order to avoid possible discrimination against them as Jews. Aunt Hanna used to take Niels and Harald on excursions when they spent summer vacations at the house of their grandmother Jenny Raphael Adler; it is possible that Ada and her siblings were involved as well.

Ada reports that as a child she was fond of reading, and benefitted from her parents’ large library. She attended N. Zahle’s School, an elite girls’ secondary school which is still in operation. There she studied Greek, beginning in 1893, with A.B. Drachmann who was her teacher also later at the University of Copenhagen. When she graduated from school, someone asked her ten-year-old cousin Harald Bohr what he would like to be when he grew up, and he replied that he would like to be a university student, if boys as well as girls could do that. Surely there were few families in Denmark (or anywhere else in 1897) where a boy could have taken women’s education so much for granted.

At the University of Copenhagen, Ada continued her studies with Drachmann, and was influenced by Professor Vilhelm Thomsen, who was lecturing on comparative and historical linguistics. [FIG. 14.1] He was also a friend of Ada’s uncle Christian Bohr. Ada came to concentrate on the study of Greek and comparative religion, and wrote her master’s thesis on ancient Greek religion (1906). In the same year she received an award from the Historical Philological Society for her research on the myth of Pandora. Subsequently she went to study in Vienna, published a few short articles, and was hired to do research and writing for Pauly-Wissowa, \textit{Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft},

\begin{itemize}
  \item[13.] Possing (2003).
  \item[16.] Adler (1918) 165.
  \item[18.] Hilden (2003).
  \item[15.] Adler (1967) 20.
  \item[17.] Krarup and Ræder (1979) 55; Adler (1935) v.
  \item[19.] Hilden (2003).
  \item[20.] Adler (1967) 13.
\end{itemize}
in 1912.\textsuperscript{21} For Pauly-Wissowa, Ada wrote articles on Greek religion, and eventually the article on the \textit{Suda}.\textsuperscript{22} While investigating the sources of the \textit{Suda}, she discovered in the Royal Danish Library D.G. Moldenhawer's uncatalogued collection of manuscripts (documents which he had evidently removed from various libraries without authorization). This became the topic of Ada's doctoral thesis.\textsuperscript{23} It appears that Ada made the best of the difficult years of World War I by taking time out from the \textit{Suda} to work on a dissertation based on resources available at home in neutral Denmark.

In 1901, Ada had married Anton Ludvig Christian Thomsen, who became a professor of philosophy at the University of Copenhagen and wrote books on David Hume and Georg Hegel, as well as on the philosophy

\textsuperscript{21} Adler (1918) 165–6. \textsuperscript{22} Hilden (2003); Adler (1931). \textsuperscript{23} Hilden (2003).
of religion. According to Adda Hilden, ‘In the early years, the marriage was probably very valuable to both when it came to research…’ (perhaps because the interests of both included the study of religion). However, the couple were divorced in 1912, and Professor Thomsen married Olga Eggers, a feminist writer who later became a Nazi sympathizer.

It was also in 1912 that Drachmann proposed to Ada the task of editing the *Suda*. She herself mentions how great a challenge it was to undertake such a large project as a novice editor: *in Suida tirocinium editoris facere illud est quod Plato ἐν πίθῳ τὴν κεραμείαν μανθάνειν appellat* (‘to make one’s apprenticeship as an editor with Suidas is what Plato calls learning pottery on a large wine-jar’). Much collating of manuscripts needed to be done, both by her and with the aid of helpers (who are thanked in the preface to volume 1). The best-known of her helpers is Kaj Barr; she hoped that he would edit the Ambrosian Lexicon, preserved in a manuscript in Florence and one in Athens. This did not happen, and it remains unpublished. Barr went on to become a scholar in Iranian language and religion. Nevertheless he was the chairman of the Commission for the *Corpus Lexicographorum Graecorum* at the time when Kurt Latte died in 1964, and he was called into service to complete the proofreading of volume 2 of Latte’s edition of Hesychius.

The dates of collation which Adler mentions in her Prolegomena demonstrate that World War I delayed her work. She reports working in Rome and Florence in 1913 and up to the spring of 1914. After the war (and after receiving her doctorate), in 1919 and 1920 she was in Paris, Venice, Oxford, and Florence. In 1921 she was in Rome and Brussels. Three years later she visited Oxford again. Some libraries were willing to send their manuscripts to Copenhagen for her study; in certain cases she collated from photographs.

Financial support for Ada’s travels, photographs, assistants, and printing came from the Carlsberg Foundation; the Hielmstierne Rosencronske

25 Vyff and Olsen (2003); Professor Thomsen ‘died, apparently suffering from a debilitating neurological condition, just a few years later [in 1915]’; Hilden (2003).
26 Adler (1928) v. 27 Adler (1928) vii. 28 Adler (1928) xviii.
29 Alpers (2007) 131–2 with n.73. 30 Adler (1928) viii–xi.
Foundation also helped with travel costs.  In all this time, Ada did not have a regular university appointment, but lectured as a Privatdozent (an unsalaried lecturer, paid directly by the students). One might compare her situation with that of the early women astronomers who worked for observatories rather than for universities, as well as those women in botany, zoology, and anthropology who were hired to process data for museums.

Volume 1 of the *Suda* was published in 1928, sixteen years after Ada started the project. Additional volumes appeared at approximately two-year intervals (volume 2 in 1931, volume 3 in 1933, volume 4 in 1935), with the fifth volume (indices, addenda, corrigenda) completing the set in 1938. As the power of National Socialism increased, challenges grew for Jewish scholars in Germany and neighbouring countries. Apparently the welcome influx of Danish currency made it possible for Teubner to continue publishing the *Suda* in spite of the Adler family’s Jewish heritage: Kurt Latte, who was beginning to edit Hesychius’ *Lexicon*, questioned whether overcoming Teubner’s racial prejudice was an appropriate use of kroner. As a German Jew, Latte lost his professorship at Göttingen and had to live and work in hiding.

However much the Adler and Bohr families had become assimilated into Danish society, World War II compelled them to involvement with their fellow Jews. Between 1935 and 1938, Ada made earnest efforts to help German Jewish scholars, especially Latte, corresponding with classical scholars in England and America; but she was unsuccessful in arranging his escape from Germany. On 9 April 1940, Germany invaded Denmark, and the Danish government soon surrendered. From that time until 1943, there was uneasy cooperation between the Danish government and the Nazis. King Christian X remained as the head of state. The Danish cabinet rejected demands to legalize discrimination against Jews. Dr Werner Best, civilian administrator of Denmark for the Nazis, avoided pressing the issue, fearing that it would stir up Danish public opinion against the German authorities. Nevertheless, acts of resistance, whether symbolic or violent, gradually increased. The Danes continued to resist German demands; and on 29 August 1943, the Germans dissolved the Danish government and instituted martial law.

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In October the Germans decided to deport all Danish Jews; but, since the information was leaked, the Danes managed to evacuate most of their Jews to Sweden. Ada’s cousin, Niels Bohr, was warned to escape promptly (since the Germans wanted his expertise in atomic fission) and was instrumental in making arrangements with the Swedish government to allow the evacuation of the other Jews.\(^{35}\) Ada herself was among those evacuated. Clemens Zintzen was told, perhaps (he says) by Heinrich Dörrie, that Ada had died in a concentration camp;\(^{36}\) hence his remarks in the preface to his edition of Damascius, *Life of Isidore*, borrowing Damascius’ words about Hypatia, the pagan philosophical martyr of late antique Alexandria: *quam feminam egregiam, Hypatiae instar interemerunt nostri aevi θηριώδεις ἄνθρωποι – ἄγος τοῦτο μέγιστον καὶ ἀνειδος προστριψάμενοι τῇ πατρίδι* (‘which outstanding woman, bestial men of our time killed like Hypatia – inflicting this greatest guilt and shame on their fatherland’).\(^{37}\) Happily this was not the case. While in Lund, Sweden, Ada taught Latin and Greek in a school which was formed for Danish evacuee young people by Danish evacuee scholars with the assistance of Swedish academics.\(^{38}\) Harald Bohr was there too, teaching mathematics;\(^{39}\) his daughter Ellen also served as a teacher,\(^{40}\) and a second daughter, Hanne, was a pupil.\(^{41}\) Another evacuee, Eva Bing, who kept a diary of her experiences in Lund, reports an elegant dinner at the home of the psychologist Professor Edgar Rubin at which Ada Adler was present.\(^{42}\)

After the war, Ada returned to Copenhagen. A letter in the Niels Bohr Archive, dated 18 August 1946, shows Ada asking Niels to help arrange permission for Kurt Latte to leave Germany and enter Denmark. She also mentions a pleasant visit with Aunt Hanne [Adler], and speaks of

\(^{35}\) Bohr and Aaserud (2005) 14.

\(^{36}\) Zintzen in personal correspondence with the author (emails dated to 6 and 7 June 2008).

\(^{37}\) Zintzen (1967) xi.

\(^{38}\) Communicated by Bjarke Falser in personal correspondence with the author (email dated 12 August 2008); [Lachmann] (1945) 23, 25, 33, and 63.

\(^{39}\) [Lachmann] (1945) 37 and 63. \(^{40}\) [Lachmann] (1945) 41–4, and 63.

\(^{41}\) [Lachmann] (1945) 51.

\(^{42}\) Recorded in emails from Erik Henriques Bing to Pia Hallenberg Christiansen, sent on 29–30 January 2014.
dizziness and a report not yet received from a doctor.\footnote{Adler (1946). Some family letters are housed in the Niels Bohr Archive. A larger collection of Adler’s correspondence is preserved in the Royal Library in Copenhagen.} This seems ominous, as only four months later, on 28 December 1946, Ada passed away after ‘lying hopelessly ill for a long time’.\footnote{Broendsted (1946).} She is buried at the Jewish ‘Vestre Begravelsesplads’ cemetery in Copenhagen.\footnote{Communicated by Janne Laursen in private correspondence with the author (email dated 17 June 2009).}

In her obituary in the Danish newspaper \textit{Politiken}, Mogens Broendsted reports that Ada was known for her kindness and hospitality to colleagues and especially to younger scholars. Alluding to Moldenhawer’s careless ideas of ‘mine and yours’ (what’s yours is mine), he suggests that Ada had a more generous conception: what’s mine is yours.\footnote{Broendsted (1946).}

Was Ada the greatest woman philologist of her time? It is plausible to believe so, though perhaps some possible rivals had appeared by 1996, when Calder said ‘incontestably the greatest . . . ever’, and even more likely by the early twenty-first century. What reasons are there for criticizing and for admiring her work?

How was Ada perhaps not so great? It may be argued that editing a lexicon does not require the same kind of creative thought that is needed for editing a literary text. One recognizes that a lexicon will contain errors, some inherited from its sources and some introduced by the compiler. The editor will leave these alone, since the object is to present the text as it was assembled by the lexicographer: ‘tel qu’il était et non tel qu’il aurait dû être’ (‘as it was, not as it ought to have been’) as Cumont put it.\footnote{Cumont (1928) 1523.} Other errors will have arisen in the subsequent transmission; these the editor will aim to remove, mainly by adhering to the testimony of the best manuscripts. Does the project then become merely a problem (albeit a big one) of data management? And does the analogy with star-cataloguing hold? As noted already, Franz Cumont praised Adler’s work as demonstrating a specifically feminine diligence in taking care of all the details.\footnote{Cumont (1928) 1524.} Does editing a literary text require a greater textual critic? Or just a different kind?

Adler’s policy was to leave in the text all the errors that she believed were in the \textit{Suda} when it was compiled.\footnote{Adler (1928) xxiii.} For example, in the entry

\footnote{Adler (1946).}

\footnote{Broendsted (1946).}

\footnote{Cumont (1928) 1523.}

\footnote{Cumont (1928) 1524.}

\footnote{Adler (1928) xxiii.}
numbered pi 2151, \(\pi\omega\gamma\omicron\nu\iota\alpha\varsigma\) is a noun which means someone or something with a beard. In the *Suda* manuscripts, it is badly glossed ‘a big beard’. Adler reports a similar entry in the unpublished Ambrosian Lexicon, so she evidently regarded this gloss as the inherited reading of the *Suda*, although the earlier editors Küster and Bernhardy had emended it to one or another phrase meaning ‘a man with a big beard’. No doubt Adler had discussed her conservative policy with mentors such as Drachmann, Wentzel, and Wilamowitz. The reviewers accepted this as the correct procedure for a work of this kind. Wilamowitz says errors must remain in the text; he alludes to the metaphor attributed to Lipsius, that the *Suda* is a sheep (or a flock of sheep), but with a golden fleece, and along with the gold containing plenty of fool’s gold. Cumont accepted the necessity of leaving the text as it is, in spite of errors. Some of the reviewers, however, were critical of Adler’s choice not to provide any indication in the text when the words are erroneous, and to offer very little explanation of what the problems are. Wendel would appreciate more corrections. Rostagni would like more of the difficulties solved, or at least indicated. Reitzenstein would like somewhat more discussion of errors, but he also praises the compactness of Adler’s apparatus. Maas, on the other hand, thinks that Adler has sometimes gone too far in accepting readings which are conjectures in the manuscripts; as he says, the fact that a reading does not make sense does not prevent it from being correct in a work like the *Suda*. In the late twentieth century, when Christos Theodoridis came to edit the Lexicon of Photius (which he argues persuasively is a source used by the *Suda* compiler), he clearly took into account both the praise and the criticism of Adler’s *Suda*. He followed her example in leaving inherited errors in the text, but marked them with an *obelus* (\(\dagger\)) to characterize them as errors. For example, at *Suda* iota 640, the entry for the noun \(\iota\sigma\theta\mu\omicron\varsigma\), the gloss inaccurately asserts that an isthmus is ‘a sea between two land-masses; for a strait \(\pi\omicron\rho\theta\mu\omicron\varsigma\) is land between two seas’. Photius at iota 210 has the same mistake, and there, Theodoridis obelizes the two nouns \(\iota\sigma\theta\mu\omicron\varsigma\) and \(\pi\omicron\rho\theta\mu\omicron\varsigma\) to indicate that they should exchange places. Adler lets the faulty entry stand.

\[50\] Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1928) 2157.  \[51\] Cumont (1928) 1523.  
\[52\] Wendel (1935) 234.  \[53\] Rostagni (1933) 111.  
\[54\] Reitzenstein (1929) 239.  \[55\] Maas (1928) 420–1.  
Another possible criticism of Adler’s work is that she did not cast her net wide enough in fishing for identifications of sources. As H. Stuart Jones pointed out, and as searches on the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae have verified, she tends to return to a small team of ‘Usual Suspects’, especially Aelian and Symeon Metaphrastes, when the actual sources turn out to be more diverse. For her bias towards Aelian, see, for example, kappa 36 καθάρμα, where she suggests Aelian in spite of the Suda’s apparent attribution of the excerpt to Aristophanes. ‘Aren’t you going to waste the offscourings, he said, and go away from us?’ Adler’s apparatus says, <i>fort. Aelian</i>. (‘perhaps Aelian’), but the <i>Suda</i> goes on, ‘Aristophanes says [this].’ And editors have accepted the quotation (with various emendations) as a fragment of Aristophanes. This is an extreme case; in general, it would be unfair to blame Adler (and her predecessors) for not recognizing the diversity of the original sources. We who are less well-read have the unfair advantage of digital resources.

How was Adler nevertheless great? First of all, we must admire her success in completing the task, and in doing it well. How many scholars have undertaken ambitious projects and failed to complete them, not necessarily by their own fault! Think of the Hesychius edition begun by Latte, for example, which was delayed by conditions in Nazi Germany, Latte’s death, and the health issues of his successor Peter Allen Hansen. Ada was able to devote herself to the <i>Suda</i> for 26 years. She collated lengthy manuscripts in libraries all over Europe. As Cumont says, ‘... durant des longues années on put la rencontrer dans les bibliothèques poursuivant avec une inlassable persévérance la tâche fastidieuse de collationer de gros manuscrits’ (‘over many long years one could meet her in libraries, pursuing with untiring perseverance the fastidious task of collating big manuscripts’). She scoured source texts to locate references (how could we manage without the online Thesaurus Linguae Graecae?). She made innumerable decisions on what reading to print in the text and what to relegate to the apparatus. She had confidence in her own judgement, not allowing herself to be intimidated by even such an eminent scholar as Paul Maas: she courteously disagreed with his claim that

57 Stuart Jones (1939) 64–5.
58 David Whitehead’s phrase used in personal correspondence with the author (email dated 13 January 2013).
59 Cumont (1928) 1522.
manuscript M was the work of the scholarly archbishop Eustathius of Thessalonica.\textsuperscript{60} She produced four volumes at two-year intervals, with remarkably few errors, completing the undertaking just in the nick of time before the outbreak of another world war. In producing her edition of the \textit{Suda}, she created a prototype for the whole series of Greek lexicography.\textsuperscript{61} Her numbering system has become the standard method of referring to entries in the \textit{Suda}, and similar numbering has been used in the other Greek lexica. Besides all the work she did herself, she organized and supervised her team of helpers. She raised funds from public-spirited foundations; she must have been a pioneer in grantsmanship. How was she able to do all this, in spite of holding no regular academic position? Clearly much credit is due to her own talents and character. Her family’s money must have played a role, so that she had enough to live on; and her health lasted long enough. Even without a university appointment, she had good connections, as a protégé of Drachmann who was himself a personal friend of Wilamowitz.\textsuperscript{62} Given adequate financial resources, perhaps her freedom from regular academic teaching and administrative responsibilities was an advantage: she was able to devote herself concentratedly to the \textit{Suda}. Likewise, the dissolution of her marriage and her childless state left her free from family obligations, while allowing her to provide hospitality to younger scholars and assistants. In terms of technology, the availability of photography facilitated study of manuscripts without her needing always to be away from home. Not least of her advantages was being a citizen of Denmark, a neutral country in the First World War and one in which a Jewish background did not impose major obstacles.

So in evaluating Adler’s work, may we compare her with the pioneer women astronomers? Perhaps to a certain extent. Like them, she organized a large mass of data in a form that would be useful to future scholars and made significant discoveries in the process. I would guess that her mentors were more confident in her abilities than the Harvard astronomers were in those of their female assistants. Also, the task of editing the \textit{Suda} was better defined, not so open-ended, as the project of cataloguing stars. Drachmann and the others knew what Ada’s task was going to be, and they knew that she was capable of doing it well. And so it proved.

\textsuperscript{60} Adler (1938) 273. \textsuperscript{61} Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1928) 2156. \textsuperscript{62} William Slater in personal correspondence with the author (email dated 14 November 2012).
15

Olga Freidenberg
A Creative Mind Incarcerated

Nina Braginskaya
Translated from Russian by Zara M. Torlone,
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Olga Freidenberg penned her own biography in a 2,000-page memoir *The Race of Life* (*Probeg Zhizni*); an epigraph in ancient Greek with a line from Pindar’s *Nemean Ode* 4.41–3, says: ‘Well I know that the lapse of time will achieve its preordained perfection.’ Thereby she predicted her own posthumous fate: from oblivion to fame.¹

It would be incorrect to surmise that Olga Freidenberg is totally unknown to the Anglophone reader. She is known to some through her lifetime correspondence with her famous cousin, Boris Pasternak.² Those engaged in semiotic and Bakhtinian studies are familiar with her scholarly works. Yet Freidenberg remains to this day an important figure in her own right in the landscape of classical studies.

¹ This essay is based on the material from Olga Freidenberg’s archive; her correspondence with relatives and friends; the documents from the state archives; her published and unpublished private papers and scholarly works. The archive also contains Freidenberg’s memoir *The Race of Life*, 2,000 typed pages long, written between 1939 and 1947. Some of the events in her memoir were written as they happened, in real time. So far, a small part of this literary work has been published in Russian; some excerpts are inserted into the correspondence with Boris Pasternak in many languages (see next footnote). The Memoirs are being prepared for publication.

² The volume of correspondence between the two cousins was published in 1981 in Russian as *Perepiska s Ol’goj Freidenberg*, and translated into the main European languages, into English as Pasternak (1982).
Olga Freidenberg was a pioneer in many respects. She scorned the traditional education available for women of her time, and received her education only after Petrograd (formerly Petersburg, later Leningrad) University opened its doors for women in 1917.\(^3\) In 1924, she became the first woman in Russia to defend her PhD thesis in Classical Philology, *The Origins of Greek Novel or The Greek Novel as Acts and Passions*; her MA work on the Acts of Paul and Thecla was dated to 1920–21.\(^4\) Freidenberg was also the first woman who received the highest degree, the doctorate in Literary Studies, when in 1935 she defended her dissertation entitled *The Poetics of Plot and Genre: The Classical Period of Ancient Literature.*\(^5\) This dissertation was published in 1936 but taken out of circulation shortly after an ideological denunciation by the authorities. It was republished in 1997 and is currently included in the university curricula. In 1932 Freidenberg was appointed Chair of the Department of Classical Philology, which she had to construct anew since all of the Classics Departments in Russia had been shut down since 1921. There were practically no women among department heads at that time, and even fewer among the creators of new academic programmes. To a large degree, Freidenberg’s achievements as the pioneer in her field were made possible by the 1917 revolution, which offered women opportunities formerly unavailable to them.

This essay charts the story of Olga Freidenberg’s life, her unconventional academic career and the fate of her rich scholarly legacy. It addresses several contentious facts of her biography: the degree to which she was forced to bend herself, her life, and her scholarship to fit into the ideological straightjacket of Soviet dictatorship; her relationship with the talented and

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\(^3\) It was during World War I that women first enrolled into several departments of Tomsk University (Siberia) and Saratov, then the new branch of the University of St. Petersburg. Two women were hired as professors, both graduates of the Bestuzhev Higher Courses for Women who completed their education in Germany: one was the ancient historian S.I. Protasova (1878–1946), and the other, classical philologist S.V. Melikova (1885–1942); see ‘Imperial Rescripts’ (1915). On the Bestuzhev Higher Courses for Women’s higher education and N.P. Raev’s Historical and Literary Courses for women (1907–17), see Goldberg (2010).

\(^4\) The first woman to defend a Master’s degree (then identical to PhD in Russia) at Petrograd University was M.A. Ostrovskaya, who graduated from Bestuzhev Courses (in Russian history; Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti. 18 March 1914). A Medieval historian, O.A. Dobiash-Rozhdesnvenskaya, first defended her thesis at the Sorbonne (1911) and then in St. Petersburg (1915). In 1916, she was the first woman to teach at the Petrograd University and the first woman in Russia to be awarded, in 1918, the next academic degree of Doctor of Sciences (in general history).

\(^5\) Up until today the system of degrees in Russia follows the German rather than Anglo-American model; see, on women’s education in Russia, Perlina (2002) 45–53.
controversial linguist Nikolay Yakovlevich Marr, and his role in her life. Finally, the essay deals with Freidenberg’s posthumous fame which brought her works out of oblivion and revealed the scale of her contribution to Classical Philology.

Olga Mikhailovna Freidenberg (hereafter OF) was born in Odessa. Her mother was Anna Osipovna Pasternak (1862–1944) and her father, a self-taught engineer, inventor, actor, and journalist, was Mikhail Filipovich Freidenberg (1858–1920), who never finished gymnasium but made several impressive inventions. Although few of them were put to practical use it is worth mentioning the most important of them: the invention of the kinetoskope two years prior to the brothers Lumière, and an automatic telephone station for 10,000 numbers which was patented in Great Britain; the Bell Telephone Company paid him £50,000 for the invention to ward off possible competitors; at the start of the Russian-Japanese War he offered the Russian government a submarine project which got lost, whereas a similar project was realized abroad. Mikhail Freidenberg died in 1920 in Petrograd from hunger, cold, and the shock induced by the devastation of post-revolutionary Russia. In more than one way, the father’s fate foreshadowed his daughter’s: both were brilliantly talented, uniqueness and loneliness marked both their lives, and both died unappreciated. The daughter thought of herself as her father’s double.

OF’s parents were assimilated Jews. Her father left his parental home when he was 16 and lived a life unrestricted by societal or religious considerations. Anna Pasternak married him against her parents’ will and lived without her dowry and their blessing. Her husband wanted his family to get baptized to escape educational and societal limitations instituted for Jews by Tsarist Russia. His wife regarded baptism as the betrayal of her people. In the end, OF’s father and brother got baptized; OF, although young and without actual ties to Judaism, did not follow suit, and prevented her mother from getting baptized. She herself was a freethinking European with her own conception of the world and a most perfect ‘supra-personal’ divine entity of whose presence in nature, history, and the human heart she was aware, although this awareness did not fit into any religious doctrine. She called God ‘Lohengrin’, whose name ought not to be revealed to anyone. Her conception of God did not

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6 Fortunately M. Freidenberg’s archive and models were preserved in Moscow, Petersburg, and Odessa museums; owing to that, the memory of his inventions did not die away.
Fig. 15.1 Photograph of Olga Freidenberg, 1912 by Thalmann frères, Vevey (Switzerland). Reproduced with kind permission of the Olga Freidenberg Archive.

contradict her conception of science: ‘Scientific method,’ she observed in one of her letters to Leonid Pasternak, ‘is a measurement with a ruler; while in its possession and studying a cell, a phrase, a text, or a layer of clay, one unavoidably brushes against God the Lord’ (February 1921).

The family had no stable income, but sometimes Mikhail Freidenberg’s inventions brought in considerable amounts of money. Since 1903 the family had lived in St. Petersburg, and after graduating from the private gymnasium that did not have any restrictions on the admittance of Jews, OF led the life of a daughter from a well-to-do family—attending theatres, reading, and contemplating. She did not strive either to get married or acquire a profession. She travelled a lot around Europe and for long periods of time lived in Germany, Sweden, Italy, and Switzerland [FIG.15.1]. After the Revolution of 1917 she could never visit Europe.

7 The text of the letter to Olga’s uncle survived copied in her notebook and she quoted it in her memoirs.
again. OF studied foreign languages, read world literature in its original languages and sometimes attended lectures at the Higher Courses for Women.8

The admittance of Jewish women without the golden medal to the Higher Courses for Women was well-nigh impossible.9 OF had only a silver medal. Her response was not to lament the case. Instead she declared that a third-rate education for women was not something to strive for.

Sometimes she made attempts to earn money by tutoring or working as a folder in a printing office. Like her father, OF crossed the established socio-economic boundaries with relative ease. When World War I began, she worked as a nurse in one of the private hospitals, participated in many cultural events offered to the wounded and befriended many of them. Her archive contains letters of nearly illiterate peasants which many years later they sent to the 'sister' and 'young lady Olga Mikhailovna' to tell her about the hardships of their lives and share with her the misery of their existence.

In 1910, a sudden closeness developed between OF and her coeval cousin Boris Pasternak, later to become the famous poet but who at that time was only a student. They were raised in the same nursery, but after the families of the Pasternaks and the Freidenbergs settled in Moscow and St. Petersburg respectively, they met only rarely and for short periods of time.

An ordinary family reunion, this time at the sea resort of Merrekuhl where Boris’ family vacationed, turned into something out of the ordinary. After that meeting, they wrote to each other breathless, stunned, and, undoubtedly, love letters, as if denying space itself the right to separate them. Each of them knew the other as their own teenaged cousin, and suddenly each apprehended in another a compressed fount of future creativity. They were drawn to express themselves to a ‘familiar stranger’; they sensed the absolute uniqueness of each other. Could one distinguish this from love?

OF recollects: 'We could not bear to be parted for a moment in Petersburg. When he left for Moscow it was with the understanding that I would go to him there and then he would bring me back to Petersburg. When he was gone I was in a state of distraction. I waited

8 On Bestuzhev Higher Courses for Women see the references given in note 3.
9 Jewish quotas were instituted at the Bestuzhev Higher Courses for Women in 1892. See Nathans (2002) 267, note 35.
for news of him in a frenzy, bereft of feeling and reason, sat in one spot and waited. And he? He had scarcely arrived when he sat down and wrote me a long letter.’¹⁰ In this letter Boris describes OF as eternal femininity, as his Muse to whom he belongs: ‘you were freer than I was; you belonged only to your own world, while I belonged to you, to you as a soundless event that made demands just by its presence . . . ’ (23 July 1910)¹¹ Their failed love affair converted into a lifelong attachment nurtured by memory of their adolescent love and the correspondence that had lasted for over forty years. The feeling that somehow both of them were chosen, and chosen together, never left them, and Pasternak’s letter communicates it: ‘You do not know how my tormenting feeling grew and grew until it became obvious to me and to others. As you walked beside me with complete detachment, I could not express it to you. It was a rare sort of closeness, as if we two, you and I, were in love with something that was utterly indifferent to both of us, something that remained aloof from us by virtue of its extraordinary inability to adapt to the other side of life’.¹² After 1936, the cousins never met again. OF never married and never shared her bed with the men she loved. She remained a spinster and was rumoured to be a lesbian. In those days, this type of gossip, which aimed to lower women’s ambitions in the professions, accompanied women suspected of striving to assume the positions traditionally occupied by men; that was also true in the case of women in academia. Thankfully, OF knew nothing about that gossip.

OF lacked in her scholarly career any familial support of the kind which most women in academia back then received from their fathers, brothers, husbands or lovers. Her own uncle, Leonid Pasternak, was a Member of the Russian Academy of Fine Arts. He painted the portraits of famous scientists in Germany and attempted to advance his niece’s works through his contacts amongst them. His attempts, however, did not meet with any success. When, already the recipient of the degree, OF had to register with the Labor Department’s unemployment office, Boris Pasternak tried to help her find employment, but nothing came out of this.

In 1936, the only book by OF published during her lifetime was viciously attacked in press;¹³ its author was repeatedly censured and

¹³ Leitenzen (1936).
chastised at the Leningrad State University. Boris sent a letter to Nikolai Bukharin, who at that time was still the editor-in-chief of Izvestiia, where the scathing review of her book appeared. In this letter he requested to put an end to his cousin’s harassment. The gesture was recklessly bold since Bukharin, as Stalin’s political antagonist, was already under house arrest and shortly thereafter was eliminated. One could only be thankful that this letter did no harm. It certainly could be of no help. Nonetheless, Pasternak played a special role in OF’s fate as a scholar, of which more later.

To return to the beginning of OF’s professional training in 1917, at the age of 27, OF entered the University as a ‘non-registered auditor’. In the post-revolutionary university the professors used to announce their courses and the students would choose whatever course they pleased. This short-lived period of exemption from rules went together with the singularities of OF’s late start in her education—that is, she was independent in her thinking, was in possession of a fully shaped worldview, and knew eight languages, reading literature in them in the original. Almost from the start, her education went the way of independent research. Her first advisor was A.K. Borozdin, a biblical scholar, a specialist on heresy and on Old Russian literature. He was, however, gravely ill, taught at home and allowed his new student to dig in his vast library.

OF wrote that he taught her two things: how to read the primary sources and how to process the secondary literature. The third step, how to write a scholarly work, she could not learn from him for Borozdin died in the summer of 1918, and many of those whose courses she took also perished because of the hardships of extreme poverty in their daily lives. In the cold and hungry Petrograd of the 1918/19 winter, the unheated university became akin to a ghost town; only the indomitable classicists continued teaching, but at home. That is how OF became a student of classics and took courses with future Members of Academy of Sciences, first I.I. Tolstoy and later S.I. Zhebelev. Under Zhebelev’s

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15 OF copied the letter skipping any mention of Bukharin’s name; later she inserted it into her memoirs. See excerpts in English in Pasternak (1982) 167–8.

16 For a detailed account see Perlina (2002) 45ff.
supervision she started working on the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, comparing Slav Medieval and Greek manuscripts of these Apocrypha. Her thesis included an introduction, translations of both Slavonic and Greek versions, and a copious commentary. In 1923 OF graduated from the university. While working on the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, she defined their genre as a species of the Greek novel—not ‘erotic’ but instead ‘encratic’, since it celebrated chastity and celibacy in the manner characteristic of early Christian writings. Her choice of Thecla’s Acts as a subject of her research was not apparently conditioned by gender issues, although one can notice in the Acts of Thecla, a virgin and protomartyr, a pattern prefiguring OF’s own life, devoted to scholarship. OF skipped graduate studies but a year after she had finished the university her dissertation was completed.17

The comparison of plot patterns of the Greek novel and Christian literature found further development in her dissertation as she moved from analysing the Apocryphal Acts to a more general conception of the genesis of the ancient novel. An admirer of the eminent Classical Philologist Hermann Usener, the author of the famous study *Götternamen* (*Names of the Gods*, 1896), OF paid attention to the characters’ names, but unlike Usener, she did not interpret myths as the stories of personified celestial bodies or local heroes. She argued that these names stipulate particular plot motifs which she then discovered in the novels. In this way she arrived at the formulation of a law of plot composition in myth and then in folklore: the semantics of the character’s name, that is, the character’s metaphorical essence, develops into action which comprises

17 While OF deeply respected her university teachers, she advanced her scholarly growth by perusing outstanding scholarly literature. She loved German scholars of religions such as A. Dietrich and F.K. Movers. In her interpretations OF owes much to H. Usener and O. Weinreich, later and with great enthusiasm she read J.J. Bachofen. In her works, she systematically referred to J.G. Frazer and Cambridge scholars of ritual, singling out F.M. Cornford. She was well acquainted with Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, and Conrad Preuss as well as with É. Durkheim and Paul Saintyves. O. Spengler was important for her because he emphasized the limitations of causality. Among Russian scholars she singled out A.A. Potебня and A.N. Veselovski and later V. Ia. Propp’s *Historical Origins of the Fairy Tale*. There is no evidence of OF’s familiarity with Carl Jung’s theories, although she knew the book of his co-author, C. Kérenyi (1927), on the ancient novel (see note 20). As time went by, as a result of the Iron Curtain, Russian scholars abandoned the very idea of communicating with foreign scholarship. In the middle of the 1940s, while writing a book on lyrics OF praised Maurice Bowra but it appears that she never heard the ideas of B. Snell’s and E. Fraenkels’s which were akin to her own.
the motif; the protagonist’s deeds are circumscribed by what his or her name means. The analysis of the names suggested to OF the Orient as the novel’s homeland. Henceforth in her future research OF considered Greece not in isolation but among other cultures, ancient Oriental, Eastern civilizations, primitive cultures, and cultures of Medieval Europe. In this approach as in many others she was very much ahead her time and unorthodox.

Contrary to E. Rohde’s opinion, considered irrefutable in those days, OF saw that the novel does not consist of the combination of different motifs and genre models of classical literature, but is in fact built into the context of Hellenistic literature of the Eastern Mediterranean. Long before the papyrological discoveries relating to the ancient novel OF was able to date the birth of the novel to as early as the second and first centuries BCE; in her opinion, it was the Hellenistic era that created this metaphorical realism, in which the ancient mythological theme of fertility gods’ passions was assimilated into the realm of human passions. Soon Carl Kerényi connected the origins of the Greek novel with Egypt and the cult of Isis but he did not touch on genre similarities between the narratives of martyrdom, Acts, Gospels, and the novel. For OF, Egypt in the novel became the top layer of the historical formation of the ancient plot at the time when the Greek novel began taking shape, but she did not see Egypt as the novel’s point of origin. She devoted her next work The Poetics of Plot and Genre to the similarities between the Hellenistic novel and the myths of the deep Archaic period, emphasizing that its authors were unaware of those similarities.

OF singled out two cycles of mythological ideas, tentatively naming one ‘Adonias’ and connecting it with death and resurrection, and the other, ‘Heraclias’, linked to the struggle and victory over death. The cult of the fertility gods corresponds to the first one, and the cycle of solar and zoomorphic images to the second.

Myths convey the change of seasons, alternation of day and night, rising and setting of the Sun and the Moon, cycles of death and life, the perpetual whirlpool of blossoming and wilting as the protagonists’ vanish

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18 See OF’s analysis of the name Falconilla in Freidenberg (2002a).
19 See Rohde (1876).
20 See Kerényi (1927) and Friedenberg (1919–1923) Table of Contents and 82–6.
and re-appear, as the vicissitudes of their fates; the journey to Heaven or
the Underworld is conveyed as the gift of death, loss of life and the birth of
progeny. The introduction of an ethical or religious perspective into these
narratives turns these concrete images into a didactic allegory. The ‘Her-
aclias’ cycle is the foundation of the plots of suffering, temporary dis-
appearance, ‘martyrdoms’ and ‘deaths’ in those episodes of the novel
where the heroes ‘freely and happily emerge from fire, beasts’ jaws and
the sea abyss’, as well as in the episodes of Christian hagiographies and
Apocryphal Acts. OF was the first to advance the idea that, while the Greek
novel was a new and unprecedented phenomenon in ancient literature, yet
unbeknownst to the novels’ authors, they absorbed and gave shape to a
thousand years of antiquity and the mythological pattern got shrouded in
the fabric of pseudo-historical ‘contemporaneity’.

Being a pioneer in many things, with a propensity to approach scholarly
problems in an unorthodox manner, OF allows one to consider the role of
the marginal figure in various professions. Indeed, OF was an adult among
the newly enrolled young students, a Russian scholar studying Western
civilization, a Jew among Russians, a woman among men. Whether any of
these experiences of marginality influenced her singular ability for innova-
tive approaches in her work is a contentious question.

To arrange the defence of her doctoral dissertation on the novel, OF
turned to N. Ia. Marr, who was destined to play an enormous role in her
fate. Nikolai Iakovlevich Marr (1864–1934) was a specialist of the East and
the Caucasus, a philologist, polyglot, historian, ethnographer, and archae-
ologist, most famous for his excavation of the ancient Armenian capital of
Ani and publications of ancient Georgian and Armenian manuscripts. He
had been a member of the Imperial Academy since 1912 and was
extremely influential in academic circles. After the revolution his renown
became even more widespread due to the creation by him of the ‘New
Teachings of language’ or so called ‘Japhetic theory’, which targeted the
origins of language and challenged Indo-European linguistics.

22 This term introduced by Marr stood for a group of archaic languages shaped by Marr
himself and named after Biblical Japhet.
23 Marr suggested that all languages undergo the same stages of the so-called
‘glottogonic process’ and that different language families do not exist. Instead all the
languages, after undergoing similar stages of development, produce hybrids of them-
seh after they come into contact. The Japhetic languages—Caucasian and Basque—
do not belong to a family; they represent the most ancient stage of that ‘glottogony’,
In his eager pursuit to advance and spread his theory, Marr identified ‘the areas of sameness’ between his teachings and the regime’s ideology, one of which was, for example, his view about the ‘class essence’ of the language. From the late 1920s, and all the way to 1950s the new doctrine on language enjoyed state support in the USSR. The new people in the academic world who started rising to governing positions from the mid-1930s made their career not through scholarship but by way of Komsomol and Communist Party organizations, and they began using Marr as the ramming machine for their advancement. Some contemporaries and historians of science regarded Marr in his later period as mentally impaired and their evaluation of his theories reflected this attitude. After Marr suffered a stroke in 1932 and then died in 1934, to use Marrism as a linguistic equivalent of Marxism became even more convenient.  

OF produced a remarkable characterization of Marr: ‘For him nothing existed except palaeontological semantics applied to individual words. In this he was the master, artist, genius, and god. For that he would flatter, be wilful, join the Party, keep a mistress, have a wife and a son. It is not that he was despotic or intolerant, it is that he tolerated nothing save his own scholarly method, created by him, and suffered no divergence from his own passion. There was something about him that made him look as if he existed beyond class or any other convention, the way children do. He was cunning, ambitious, power hungry, unjust, yet simultaneously he struck one with his sincere naivety, lofty simplicity, placidity, and there was neither greed nor pettiness in him as if he were cleansed of them. As a true artist, he was smaller than his own art, did not know how to interpret it, writhed in it as if in snares. As a genius, he was one-sided and owned nothing except creativity’.  

with different centers of origin. In his theory the touch of genius went hand in hand with lack of critical thinking and complete randomness, although one can detect in his works the inchoative stages of linguistic typology and an approach to studying a unified Afro-Eurasian protolanguage. Marr did much for the description of languages of the peoples in Russian Empire who did not have written language; he combined the study of culture, thinking, and the language; in the social sphere in 1920s he shielded scholars from persecutions.


For a historian of scholarship, OF’s ‘Marrism’ occupies a centre-stage position in her biography. Her critics, predominantly among classical philologists, believe that to identify her as a Marrist is enough to discredit her as a scholar and invalidate her ground-breaking works as Marrist nonsense. There are indeed references to Marrist etymologies in some of her works. Yet, OF was not a linguist but was, undoubtedly, independent in her work on mythological semantics, unlike Marr who followed such scholars as A.N. Veselovskii, A.A. Potebnia, E. Cassirer, and L. Lévi-Bruhl. To list OF among ‘Marrists’ can be supported by the facts of everyday scholarly life rather than by the content of her works.

Marr highly evaluated OF’s work on the Greek novel and on 11 November 1924, at the Institute of Comparative Study of Literatures and Languages of West and East (ILIaZV) directed the defence of her dissertation despite the hostility with which the academic milieu received her. It is hard to say whether scholarly or social causes were behind this attitude. Perhaps Marr’s note sent to OF during the heated debate, and saved in her archives as a relic, can serve as a commentary about the atmosphere at her defence: ‘Please, do not be nervous: it is clear your interpretation is overly novel and original’.

Neither should one overlook OF’s status as an outsider in the academic world. She was an ‘alien’ and during the defence behaved without any regard for the protocol of the debate, partly intentionally and partly on account of her lack of experience. Even her application to ILIaZV requesting the admission of her dissertation for defence was written in an impermissibly personal tone: ‘My research that took me five years to complete, from 1919 to 1923, was done under the conditions of the revolutionary period, and so it should be treated in accordance with its character and execution. There is no press currently and no way to make my work public in any of the ways previously possible. Having overcome thousands of obstacles, struggling to keep my work in existence, I finally have the good fortune to give it life with the Institute’s help and I hope that being a scholarly centre, it will help me and not suffocate my work’ (Leningrad, 9 April 192426).

After the Revolution, all the degrees and dissertation defences were abolished along with the nobility titles. It was precisely because academic

26 An application is on its way to press together with the dissertation.
titles and degrees still retained significance for the academic milieu that this milieu had for some time resisted their restoration under the new regime; it was especially true in case of a woman who received her education after the Revolution. This conservative attitude was in stark contrast with OF’s: ‘I am not offering my work to those who wish to treat scholarship placidly, with the assessment established once and for all, and always dispassionate. My explanations are directed toward those for whom scholarship is above all the expression of life nurtured by it, from which it derives good and evil and to which its results stream back—to its hostile womb. Should we forget our epoch, face the unfolding of our life dispassionately, with the standard assessments of the Ice Age? Let him who can do that. I do not wish to forget the days in which I have lived and continue living; the acuity of my time is my corner stone. Hence a formalist should not embark on the criticism of my work, for it is the work of an apprentice and for this reason alone, from an ordinary point of view, is not to be considered seriously...’ (Introduction to Dissertation).

This introduction antagonized those who identified themselves with the word ‘Formalist’, that is, both the old academic school and the young formalists of the Society for the Study of Poetic Language.27 She, in all likelihood, meant academic positivist scholarship. Her ‘Ice Age’ comment was not about wearing overcoats in unheated university lecture halls but about the pre-Revolutionary ways of doing things, which she labelled as hackneyed although the academic majority perceived those ways as the ‘eternal values’ of positive knowledge, threatened as they were even without OF’s attacks. Seeking to receive recognition in the scholarly community, OF seemed to be doing everything to oppose herself to that community.

Besides, OF’s discovery of genetic and generic affinity between the Christian apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla and the pagan Greek novel was for that time too new and shocking. Although Zhebelev recognized OF’s conclusions and they were in time accepted by the famous A. von Harnack,28 OF’s younger colleagues from Zhebelev’s seminar, the

27 OPOIaZ was a prominent group of linguists and literary critics in St. Petersburg founded in 1916 and dissolved by the early 1930s; under political pressure ‘formalism’ came to be a political term of opprobrium.
28 L.O. Pasternak handed to A. von Harnack a concise report of the theses written in German. In his reply on 28 October 1926 Harnack wrote that the work by OF persuaded
philologists with the ‘pre-revolutionary experience’, immediately noticed that OF’s method was at variance with traditional classical philology and rejected it as non-scholarly. At her defence the petition collecting signatures against awarding OF the degree was passed around. Virtually ostracized by her university colleagues and only one year later, OF received an adjunct position at ILLaZV thanks to Marr’s efforts.

As time passed, the works of the French folklorist Pierre Saintyves (Émile Nourry) and of Kerényi became known in Petrograd and the similarity of these foreign scholars’ approach to OF’s method somewhat reconciled her colleagues with her works. Her own milieu, ‘the hot pulse of scholarly life, the atmosphere of important scholarship’ OF found not at ILLaZV, where she worked officially, but at the Japhetic Institute’s workshop that studied mythology, folklore, plot structure and, in general, so-called ‘paleontological semantics’. The Japhetic Institute, where she worked for free, with only ten scholars listed as its members at the outset of its existence, was situated in Marr’s apartment and due to the informal atmosphere that reigned there attracted numerous humanities scholars of Leningrad.

It was at this workshop that OF developed a close relationship with I.G. Frank-Kamenetsky (1880–1937), a scholar of Hebrew and Egyptology educated in Germany, with whom she shared her scholarly interests and ideas. She called him ‘a husband given by nature, the way grace is given from God’, although nothing in their relationship resembled marriage, except strong affection and similar ideas about mythological thought. Frank-Kamenetsky introduced her to the works of Ernst Cassirer. OF was actively involved in the workshop’s activities: she regularly gave talks at its sessions; she also initiated and organized the only collective volume him and that several ambiguities cannot disprove the principal conclusions. He also complimented the erudition and critical sense of the author.

29 Saintyves (1922) and (1923).

30 The members of the ‘mythic’ department were V. Th. Shishmarev (chief), V.L. Komarovitch (Russian studies), I.G. Frank-Kamenetskiy (ancient Israel and Egypt), V.V. Struve (Egypt), T.S. Passek (archeology), B.A. Latynin (archeology and linguistics), B.V. Kazanskiy (classicist and member of OPOIaZ), B.M. Engelgardt who wrote on Veselovskiy, formal school etc.

31 With the lapse of time the Japhetic Institute with its informal atmosphere turned into a ‘normal’ academic institution (Institute of language and mentality named after Nikolay Marr; contemporary Institute of Linguistic Studies in Petersburg).

produced by that scholarly group, which included two major contributions of her own.\textsuperscript{33}

In these particular studies, Marxist influence is clearly pronounced. In her memoirs, OF writes with irritation that the notion of stages of cultural development were attributed to her and expressed hope that the future reader would separate her own thoughts from those forced on her. By and large, those were vain hopes.

The period of 1930–1933 was characterized by OF’s most active societal and public involvement. She was appointed to various administrative positions in research institutions and not only did she perform her duties diligently, but she also expressed a naïve and boastful pride about various signs of her power and status of which she wrote to L. Pasternak’s family. However, the turn of the 1920s in the Soviet Union has been described by many historians of the period as an obvious and irrevocable breaking point. OF wrote about it while Stalin was still alive:

Those were the years when the creeping bloody regime suddenly became a fact . . . The entire Soviet society with its intelligentsia have been trying to comprehend the events that were occurring, trust their logic, understand, learn . . . In 1931 I was already a Soviet human being eager to gain insight, understand, respect and build the new. But with Stalin’s reign came the system whose essence nobody as yet comprehended and could only knock their heads against it. In hindsight one can see how simple it was: the strangulation of the country through hunger and carefully managed destruction; total suppression of personality, thought, creativity, human individuality. This system was put into effect through record numbers of denunciations, political and ‘ideological’ persecutions as well as public abuses. I remember overall perplexity at the first instance of printed abusive language accompanied by personal names and mudslinging. I remember the first campaigns undermining all and any competent authority, whether professional, political or moral. The destruction as a political end in itself was at its very beginning.\textsuperscript{34}

It was also then that the revolutionary period in education came to an end and the return to old forms necessitated the resurrection of Classics Departments. The Petersburg classicists were not ‘Soviet’ enough, since by origin and upbringing they belonged to the upper crust of society. The offer to set up and chair the department was awarded to OF by virtue of her democratic origin, post-revolutionary education, and her association with

\textsuperscript{33} Freidenberg (1991a) and (1991b).  
\textsuperscript{34} Freidenberg (1939–47) Notebook 7, f.230v.
Marr. She invited the ‘dubious’ nobility to join the department where all professors were entitled to their own ‘schools’, which was as unusual according to the unanimous view of the totalitarian system as hiring exiled scholars or returnees from the camps and exile, which she did. OF was in charge of the department until 1949, with a disruption caused by evacuation to Saratov between 1941 and 1944.

While OF’s association with Marr assisted the advancement of her career, she herself, in 1931, moved away from him and especially from the group surrounding him, which turned into a sect and used the influence of its leader to secure their own position. The theory of four elements out of which the words in all the languages were created was regarded by her as nonsensical mysticism. The dislike was mutual. The ‘Japhetologists’ rejected OF’s articles in the periodicals under their control, and they even blocked her work’s publication in the collection dedicated to Marr’s memory; her Memoirs of Marr was published only half a century later.

It was I.I. Meschaninov, an archaeologist, who became an Academic owing to Marr and, although at that time he did not conduct any research in linguistics, became Marr’s successor. As time went by, awards, positions, and titles were showered upon him and he became the official head of Soviet linguistics. He did not need any noticeable and especially independent figures in Marr’s ambit. It was, in fact, Meschaninov who through his acolytes organized the ideological defamation of OF’s The Poetics of Plot and Genre, defamation which at that time endangered not merely the career but the freedom and life of its author.

Fate spared OF’s life, but the space within which she could be active was limited to her department; till the end of her life she was barred from publishing outside the Leningrad University editions; the latter were deposited in the country’s most important libraries but were otherwise difficult to access. Fortunately, Meschaninov’s desire to force out his potential rival coincided with OF’s own desire to distance herself from the ‘Japhetic’ school. In 1937 Frank-Kamenetsky was hit by a car and died. Henceforth nothing connected OF with Marr’s milieu. It was a hard blow for OF when her monograph on Hesiod was rejected for publication.

37 Unlike the Western universities Proceedings and Bulletins published by the universities in the USSR accepted mostly authors affiliated with the home institution.
(1933–1939, over 700 typed pages).38 Thereafter, her only printed output consisted of the abstracts of her monumental research. This situation persisted until the end of her life—her last publication was the abstract on Sappho of which she wrote to Boris Pasternak: ‘I am suffocating from being unable to publish. The members of the editorial board publish only themselves (Once Again Concerning the Question of . . . ). It is not only because they don’t publish me– they don’t publish anyone but themselves. And I write one book after another. Like the Wandering Jew, I am the itinerant pharmacist peddling extracts. Oh, this tragedy of summaries and abstracts! And even they exist only under the best circumstances’ (24. XI. 1946).39

Simultaneously OF composed her memoirs about the years of Stalin’s dictatorship: ‘The notes, written amid searches, arrests, executions are my protest as a human being against the Antichrist’s artillery’.40 To the extent that OF preserved her own personality, she was nevertheless doomed to obscurity as a scholar; inasmuch as she maintained her reputation in the academic circles as a follower of the ‘New Teachings on Language’, as the department chair and a Soviet university professor, her personality was imperilled.

During the blockade of Leningrad, OF had stayed in the city. The goods stored by OF for her brother, A.M. Freidenberg, who was arrested in 1937 and thought by her to be in the camps, allowed her and her elderly mother to survive the hunger of the winter of 1941/42. She did not know at the time that the sentence ‘ten years without the right of correspondence’ meant that her brother had been executed. Her testimony about the siege is a matter of future publication, since so far only isolated excerpts have appeared in Russian and English.41 Her account about life under the siege makes an overwhelming impression not only due to its description of the unspeakable suffering and monstrous treatment of the population by its government, but also due to the scope of her vision of the events. It is not simply the testimony of a human being who survived the siege, because she measured the events against her life in historical context rather than only as an individual experience.

38 Post mortem four chapters and excerpts from the book were published, as Friedenberg (1973), Freidenberg (1988a), Freidenberg (1990), and Freidenberg (2007).
41 Freidenberg (2002b) and (1987).
OF’s grasp of the essence of Stalin’s regime, that she felt compelled to write about at the time when Soviet people burnt everything they had ever written, is stunning. The most astonishing fact was that in the besieged Leningrad, although emaciated and scurvy-ridden OF continued to write, producing three monographs, and the part of her memoirs entitled *The Siege of a Human*. In the post-war years she completed another three books, none of which was published during her lifetime.

After the war, the atmosphere in the country was hardly better than during the war. When the department members returned from the evacuation, OF was again appointed the department chair. She had been striving repeatedly to give up her position so as to escape the necessity of participating in never-ending kangaroo trials, to be neither a victim of, nor a witness to the defamation of the country’s best scholars and the destruction of the University. The Anti-Semitic campaign conducted under the slogan of the struggle against so called ‘cosmopolitanism’ was directed both against the Jews and any contacts between Russian and foreign scholarship.

In 1948–1949, Marrists intensified their rabble-rousing activity. Suddenly in 1950 Stalin interfered in the linguistic debates initiated in *Pravda*, the Communist Party main newspaper. Against all expectations he took the side of the opponents of Marr’s teachings. Thereafter defamation and expulsions befell adherents of Marrism as before they had befallen the people accused of being partial to Western scholarship; in both cases public repentance was required.


OF did not ‘repent’. She gave up her position as the department chair in 1949 and in 1951 she retired. After her retirement, OF spent her time putting in order her private papers and scholarly writings while completing her book *Image and Concept*, which summed up all of her findings and years of research. In 1955 she died from cancer; only six people attended her funeral, not a single person from the official world was there, and for many years her thoughts and manuscripts sank into the protective silence of a private archive. At the end of the 1940s, Iurii Lotman, a future renowned creator of Russian semiotics, was a student at the Leningrad State University. He recollected that he had never heard of the scholar called Olga Freidenberg, nor of her works and theories. One of the most remarkable innovative minds of the twentieth century was remembered by many as a kind and compassionate person, who eagerly helped poor instructors and students with money and was not afraid to protect the persecuted and even—something unthinkable in Soviet Russia—the arrested. Many others thought of her as a Marrist with a difficult personality far removed from classical philology. But nobody saw or wanted to see her scholarly achievements, much the same way as in the post-War Budapest University there was no place for Karl Kerényi. Three quarters of a century after OF’s last publication in her lifetime, Iurii Lotman published three articles about her,45 and wrote about her as an outstanding theoretician of culture.46

If decades after the death of a classical philologist, the philologist’s works are recovered from dust, published and translated into foreign languages, and if the person known only to a narrow circle of colleagues becomes the subject of scholarly articles, academic surveys47 and dissertations48 this is a sufficient testimony to OF’s unique fate. During her lifetime OF published twenty articles, one monograph, ten short abstracts and excerpts from her essays, and served as an editor of three volumes. In her iron trunk she left ten scholarly monographs, dozens of articles, thirty-four notebooks of her memoir *Race of Life* and among her correspondence there were 130 letters from her cousin Boris Pasternak. Posthumously over 100 of her works have been published in different

45 Iz nauchnogo naslediia O.M. Freidenberg: Proischozhdenie parodii; Proischozhdenie literaturnoj intrigi; Chto takое eschatologiiа?, ed. in Lotman (1973) 490–514.
languages, primarily in Russian. In addition, over 200 publications and significant fragments in other scholars’ works about OF should also be included in this list.\textsuperscript{49} The number of references and allusions to her are hard to estimate.

She was not recognized by her classicist colleagues because she was a philosopher of culture who used the material of the ancient world for her work. For a classicist the scope of her vision was too grand and for the reader without a classical education her works were too difficult to comprehend. She did not declare herself to be a philosopher, and the sole reason was not that in her time and country the only philosophy allowed to exist was the Soviet brand of Marxism. She herself did not immediately identify her works as philosophical. At the beginning of the 1970s, it was Russian semiotic studies, the theory of signs and symbols, of cultural communication based on linguistics and philology, which turned out to be the scholarly trend that claimed OF’s works.

During the time of Khruschev’s thaw (1954–1961), the field of linguistics assumed the function of a new post-totalitarian humanities discipline and crafted a model of scholarship for all humanitarian disciplines emancipated from ideology. Marr was a symbol of ideologized anti-scholarship and therefore was denounced twice—first under Stalin and then from the standpoint of a new structural linguistics and of the resurrected field of Indo-European language studies. Nonetheless, the leading names in the structural and semiotic school in Russia, such as Iu. Lotman, V.V. Ivanov, and E.M. Meletinsky were interested in OF’s legacy even though Lotman identified her association with Marr as the reason for her being erased from memory.\textsuperscript{50} Her first posthumous publication was in fact prepared by Lotman rather than by classicists, or her students, or younger colleagues; the second one was overseen by Meletinsky and myself, N.V. Braginskaya.\textsuperscript{51} The scholars of the 1970s gathered anything valuable that had survived under Stalin. That explains why the first translations of OF’s works into English appeared in the volumes devoted to Russian semiotics and formalism.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{49} See the bibliography at http://freidenberg.ru/.
\textsuperscript{50} Lotman (1976) 257–8.
\textsuperscript{52} See Freidenberg (1976) and (1978b). The first draft of the latter was published in Russian in 1926.
In OF’s scholarly fate two people played serious if exactly opposite roles: N. Ia. Marr and Boris Pasternak. The former helped her during his life and harmed her reputation posthumously. The latter could not help his cousin in any practical way, but it was thanks to him that, after their deaths, her works did not sink into oblivion. Pasternak’s world-wide fame as a poet and a Nobel Prize winner, allowed OF to emerge from the darkness of oblivion, when their correspondence in English translation became a bestseller and attracted the attention of the press and the public. The reader was surprised to discover such a previously unfamiliar correspondent of a famous poet.

Usually when the famous writers’ correspondence is published, their correspondents’ letters are used for commentaries at best. In this case, the letters of both sides were published and the great poet’s cousin appeared to be his equal in the power of the word and inner freedom. Aiming for sensationalism, reviewers proclaimed OF to be the first and most important love in the poet’s life. This journalistic reception reflected a certain degree of awe for the poet’s correspondent. Neither the historians of Russian literature nor the classicists of Europe and America have ever heard anything about this professor of classical philology. This correspondence was passed from hand to hand in the circles of the intelligentsia and was even forwarded to Andrei Sakharov in exile. This way the Correspondence and simply the hear say about it awoke an interest in OF’s legacy. (I discovered the letters at the end of 1973, or beginning of 1974).

OF’s theoretical ideas are important. As an introduction to these ideas and a concise way of winning the interest of the Western readers a synopsis of her ideas is provided in this chapter, to encourage further work with her ideas and with the hope that her works will find their translators. A contemporary of Russian formalists, OF was never theoretically close to that school. Admittedly, she did share with the formalists some common opponents, such as those who considered the evolution of culture as a linear chronological process. She was close to the theory of nomogenesis developed by a biologist L.S. Berg, which significantly contributed to the modern synthetic theory of evolution. She approached the dynamics of culture, not unlike Goethe or Cuvier, as a complex, iterative, recursive, spasmodic, polygenic, and catastrophic movement: interference and interaction between separate and ever new phenomena, which collide, encompass or amplify each other, constitute the uninterrupted process of
the whole in which, paradoxically, the proximate repels, and the opposite ensures continuity. From this it is rather obvious that although OF was a professor of classical philology who wrote on Homer, Hesiod, Aristophanes, tragedy, Plato, the Greek novel and the Apocrypha, Archaic lyric, Sappho, and fabula palliata, she hardly fitted the conventional standard of a classicist. Generally speaking, this is not untypical of major classical scholars, which is why they are often resented by their peers.

In her works of 1925, primarily in the *Idea of Parody* and *The System of Literary Plot*, OF in a condensed way, and sometimes rather enigmatically, presents many far-reaching insights that she would develop in her later scholarly life. In the former she reviews the Medieval sotties and clownish liturgies (all those genres which decades later received the name of ‘carnivalesque culture’ and became known as Mikhail Bakhtin’s discovery). She then turns to the presence of the serious and the sacred in the lowered form in comedy, in the shape of hymns, theogonies, mysteries, as well as in the representations of the gods in hilaro-tragedy and in the archaic genres of the satyricon and the phlyax. The archaic parody, which, unlike the individual, literary one, is based on ritual and on the ‘substratum of the impersonal psyche’, was not, according to OF, a result of the decline of religious consciousness.

As archaic parody demonstrates, the proximity of tragedy and comedy must be explained by their common origin, rather than by the influence that the older genre exerted on the younger one. OF deemed naïve the explanation of the two-tiered structure of the tragedies of Shakespeare and Spanish playwrights by reference to the author’s great knowledge of life, even if the modern reader and spectator might see it as such. The two-tiered structure—serious drama accompanied by comic relief, interlude or intermission—is a general phenomenon found in Hindu and Japanese theatre, and if one looks carefully, in theatre all over the world. It follows that what is at issue is not Shakespeare’s genius, but the origins of drama itself. Later OF would write a work about ‘the comic before comedy’, in which she will develop the idea that the archaic laughter or ‘the comic’ have mythological semantics linked to fertility. It is from such a comic genre similar to satyr play, that tragedy was born. We learn about satyr play later when this as it were ‘embryonic’ form of tragedy

53 See previous note. 54 Freidenberg (1988d).
stuck to its historical form, entering the tetralogy of performance. The content that is satyric, political, and comic (already in the Aristophanic meaning of these words) fills the archaic form that was left behind by rituals of fertility with their apotropaic invective. ‘The comic before comedy’ did not deride anything lofty or sacred, but rather affirmed them with the help of the benevolent element of trickery and laughter.

According to OF, the specificity of the comic-realistic genre lies in the selection of only one cluster or filiation of images, specifically one that conveys the semantics of fertility. The metaphors of fertility are the closest to everyday life. Food, the reproductive act, and physical deformity live as metaphors in folklore and also exist as real facts of life. The particular connection between cult laughter and the image of fertility is traced in the monograph The Comic before Comedy. OF links the appearance of the comedic, in the place where the mythological comical used to exist, to the emergence of the category of quality and thereby of evaluation and of ethical concepts. This special quality of ancient realism is the subject of the chapter ‘Vulgar realism’ in Poetics of Plot and Genre. OF notes that the idea of ‘real’ is presented as something void of beauty and grandeur, as something deformed by excessive characterization and similar to grotesque. Greek classicism does not create noble realistic characters; it creates only the lofty and the base, praise or invective. If in Greek literature reality signifies something debased and comical, in Greek philosophy reality is conceived of as a negative value, contrasted with the ‘positive principle of the abstract and the substantial’. The comical is created long before comedy from the peculiar cognitive or ‘gnoseological’ given: reality is perceived as the semblance of true being.

In another work dating from 1925, The System of Literary Plot, OF formulated the main thesis of the so-called genetic method: plot and genre present the worldview in its genesis. In other words, mythological content, once it has lost its actuality, undergoes sedimentation as literary form. The simplest illustration of this tenet is the well-known phenomenon of the reconceptualization of ritual: religious performances, more conservative than words, outlive their own meanings and become customs for whose explanation the ‘sacred stories’ are then invented. When analysing ancient literature one does not need to emphasize the structure of the genre: genre in this case is not the formal part, but almost a ‘biological’ basis of the work. The generic structure can
also function separately outside the confines of the literary material, as can be observed in folklore and in pre-religious cult. The Saturnalia exist in reality as well as in the religious calendar, and the inversion of master/servant relationships finds its place in the literary *fabula palliata*. Whereas the traditionality of a genre is intrinsic to its very definition, considering plot as a similarly tradition-bound element was a novel thought at the time when OF began to ponder the origins of plot. OF put forward a notion of the long-lasting epoch of the ‘ready-made plot’, which continued in Europe all the way to the eighteenth century and after which the time of relatively free fictional plots arrived.

Looking for a name for what she was researching, OF put forward the neologism ‘semantology’. Under *semantics* she understood not the realm of meaning in general, but only the mythological system of meaning. For OF, the meaning of the myth is always hidden and does not exist outside its expression through ‘metaphors’. OF calls the mythological metaphors ‘pre-metaphors’ since they do not involve an actual transfer of meaning. Mythological ‘metaphor’ endows an amorphous meaning—the mythical image—with a capacity of being expressed and localized, a certain state of concentration. According to OF’s definition, myth is an imaginative representation in the form of several metaphors, from which logical causality is absent and where objecthood, space, and time are understood in a way that is non-differentiated and concrete, where human being and the world, the subject and the object are one. Myth penetrates all of primitive life: actions have mythological semantics, as well as things, speech, and ‘gods’. There is no single pattern according to which myth circulates. Having from their very beginning a linguistic and rhythmic texture, verbal myths function as lamentations, wailings, invocations, addresses, curses, laudations, exclamations, and exchanges of questions and answers. When OF speaks of the verbal, material, and performative aspects of myth she is not referring to separate and parallel circulation of these forms. Verbal myths are staged, performative ones are verbalized, and both accumulate material accoutrements. Myth is imagistic, but—as if to tempt naïve historicists—it takes forms that employ realistic categories.55

55 All mythologies, whether given in a verbal or non-verbal plot, are nothing but ‘cosmogonies-eschatologies’ yet, inasmuch as a hunting collective conceives of its being as the dying and the resurrection of ‘totems’, their fight or journey (totem being a conventional name for the subject-object totality comprising the world and the self). Myths are to such an
Since in traditional cultures, according to OF, content does not generate new forms for itself, a system of images that belongs to one code (for example, zoomorphism) is not superseded by other systems of images (such as vegetative or agrarian metaphorical systems) but is instead placed in a relationship of ‘synonymity’ to it. The peculiar systematicity of ancient plots that are founded on mythology derives from the anti-causality of their principle of construction, which combines elements whose legitimacy is grounded in different eras. Since the sequence of these elements does not follow the rules of logic and lacks a unifying centre, the ‘syntax’ of a literary work in antiquity is informed by the principle of ‘apposition’.

The rewriting of myths in conceptual terms, the role of conceptual processes in the emergence of poetic categories, and literature approached as material for a theory of cognition are topics that preoccupied OF in the 1940s and 1950s. In Image and Concept OF demonstrated that the ancient concept is formally built on the semantics of the image. Thus an emergent conceptual phenomenon is christened using old imagistic diction, that is, the content of a concrete mythical image is transformed into the texture of an abstract concept. In such a contradictory fashion, with the abstract comprehended through the sensuous, the artistic image is born as a symbiosis of image and concept. Ancient concepts emerged in the shape of metaphors (lit. ‘transfer’ or ‘transposition’), whereby the old identity of meanings of the ‘original’ (mythological semantics) and its ‘transposition’ (mythological pre-metaphor) was replaced by a mere illusion of such identity. Exact correspondence was transformed into a patent lack of veracity, into an instance of saying one thing by means of another (allegorein).

Poetic metaphor thus resulted spontaneously as a form of image in the function of concept. In order for a metaphor to come into being, there is one necessary precondition: ‘two concrete meanings should be extent devoid of the tendency to lay bare their content, they are so distant from it morphologically that, being self-sufficient, they immediately take on an autonomous function ‘of being emplotted (siuzhetnost’).

56 This principle, often incorrectly interpreted as that of ‘insertion’, is discussed in OF’s Semantics of the composition of Hesiod’s ‘Works and Days’.
torn asunder, one of them remaining concrete, and the other being its transposition into the conceptual realm’ (*Image and Concept*). The difference between the ancient and the modern metaphor consists in the fact that underneath the ancient ‘transfer’ there must be found a genetic identity between the semantics of that which supplies properties that are being ‘transferred’ and the semantics of that onto which these properties are transferred. Image can carry logical and cognitive functions even as it remains an image, whereas concept may become a determining factor in the rise of poetic categories. Mythical image originates in antiquity as the lowest form of thought, yet eventually, when concepts come to inform poetic images, it emerges as the highest cognitive form. Conversely, logical conceptual thought may become enervated and vacuous; once formal exactitude has been achieved, and the production of images becomes the highest form of cognition in science, including physics.

It is no easy task to summarize theoretical works that, rather than containing one or two insights, are permeated by thought. Neither should we forget that, beginning in the 1930s, OF lived in a society closed to the outside world and was deprived of any contact with foreign scholars. As result, she remained unaware of many achievements of her contemporaries. The converse is also true of modern scholars, such as George Lakoff who was ignorant of her *Image and Concept*, a work that anticipated his books by decades. OF’s works call for translation into European languages: I am confident that they have not dated, and that some of her thoughts still await us in the future.

One of the most striking things about OF is her own earnest hope that her prolific works on so many aspects of ancient literature would one day be read and her contribution appreciated; that the manuscripts which somehow escaped fire during the icy winters of the siege of Leningrad and which somehow avoided annihilation by the bombs and disappearance in the KGB archives will survive and reach the readers. It seems appropriate, given the degree to which she was silenced in her own lifetime, and vilified at other times both from within the Communist establishment and by its critics, to leave her with her last word written on her last book *Image and Concept*, translated now into many languages. That note was written not in pen but in stylus, as if she were returning to the times of the papyri:
I shall have to begin with the same thing: the prison-like conditions in which this work was written.

I do not have the right of access to scholarly books. Therefore I have written from memory. I have been isolated from scholarly thought. My pupils and my friends have turned away, my classroom has been taken from me.

Under these conditions I decided to synthesize my thirty-seven-year experience in research and fall silent.

Passer-by! Pause at this work and pray for scholarship.

20 March 1954

Olga Freidenberg
An Unconventional Classicist
The Work and Life of Kathleen Freeman

M. Eleanor Irwin

Kathleen Freeman [FIG. 16.1] was a lecturer in Greek at the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire (now the University of Cardiff) from 1919 to 1946.¹ She was the author of *The Work and Life of Solon*, *Companion to the pre-Socratic philosophers*, *The Murder of Herodes*, *Ancilla to the pre-Socratic philosophers*, *The Greek Way*, *The Philoctetes of Sophocles*, *Greek City States*, *God, Man and State* and *The Paths of Justice*. She translated Untersteiner’s *I sofisti* from Italian and combined *Everyday Things in Homeric Greece*, *Everyday Things in Archaic Greece*, and *Everyday Things in Classical Greece* by C.H. Quennell and Marjorie Quennell into a single volume.² All but *Solon* were published in 1946 (the year in which she resigned from the university) or later. Fifty-five years after her death, all but two of these books have been reprinted, some several times, and all are still available in university libraries.³

These books were only part of her activity. She drew on her knowledge of the ancient world in producing propaganda during the Second World

¹ I am grateful to my colleague Prof. John Warden for his comments on a draft of this chapter, to Prof. Ceri Davies, University of Swansea, for advice on things Welsh; to the National Library of Wales and to the University of Cardiff.
² Marjorie Quennell was an artist and museum curator and her husband C.H. Quennell was an architect. The books were addressed to school children. Freeman broadened the audience and tightened the contents.
³ World Cat. ‘Kathleen Freeman’ on line. Neither Freeman’s translation of Untersteiner *The Sophists* nor her translation of *Philoctetes* has been reprinted.
War. She was Director of Studies for the Philosophical Society of England (ca. 1948–52). She wrote poetry and fiction under her own name and under pseudonyms, the most common of which was ‘Mary Fitt’, in which identity she was a successful writer of mysteries (1936–60) and was inducted into the Detection Club in 1950. As Mary Fitt she also wrote twelve children’s books (1953–59). I shall say little in this chapter about her fiction except where it can be related to her Classical interests.4

Freeman’s early life and schooling

As a female in a field where men were in the majority and a pupil at a school where girls did not study Latin and Greek, Freeman must have seemed unlikely to become a Classicist of note. She was the only child of Charles Henry Freeman and Catharine née Mawdesley, born on 22 June

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4 For a complete bibliography, see Irwin 2004a and 2005.
1897 in Yardley near Birmingham. By the 1911 census her family had moved to Cardiff to an 8-room house on Conway Road in the Canton district from which Kathleen could walk less than half a mile to the Canton High School on Market Road. Both boys and girls attended Canton High School which opened in 1907, though they were taught separately and offered slightly different subjects. Kathleen graduated from high school in June 1915 and was accepted at the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire.

There was nothing remarkable about Kathleen’s family to predict her career and little indication of her relationship to them. Her mother died in 1919, shortly after Kathleen graduated from university. Almost thirty years later (in 1948) she dedicated And where’s Mr Bellamy? (under the name Stuart Mary Wick) enigmatically ‘For Catharine Mawdesley/ instead of flowers’. Her father died in 1932 (see p. 321 under my discussion of Liliane Clopet).

Both her father’s and her mother’s family were respectable middle class. Several members of her father’s family had been teachers. Her grandfather Charles Freeman had been ordained in the Church of England and for a time was a school teacher (1881 census). By the 1891 census, both her father’s parents were dead (Charles in 1885 and Frances in 1890) and her father Charles Henry and four of his siblings were living with an unmarried aunt. Her father was a brewers’ traveller, two of his sisters were teachers, a third an assistant teacher and a brother a tailor and draper. Freeman’s maternal grandfather James Mawdesley had died in 1875. Her mother Catharine at age 14 was visiting her aunt and uncle at Hill Top Farm (1881 census) and at age 24 was living with her mother Margaret and stepfather Thomas Cory, with no employment indicated (1891 census). Her stepfather was a draper and her half-brother a grocer’s assistant.

5 I am grateful to Adele Espina who traced the Freeman, Mawdesley/Cory and Clopet families in census and other genealogical records.
6 Underdown: from 1907 boys took English, History, French, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, and Handicraft; Latin and Chemistry were added in 1908. Subjects offered to girls: English, History, Geography, Physics, Hygiene, Sewing, Drawing, French, Arithmetic, Scripture, and Handwriting. www.chrisb.4ce.co.uk/schools_site/school (accessed in 2003, has since disappeared).
7 Children in her children’s books are usually separated from their parents. This might suggest that the parental relationship was not important to her but it might be simply that she wanted her child figures independent.
8 Sarah Blankley, their mother’s sister. Another sister had died before 1891 and another brother was not living at that address.
Canton High School offered Latin, but apparently not to girls; Greek was not offered. Latin and Greek were required subjects for certain careers (e.g. the church, medicine, and law) and a great advantage for others (e.g. diplomatic and civil services).\(^9\) When Latin and Greek were taught in high schools, their students gained a definite advantage over late-starters.\(^{10}\)

We do not know when Freeman began to learn Greek or from whom. Various stories in her novels and comments in her prefaces suggest that she found a tutor outside of school and began to acquire Greek before she entered university. In the preface to *The Greek Way*, she says that ‘one can learn to read easy Greek in a year or less. Mastery of Greek is the work of a lifetime or longer’ (Preface vii). Several characters in her novels had studied Greek: in *The Huge Shipwreck* (100–1, 164–6) two girls learn Greek from a nun, when the school did not offer it, and soon they were reading Aesop and Xenophon;\(^{11}\) in *Clues to Christabel* (221) the central figure leaves a note in Greek for George with whom she had studied Greek in youth. From these incidental comments I conclude that she learned Greek before university.

Freeman also had a working knowledge of Latin, French, German, Italian, and modern Greek as is evident from her publications.\(^{12}\) Except for French, which was offered at her high school, we do not know when she learned these languages.

**Freeman as an undergraduate**

Freeman attended the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire from 1915 to 1918.\(^{13}\) At university she had the good fortune to have Gilbert Norwood, Professor of Greek, as her teacher.

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\(^{9}\) Cf. the Classically trained Sir Humphrey Appleby and Bernard Woolley in *Yes, Minister* (BBC). See Parkinson 50 on Classics as a preparation for imperial administrators.

\(^{10}\) Carr 140–1 with reference to the Cardiff High School for Girls which offered Classics from 1895: ‘only a few fortunate girls have learnt Greek in School; the opportunity to do so is available...to girls who seem to have a bent for language...Latin...may be started in the fourth [year] by any girl...who bids fair to be of University calibre.’

\(^{11}\) *The Huge Shipwreck* (1934) dedicated to Liliane M.C. Clopet is set in a girls’ school, much like St. Mary’s Convent School in Berwick which Clopet attended (census 1911).

\(^{12}\) Translation of *I sofisti* (Italian), *Companion* (German). See *Voices of Freedom* 287.

\(^{13}\) She described university Latin classes in her first novel, Freeman 1926b.
Norwood saw her potential and hired her in 1919 as a lecturer in Greek. In 1926, Norwood left Cardiff for Toronto where he became Head of the Classics Department at University College, but they kept in touch; she dedicated *The Work and Life of Solon* (1926) to him with thanks for his ‘help and inspiring encouragement’;¹⁴ he encouraged her to submit a manuscript (*Aspects of Greek Life and Thought*, of which more later) in 1939; she contributed a chapter to his *Festschrift* in 1952 (Freeman 1952b) and wrote a letter of condolence to his widow Frances: ‘I owed him very much, especially for his inspired teaching.’¹⁵

The University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire accepted both male and female students by the charter granted in 1893.¹⁶ When Freeman entered university in 1915, WWI had begun and student enrolment had dropped dramatically. Male students had always outnumbered female until 1916–18 when female students became more numerous.¹⁷ Smaller class sizes and fewer men must have made it easier for a promising female student to be noticed. By 1919/20, the year she was appointed lecturer, attendance more than tripled with almost 1,000 students enrolled.

**Freeman as Lecturer in Greek from 1919 to the beginning of WWII**

A Royal Commission (the Haldane Commission) had been set up in 1916 to study the University of Wales which at that time consisted of colleges in Cardiff, Aberystwyth, and Bangor (Williams 119–64).¹⁸ The Commission was to address tensions between the University and its Colleges, competition among the Colleges and a concern to provide higher education for Welsh students within Wales. As the result of the Commission, the Colleges were granted better financial support and

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¹⁴ Freeman (1926a) 8.
¹⁵ University of Toronto archives: Norwood, letter dated 26 October 1954. Norwood (*Pindar* 1945) included her *G&R* article on Pindar in his bibliography and noted her suggestion that Pindar was responding to Xenophanes’ criticism.
¹⁶ Article 1 (iii), Trow and Brown 13. Classes began in 1883.
¹⁷ Trow and Brown, 28; graph, 30. A total of 735 past and present students enlisted, and of these 110 were killed in action or died on active duty, Trow and Brown, 101.
¹⁸ A fourth college was established at Swansea in 1920 after the Royal Commission had reported, Williams 144.
greater autonomy (Williams 139); syllabuses were to be agreed ‘between
the teacher and his College’ and examinations were to be conducted by
the college, with one external examiner on each body of internal exam-
iners only for the final examination for the initial degree (Williams 143).
One recommendation which directly benefitted Freeman was the cre-
ation of the University of Wales Press in 1922 ‘to encourage research and
publication’ (Williams 146). Her work on Solon was published by the
University Press Board.

From 1919 to 1946 Freeman was a lecturer in Greek at the University
College of South Wales and Monmouthshire. A picture of the faculty
taken in 1922 shows 41 men and 10 women, more women than we might
have expected. Professors were seated in the front row, all men except for
Barbara Foxley, Professor of Education (Women). Nineteen women stand
side by side in the middle row, among them Freeman, noticeably taller
than the other women, directly behind Norwood. Only one of these
women, Dr Ida Beata Saxby, had a doctorate. The proportion of women
to men may owe something to the high casualty rate among enlisted
men in the war. It is hardly surprising that the only woman professor
was head of women’s education.

Freeman earned her MA in 1922 with a thesis The Work and Life of
Solon. In 1923 she published an article on Sophocles, Oedipus Coloneus.
She revised The Work and Life of Solon for publication in 1926 and
added a translation of his poems. Solon had a great attraction for
Freeman; she returned to him, in her wartime writing, in a children’s
book, Man of Justice. The story of Solon (Fitt), and in Paths of Justice. He
represented for her the influence a single leader can have on the direction
of a state. She praised his character: his ‘invincible moral strength’, his
‘honesty and disinterestedness ‘and above all his ‘devotion to justice’
(Solon 200–1).

In April 1939, Freeman submitted a manuscript with six articles
published in Greece and Rome between 1935 and 1940 ‘and some others’
to J.M. Dent. She had the support of Gilbert Norwood, H.J.W. Tillyard,

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19 Foxley, cf. Evans 158. I am grateful to the University of Cardiff for a copy of this
picture.
20 Freeman (1926a).
21 University of North Carolina archives 1.1–603 ‘Kathleen Freeman’ letters to Dent
21 March 1939 to 27 April 1939.
who succeeded him as Professor of Greek at Cardiff, Benjamin Farrington, Professor of Classics at Swansea, and Cyril Bailey, Balliol College, Oxford, as well as the poet T.S. Eliot who thought well of her article on Pindar. Dent, however, declined to publish the book, citing a ‘limited market’, in spite of the offer of a subvention from the university through its Principal J.F. Rees. I hope to be forgiven for saying that this book would have been well worth publishing and would have rescued from oblivion articles even now worth reading. It would have been informative to have Freeman’s introduction which she told Dent would ‘bring out the underlying unity’ of the various chapters.

The six articles which would have been included varied in subject from a study of the philosopher Anaxagoras (1935), the Greek view of children (1936), what it was like to belong to the ‘garden’ of Epicurus (1938a), the life of a wealthy Athenian (1938b), Pindar’s presentation of himself as a poet (1939) and Plato’s opposition to poetry (1940). Her approach was unusual for the time in taking an interest in people, some famous like Plato, but most quite ordinary and rarely the focus of scholarship. She was completely familiar with the evidence of the ancient texts but rather than being chained to them, she provided an historical and cultural context which breathed life into her subjects. Not least, she was personally engaged with what she wrote; rather than looking at the past as through a telescope, she saw the ancients as fellow human beings whose feelings she could understand even if at times she did not agree.

In 1940 Freeman was awarded a D. Litt. by the university for the published version of *The Work and Life of Solon* (1926) and the six articles published in *Greece and Rome* between 1935 and 1940.

Two other articles were published in *Greece and Rome* and may have been among ‘the others’ included in the manuscript of *Aspects*, one on Thourioi (1941) which later found a place in *Greek City States* (1950a) with a few additions for a less Classically attuned readership and some subtractions of rather esoteric material, and the other ‘Vincent, or the donkey’ (1945), a sympathetic portrayal of this ‘most unhappy of all the working animals’ (41).

The straightforward, attractive prose style of these articles is a reminder that she had been a successful novelist and short story writer.

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22 The donkey appears in *The Greek Way* #105, 93–5.
from 1926, the same year in which Solon was published. Her familiarity with the whole range of Greek writing is admirable for the apparent effortlessness with which she combined poetry, philosophy, and history. (She was always careful to provide references without letting them overwhelm the text). It was not only the subjects—children and animals—which made her different from her male colleagues, but her sympathy and her effort at understanding. She used the origins of the Thourian colonists from different city states to explore how these origins might have affected their attitude to events just as she had used Solon's poems as a lens through which to view his reforms. She was able to get inside the skin of her subjects in a way which few if any male Classicists of her time even attempted, creating sympathy in her readers without calling attention to herself. One of the most striking examples was her betrayal of emotion for the donkey in Apuleius' Golden Ass: ‘the light it throws on the treatment of animals makes it even more unbearable reading in places than its surpassing coarseness’ (1945, 41).

The invention of Mary Fitt

In the 1930s Freeman reinvented herself as Mary Fitt, author of murder mysteries. Freeman enjoyed being enigmatic; when asked for a biography she wrote that Mary Fitt was born ‘in that part of the world which lies between classical Greece and Elizabethan England’. She travelled widely and used her travels as settings for her mysteries. Her travels began in Paris and then extended ‘to Rome and Berlin, Madrid and Istanbul, Athens and Budapest: . . . cruising past Stromboli on a summer night . . . [and spending] long summer days in the Arctic Circle’. Three of her first four mysteries are set in continental Europe: Murder Mars the Tour in Austria (1936), Bulls Like Death, in Germany and Switzerland (1937), and The Three Hunting Horns in France (1937).

23 The Thourians were made up of Athenians and Peloponnesians who formed their own alliances without being bound by their city origins. Freeman was aware of the status of Wales within Great Britain and her comments on Thourioi may have been influenced by this.

24 For a possible explanation of the name Mary Fitt see Irwin 2008, 51.

She was interested in the character and motivation of people, and this interest rather than the puzzle aspect of solving murders characterizes her Mary Fitt mysteries. She explained her interest in people by invoking an English poet and a Greek sophist:

It has been said, though unfortunately by a poet [Alexander Pope] I dislike, that the proper study of mankind is Man. And it has been said by a philosopher [Protagoras] I greatly admire, that Man is the measure of all things.

These two aphorisms sum up equally my approach to writing and my approach to life.

Her friendship with Liliane Clopet

Freeman did not marry. Her friend and companion Dr Liliane Marie Catharine Clopet qualified in medicine in 1928 and graduated from the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire MB BCh in 1930. Their friendship had begun by 1929 at the latest when Freeman dedicated her novel *This Love* ‘to my friend Lilian’ (sic). In the early 1930s they built a ‘sky-blue’ house on Druidstone Road in St Mellons near Cardiff and named it Lark’s Rise. The death of Freeman’s father in 1932 not only provided money towards the house but also allowed Freeman to make her own living arrangements. Freeman dedicated many of her books to Clopet (sometimes as LMCC) and Clopet dedicated *Once upon a Time*, a collection of folktales (1944): ‘To KF for whom I wrote them.’

From the fifth Mary Fitt mystery *Expected Death* (1938), her detective Mallett and his companion Dr Fitzbrown work together cooperatively, often using Fitzbrown’s medical knowledge. Fitzbrown is not like the unfortunate Dr Watson doing Sherlock Holmes’ bidding (Conan Doyle) or Dr Hastings producing a wrong solution for Hercule Poirot to shoot down (Agatha Christie) or Bunter who chats up the below-stairs staff while Lord Peter interviews above stairs (Dorothy L. Sayers). This partnership of Mallett and Fitzbrown gives an insight into the supportive friendship of Freeman and Clopet.
Writing and teaching during WWII

Freeman’s manuscript *Aspects of Greek Life and Thought* was rejected in April 1939. She did not have long to regret the rejection. In September 1939, when war was declared, she began to contribute columns to the *Western Mail*, published in Cardiff, and continued to contribute for three months. She had travelled in Europe in the thirties and must have observed the rise of Hitler and Nazism. These columns drew on ancient Greek writers to provoke thought about the issues of the war and were published in 1941 as *It has all happened before. What the Greeks thought of their Nazis* with a foreword by Gilbert Murray. Each excerpt is identified by author and given a title; some have a brief explanation. By means of quotations, she emphasized the need for a rapid response against a dictator and defined the way states should treat one another. Under the title ‘Dictators’, she quoted Solon: ‘when a man has risen too high, it is not easy to check him after; now is the time to take heed of everything’ (9). Under the title ‘The Good Ruler’, she quoted Isocrates: ‘I choose to rule with justice my own land, rather than seize with injustice a territory many times greater than what I have’ (35) and ‘Treat weaker states in the same way as you would like stronger states to treat you’ (31). In this way she prompted readers to equate ancient political figures like tyrants with the Nazis.

Freeman learned details of the French *Résistance* through Clopet, whose father Aristide was born in France. Clopet family members including her mother Charlotte lived in France during the war. Her brother Karl Victor had worked in Casablanca in the merchant marines for a dozen years before being brought to London in 1942 to advise on Operation Torch. Her young cousin Evelyne was in the *Résistance*; she was trained in England for the Sussex Plan and parachuted into France in August 1944. A monument records her capture and execution by the Nazis. Years later (1956) Freeman (under the pseudonym Caroline

29 Aristide became a naturalized British subject in 1910. His brother Charles Frederick worked in Casablanca and died there in 1944.
30 Freeman’s first trip abroad was to Paris. According to Clopet family tradition, Charlotte was killed in a bombing in Paris in 1944, though this has not been corroborated.
31 Truscott, 77
32 The Sussex Plan trained French nationals in England 1943–4. They were dropped back into France and were an important source of information to the allies. Soulier.
33 An image of the monument, Soulier.
Cory wrote *Doctor Underground*, a novel set in France during the war, dedicated to LMCC with the note that it was ‘based on the experiences of a member of her family’ who surely was Evelyne.

Through the newspaper columns and wartime books, Freeman came to the attention of the world outside the university. Perhaps as a result, she was invited to lecture during the war ‘on Greece etc.’ (the phrase is hers) ‘to the Ministry of Information and in the National Scheme of Education for His Majesty’s Forces stationed in South Wales and Monmouthshire’. We know nothing more about this than what she included in her *Who’s Who* entry, though the fact that she included it indicates that she was proud of this contribution to the war effort.

She followed *It has all happened before* with *Voices of freedom* (1943), weaving together a narrative with excerpts from many authors of steps on the path to representative government and the parliamentary system in Britain, beginning with Pytheas the explorer in the fourth century BCE (10) and ending with Winston Churchill in the House of Commons on February 11, 1943 (279–80). The translations from Greek, Latin, Anglo-Saxon and Norman French were hers (with a few exceptions, 287). She included not only examples of those who fought for freedom but also examples of dependence. The British military commander Calgacus’ speech to his troops, recorded by Tacitus, encouraged them to show ‘what men Caledonia nurtures in her wilds to defend her’ (22–3) though they lost the battle. Gildas, a Welsh Christian priest of the sixth century CE, described how Roman domination had ‘sapped the strength’ of the Britons and left them vulnerable to invasion (25–7).

Freeman converted her academic interest in the ancient world into pertinent comment on the contemporary situation. The style of these books—a narrative with quotations from other writers—encouraged her

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34 Cory was the surname of Freeman’s step-grandfather (census 1891).
35 I am grateful to Jackie Matthews Clopet for information about the French Clopets in the war. Aristide’s brother Charles Frederick had an English family (by Mary Ann Partridge) and a French family. Evelyne was his daughter by his French wife.
36 *Who was who* 1951–1960, 396.
readers to interact with these writers and used their reputation to enhance the importance of the positions taken.

Publications 1946–47

After the end of the war, Freeman resigned from the university in 1946 'to devote [herself] to research and writing.' In addition to the reason she gave (on which she made good), one can imagine other reasons. H.J.W. Tillyard, Professor of Greek, retired in 1946 and was succeeded by L.J.D. Richardson, an old fashioned Classicist, a graduate of the prestigious Trinity College Dublin. In 1915 he had won a prize for Greek prose in the style of Herodotus (1926) and had written articles on obscure philological subjects, for example, 'Agma, a forgotten Greek letter' (1941). This was not the direction Freeman wished to pursue. From the outset of her career in Classics, she had been impatient with the traditional scholarly approach of her contemporaries which was narrowly focussed on the text. She was not an armchair scholar but one who walked over ancient sites and re-enacted in her imagination scenes from the past in an era when some Classicists had never visited Greece. She was in a fortunate financial position because she was receiving royalties from her Mary Fitt mysteries and she had a place to live with Clopet. This was the right time for her to make a move.

She had manuscripts which she had developed as teaching tools virtually ready for publication: Companion to the Pre-Socratic philosophers and Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic, and other manuscripts for which she had material at hand: Murder of Herodes, The Philoctetes of Sophocles and The Greek Way.

Companion to the Pre-Socratic philosophers, published in 1946, grew out of her desire to help her students who lacked the Greek language skills or the time to work through Diels-Kranz, Fragmente der Vorsokratiker fifth edition 1934–7. Diels-Kranz is not an easy book to use, especially for English speaking students. For each philosopher there are quotations from ancient sources on his life, sayings, and writings (testimonia, section A) and the surviving fragments of his writings (section B). The fragments are translated into German, the testimonia are not

39 Who was who 1951–1960, 396.
translated. Freeman used the *testimonia* for a connected account of each philosopher, indicating in footnotes the references on which she was drawing. As the name *Companion* indicates, it was meant to be used alongside Diels-Kranz. She followed *Companion* with *Ancilla to the pre-Socratics* (1947), a translation of all the fragments in Diels-Kranz. *Companion* is a work of great industry and gives us a glimpse of the kind of teacher Freeman was, conscious of the linguistic limits of her students but expecting hard work from them.40

Also in 1946, Freeman published *The Murder of Herodes and other trials from the Athenian lawcourts*, which includes a discussion of the way the Athenian courts functioned, the role of the speechwriter and a translation of fifteen speeches given in the courts, nine of which were by Lysias whom she particularly admired for his narratives. Her stated intention was to help her readers understand Athens and, by extension, human nature. She also saw the study of court cases as a ‘corrective to the sentimental idea that everybody in ancient Hellas was absorbed in the quest for Truth and Beauty’ (9). As we have seen, she had another interest in legal matters, having written a number of murder mysteries under the pseudonym Mary Fitt. She followed *The Murder of Herodes* with three short stories (in her own name) in the *London Mystery Magazine* (1950–51) and a chapter contributed to Norwood’s *Festschrift* (Freeman 1952b) each based on a speech in the Attic orators.

One short story (Freeman 1950b) and the chapter in Norwood’s *Festschrift* dealt with the same speech, written by Antiphon (6) on the death of a boy training for choir performance (a Choreutes). The chapter in the *Festschrift* was written for an academic readership and included background on the tension between the democratic and oligarchic parties in Athens which prompted charges against the Choregus, while the short story in *LMM*, more suitably for the general reader, concentrates on the difficulties of deciding without an autopsy whether cough medicine was the cause of death and if so, whether it was given intentionally.

Freeman often included her own translations from Greek in her writing, beginning with her earliest publication on Sophocles *Oedipus Coloneus* which contains three lengthy passages (51–52). In *Solon*, she included a prose translation of all the fragments. *The Greek Way* (1947)

40 Freeman (1947a).
contains translations in prose and verse chosen to give a different picture of Greece from the serious, even sombre picture Freeman believed most people had of the Greeks and to entice her readers to learn Greek. This second purpose is accompanied by advice: not to choose to learn from a ‘worshipper of grammar’. Grammar was a ‘means to an end’, needed because ‘enthusiasm and inaccuracy are not necessarily yoke-fellows either’. The enjoyment from learning Greek is greater than ‘bridge or a cross-word puzzle’ (Preface vi–vii).

The translations are grouped by topic: prayers; love and friendship; hate; children; flora and fauna; etc. She included a wide range of Classical texts from Homer to the Alexandrian and Christian writers and modern Greek songs with their music (vi). Freeman imagined a reader picking up the book on a weekend and reading it for pleasure. For those who wished to know exactly where these excerpts could be found, she included references in an index.

Some of the translations had appeared in Solon or one of her Greece and Rome articles or had been done for dramatic productions which were staged by her students. Following the practice of her mentor Norwood, Freeman translated Greek dramas for student productions of which only her Philoctetes (1948) was published in its entirety. Philoctetes was produced by men students under Freeman’s direction in November 1939 shortly after war was declared (Preface). By publishing the translation after the war was over, she implicitly dedicated it to the young actors whose fate by then was known.

A new direction 1948–54

By 1948 a change can be observed in her essay in World Affairs reflecting on the changes in post-war Europe, in particular the USSR which had become increasingly isolated and repressive after the end of WWII. Freeman was concerned about the possibility of a European Union which was being proposed with the hope that it would avoid the extreme nationalism which had led to WWII. There was even talk of a potential North American union. Freeman argued that such unification was not a

41 Freeman (1947b).

42 Three ‘acting editions’ listed in Norwood’s ‘Published Writings’, White p. xi.
good solution and used the example of the Greek city states to argue that life was better and livelier when the states were independent.

In 1950 she used the World Affairs article, with some modifications, for the introductory and concluding chapters of Greek City States in which she wrote about nine city states, notably omitting Athens and Sparta, to show the variety and vitality of these states while they were freestanding and following them through the Alexandrian, Roman, and, in some cases, the Byzantine periods. She argued that the freestanding states were better places to live in than these same states as part of an empire. She acknowledged that the weakness of the Greek city states was their tendency to fight with one another but refused to accept the argument that a political union was the solution. What was needed was education and ‘imagination’ by which she meant the ability to put oneself in another person’s place.

One of the features of her discussions of these city states is her ability to describe the physical setting of each city state, often indicating her own observations. She had a keen eye for geography and often added a comment as an eye-witness: ‘both rivers [the Sybaris and the Crathis] are still there today’ in Thourioi (24), the two rivers in Acragas ‘are still to be seen’ (45), ‘one of the most remarkable views in Greece’ can be seen from the summit of Acrocorinth (86), ‘the malaria-ridden, almost deserted mass of ruins’ of Miletus (134), the spring at Cyrene whose ‘water still flows abundantly’ (193), ‘to this day the chief water-supply is rain-water’ in Seriphos (213), and ‘the ruins still show the skill of the builders and the efforts of the destroyers’ in Byzantium (258).

The Philosophical Society of England and God, Man and State

By 1950, and perhaps earlier, Freeman had joined the Philosophical Society of England, a society established in 1936 and reconstituted in 1948 to respond to post-war needs, specifically making education available outside the universities.43 Freeman developed a truly formidable reading list and supervised the studies of members. Those who satisfied the terms of the Philosophical Society could write FPhS (Fellow of the

43 For a history of the Society, see Hill.
Philosophical Society) after their names. At the head of her reading list, Freeman used these letters after her name along with her D. Litt. from Cardiff.

Faculty in university departments of philosophy who were invited by the Society to consider themselves Fellows were deeply offended by the use of these letters and by the gown in the colours of the society which Fellows could wear, seeing them as a cheapening of the university degree. A critical letter was written to *The Spectator* (28 March 1952) and a question about the Society asked in Parliament (19 April 1952).44

In 1952, Freeman became Chairman of the Council of the Philosophical Society. Two of her lectures were published in *The Philosopher*: her lecture on the idea of God in the pre-Socratics was expanded in *God, Man and State* (Freeman 1952a) to include later philosophers down to the Epicureans, Stoics, and Neo-Platonists; her second chapter on the concept of Man was similarly related to her lecture in *The Philosopher* on the concept of Man. She added chapters on society in which she incorporated material on Epicurus and his garden, on education, and on law.

Unlike her framework in *Greek City States*, where the study of the ancient world was bookended by essays on the future of Europe, in *God, Man and State* she built from the early thinkers to Plato and Aristotle and then followed a gently declining path through the Epicureans and Stoics and, in the chapter on God, the Neo-Platonists, leaving her readers, for the most part, to draw their own conclusions.

Her address at the annual luncheon in 1952 compared Athens and Constantinople (Istanbul), praising Athens for its liveliness and imagination, and denigrating Istanbul for its sluggishness, a similar argument to the one she employed in *Greek City States* on the dangers of imperialism.45

During this time she put together *Fighting Words from the Greeks* published in the US (not Britain) as a deterrent to communism. Gilbert Murray wrote a foreword to this book as he had to her earlier *It has all happened before*.46 Murray was guest of honour at a dinner of the

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44 For a more detailed account of the dispute, see Irwin (2008) 58–9.
45 Freeman (1952c) 101–2.
46 Her relationship to Gilbert Murray is interesting. He thought well of books by Mary Fitt long before he knew that Mary Fitt and Kathleen Freeman were one and the same, Boucher (1962) 1.
Philosophical Society; he claimed that he had been worried about speaking to them until he had been told—he does not say by whom—that they were not real philosophers. Freeman owned that she had described members of the Society to him as amateur philosophers, reproached him courteously for equating ‘amateur’ with ‘not real’ and reminded him of the basic meaning of ‘amateur’ as ‘lover’. Members of the Society were lovers of wisdom.47

Freeman and the status of women

All the Greek philosophers studied by Freeman were male, but in *God, Man and State* she turned her attention to the lot of Greek women. She often (not always) used ‘man’, sometimes with a capital M, to include male and female. Heraclitus’ saying is translated in *Ancilla* ‘character is destiny for man’ (#119, 32) though in *Companion* (125) she translated ‘Character for a human being is destiny’. Protagoras’ saying is translated in *Ancilla* ‘of all things the measure is Man’ (#1, 125) though in *Companion* (329) man and human being are used interchangeably (329). She showed no discomfort in using the generalizing masculine as when she expanded on Protagoras’ saying on the back cover of several Penguin editions of her mysteries: ‘And as Man is the measure of all things, this dictum has given me the excuse I have not needed to study his philosophy, his poetry, the works of his hands—and his villainy’ (emphasis mine).

In general it had not been her battle to point out prejudice against women either in Classical Greece or in contemporary Britain. However, in *God, Man and State* she noted the very different experiences of Greek men and women, especially in her chapters on Society and Education. Women had no part in government even in democratic Athens; girls were educated at home for looking after the house and caring for children while boys attended school and learned music (literature), gymnastics, and affairs of government. Girls and women had limited opportunities outside house and family, the occasional religious festivals being the exception. She contrasted this situation with the Pythagoreans, where women participated with men in their communities, and Plato’s

47 Freeman (1951b).
ideal state which included women among the Guardians. Then, she makes an unexpected, very strong statement:

The results of Athenian refusal to regard women as human beings cannot be exaggerated and were contributory to the rapid decline and fall of that splendid civilization. (God, Man and State 183).

Freeman’s views on women’s lives were influenced by her companionship with Clopet, who exposed the prejudice women doctors could expect to experience in a novel Doctor Dear (1954), written under a pseudonym, Mary Bethune, to avoid backlash. The central figure, Dr Pauline Moir, had to cope with unwelcome advances from her medical supervisor and patients who refused to have a woman doctor look after them.

Paths of Justice

In Paths of Justice (1954) Freeman returned to her didactic approach to Greece. Her purpose was to show that tyranny and law cannot live together and to use the example of the Greek world to demonstrate this. She discussed the Athenian legal system and traced Athens from its early days through the lawgiver Solon to the post-Peloponnesian war period, using speeches of the Attic orators. This book was an extension of her wartime publications as well as Herodes. Her preface is an appeal to her readers to consider the importance of law quoting Heraclitus, ‘The people must fight to defend their laws as they would their fortifications’ (preface end).

Freeman’s reputation

In the History of the University of Wales (248), Williams described the Classics department in Cardiff and Freeman ‘a member of the department’ as ‘an accomplished popularizer of Greek themes . . . better known as a writer of detective novels’, though neither was true while she was a member of the department. Her ‘popularizing’ books were published after she resigned from the university. Her identity as Mary Fitt was not known until after her resignation. ‘Mary Fitt’ was invited to become a member of the Society of Authors in March 1948, six months after she had joined as Kathleen Freeman (Irwin 2008, 50).
Many of her academic colleagues dismissed her as a mere popularizer and cautioned their students to stay away from her books. Many reviews of her books in academic journals were the kind where the reviewer wants readers to know that he (and it is always he) could have done better. (I have not found any reviews contributed by Freeman to scholarly journals; perhaps she was never asked). Reviewers expressed concern not only about her popularism but also about the general state of education which made such popularism necessary. Often this judgement is accompanied by a caution that Freeman’s material is not to be trusted. The reviewer of her Solon expressed the ‘somewhat melancholy reflection that Greek history is now being studied, at least at the newer universities, by those who cannot read Greek’ (Walker, 19). Herodes is ‘a popular book... [for] the unscholarly reader’ (Ehrenberg 137). On Greek City States ‘The general reader will enjoy this book as light and attractive reading, but it is to be doubted whether he will gain any clear insight’ (Hammond 217). On God, Man and State: ‘To an increasing number of persons it may be news to learn that the Greeks had things to say on these subjects which still have significance at the present day, and for such readers the present book will convey a great deal of interesting information, together with some that is misleading or even untrue’ (Kerferd 30). Perhaps the most devastatingly negative judgement was on her Companion: ‘this is not a book which can safely be recommended to undergraduate classical students’ (Hamilton 54).

Not all reviews were unfavourable. Her Ancilla was judged the ‘most complete, accurate and up-to-date English version’ of the pre-Socratics (Luce 90) and her translation of Philoctetes ‘poetic and accurate’, with ‘vigorous’ dialogue... which ‘preserves the spirit of the original’ (Foster 34). Neither The Greek Way nor Paths of Justice was reviewed in an academic journal; an omission which damned them as unworthy of attention.

Freeman as a human being

Freeman frequently quoted Heraclitus’ saying ‘character is destiny’ and this was true for her. She was energetic, observant, and industrious. She chose to present herself on the dust jackets of some of her mysteries (and reproduced at the beginning of this chapter) as androgynous, serious, short-haired, in a tweed jacket, shirt, and sweater.
She enjoyed travelling and had a fine eye for landscapes. From her novels we can be quite sure that she went on walking holidays (*Murder mars the tour*) and had gone spelunking (*Gown and Shroud*). Her experience of different cultures and landscapes made her aware of the importance of landscape in ancient Greek city states and observing different political regimes made her acutely aware of the issues of freedom and good government.

Her poems published in 1924 and 1925, before she had established a reputation as a writer, show an intense young woman, wanting a relationship but not willing to compromise. The speaker is like an open wind-swept road; the beloved wants to wander in shaded lanes (*Candour*). The speaker releases the beloved’s chains, but the beloved does not go away (*Liberation*). Perhaps most predictive of her mature self: ‘I give justice not passion’ (*Failure*).48

Epilogue: T’Other Miss Austen

In 1954 Freeman suffered a debilitating illness which prevented her from writing for several months.49 She recovered to the point that she was able to write more murder mysteries and children’s books, but she did not return to the ancient world. She had been an admirer of Jane Austen (1775–1817) for many years and in this period wrote *T’Other Miss Austen* (1956), using Austen’s letters to explore her character and relationships. It would be easy to dismiss this study as of little interest in our exploration of Freeman as a Classicist, but it tells us a great deal about Freeman herself, indirectly.50

Throughout as she describes Austen’s life, readers can contrast her experience with Freeman’s own. Both were novelists, neither married and both had a close female friend, Jane her sister Cassandra and Freeman Clopet. But Freeman had freedom to travel, while Austen always had to find a traveling companion. Freeman had better medical treatment than Austen who died in her 40s from a condition which in the

49 Handwritten letter from Freeman to the Society of Authors, 8.7.54. Archives, British Library.
50 She dedicated *T’Other Miss Austen* to ‘Mary Bethune’, Clopet’s pseudonym under which she wrote *Doctor Dear*. 
twentieth century would have been operated on (146–8, 217–8). Austen’s friends were all drawn from family or neighbours (132–45) while Freeman made the acquaintance of colleagues in universities, in the Philosophical Society, and through her writing.

Like any eighteenth-century woman, Jane Austen had expected to marry; and once married, to hope for children. This was not without hazard as we see in Freeman’s reference to the hardship and threat to health from frequent pregnancies (97–9). Austen did not have children, but the novels she left behind more than made up for this. Freeman considered her books her legacy, as she wrote in a letter to Vincent Evans: ‘my books are my children and I love them dearly.’51 It is a very Greek thought that her books will achieve immortality for her.

Conclusion

Freeman’s quite ordinary background and family led her to believe that anyone could appreciate the ancient Greek world and everyone deserved to have the chance which she had. She travelled throughout Europe and beyond and encountered people from other cultures with different ideas; in particular she saw what was happening in Europe as a result of Nazism. After twenty-seven years in the university, she freed herself by resigning. Her experience during the second world war, with the reception of her columns in the Western Mail and teaching the armed forces, encouraged her to look beyond the university.52 Her books published after the war and her involvement with the Philosophical Society were ways of reaching a new audience.

Her books are a significant monument to her contribution to Classics. In many ways she was ahead of her time. Classics in universities in the early twentieth century was heavily philological, with an emphasis on grammar and vocabulary (as she noted in The Greek Way) leading to reading texts in Greek and Latin and translating them. Freeman was interested in the big picture: first, what the Greeks were like and why they behaved as they did, and then, what lessons we could learn from observing

51 Undated letter NLW MS A412.
52 See Goldman for the effect teaching ‘working class’ students had on those who taught them.
them. But whereas ‘Classics in translation’ avoids the demands of language, she made it clear that learning Greek, though hard work, was far to be preferred to reading Greek authors in translation. Her unconventionality and ‘popularism’ meant that she was not appreciated by many of her colleagues but her influence has extended far beyond her lifetime as she is rediscovered.
17

A. M. Dale

Laetitia Parker

Amy Marjorie (‘Madge’) Dale [FIG. 17.1] was born in Nottingham on 15 January 1901. Her father, Edward Dale, was a civil engineer. She attended Sheffield Central Secondary School, from where she won a scholarship in classics to Somerville College, Oxford. In the summer before she went up, a young man who already held a scholarship at Oxford, the son of friends, was invited to come to tea to tell her about the university. One piece of information which he casually let drop dismayed Madge: all scholars of course did verse-composition. In those days, boys’ public and more academic grammar schools taught the skill as a matter of course, but girls’ schools did not teach it. Madge procured a copy of ‘Sidgwick and Morice’, or Arthur Sidgwick and F.D. Morice’s An Introduction to Greek Verse Composition: with Exercises,¹ and proceeded to teach herself, only to be told when she reached Oxford that women never did it. Madge insisted that she had done some already. Her tutor, H.L. Lorimer, then ‘threw’ her a passage of Shakespeare to try her hand at, and was impressed enough by the result to show it to Gilbert Murray. He at once offered to teach her. Professors were not allowed to receive pay for giving tutorials, but on Sundays Madge made her way to the Murrays’ house on Boar’s Hill, where she would have lunch, followed by a peripatetic tutorial on the old golf course across the road. Madge later wrote of Murray as ‘the scholar to whom in this subject [Greek metre], as in all Greek Studies, I owe more than I can ever find words to express’.²

¹ The first edition of this standard textbook was published in 1883.
² Dale (1948) vii.
She was placed in the first class in Honour Moderations (1921) and in the Final Honour School ('Greats', 1923). This made her the fourth woman to achieve a double first in the thirty years for which the examinations had been open to women. Her achievement was the more impressive in that she always suffered severely from asthma, and had had to write her Finals papers in the College sick bay. Her courage and determination could be likened to those of her friend, near-contemporary and fellow-Somervillian, Dorothea Gray, who fought the crippling effects of childhood polio to make a name in the study of the archaeology of Homer. Madge never succumbed to invalidism. At Oxford, her sport was sculling, and, as long as she could, she loved walking, especially in mountainous country.

As a young graduate, she spent a year in Vienna, working with Ludwig Radermacher. In those days, there was no pressure to complete a

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3 Winnington-Ingram (1967) 436.
doctorate. Indeed, doctorates were thought of as something for foreign
students—Americans or Germans, who were deemed to care about such
things. Later, in the 1930s, she was to spend a sabbatical year in Lund,
where Albert Wifstrand shared her interest in Greek metre.

Madge taught for a time at Oxford High School, before taking up her
first academic post in 1927 as Assistant Lecturer in Classics at Westfield
College, University of London. Westfield was a women’s college of fewer
than 300 students, pleasantly situated in Hampstead. The chief duty of
the Assistant Lecturer then (and for at least three decades thereafter)
was to lecture to the first year on Roman History from the foundation of
the city to the reign of Constantine. Madge had already been struck by
the lack of a good elementary textbook on ancient history. Her A Junior
Ancient History, designed for ‘middle forms in schools’, was published
by Methuen in 1928.4 Austere in format, as schoolbooks were in those
days, it combines imagination with brevity and exemplary clarity. In
particular, Madge takes care to explain how we get out knowledge of
the ancient world, and how archaeology can fill the gaps in the written
record. The existence of this work remained a well-guarded secret for
the rest of her life.

In 1929, Madge was appointed Fellow and tutor in Greek and Latin
Languages and Literature at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford (‘Mods Tutor’
for short). A member of the audience of her Oxford lectures in the 1930s
described her as ‘not pretty. Jolie-laide. Always very neat and well-
dressed.’ Tiny, pale, and fragile, she was striking by her dark eyes and
dark auburn hair. In later life at least, her slightly down-turned mouth
gave a rather stern look to her face, which would, however, be suddenly
transformed by her brilliant smile.

Her first publication on her true interest, ‘Lyrical Clausulae in Sopho-
cles’, appeared in 1936 in the Festschrift celebrating Gilbert Murray’s
seventieth birthday.5 The only other woman to contribute was Madge’s
old tutor, Hilda Lorimer. To publish a first article at thirty-five would
now seem rather slow progress, but in the 1930s the attitude to publish-
ing, indeed to research, was very relaxed. In fact, however, Madge was
hard at work. The Lyric Metres of Greek Drama, still, probably, her best-
known work, was half finished when war broke out in 1939.6

Madge was one of the large contingent of classicists, from mature scholars to young people recently awarded scholarships to Oxford and Cambridge, who were deployed to the government code-breaking establishment, ‘Intelligence Services Knox’ (ISK). Now Bletchley Park is popularly associated with mathematics and computing, while the many classicists and linguists who worked there seem generally forgotten. But its head, Dillwyn Knox, was a classical scholar who edited Herodas and Cercidas and contributed to the study of Greek metre by his discovery of ‘Knox’s law’, which applies to the iambographers.\(^7\) One of Knox’s most notable successes as a cryptographer in the First World War had been his breaking of the German admirals’ flag code. His sensitive ear for verse enabled him to detect embedded lines of poetry. Madge worked in the Japanese section, which, of course, required her to learn the language from scratch.

It was at Bletchley Park that Madge met T.B.L. (‘Tom’) Webster, and the pair were married in 1944. After a brilliant undergraduate career at Oxford, Tom had been appointed almost at once to a studentship (i.e. a fellowship) at Christ Church. But in 1931, at the age of just twenty-six, he had moved to the Hulme Chair of Greek at Manchester University. After the war, he returned with Madge to Manchester. There she did not hold a teaching post, so was free to devote herself to finishing her book, which was published in 1948, the year in which Tom was appointed to the chair of Greek at University College, London.\(^8\)

The Websters were a devoted couple. They shared a profound love of and interest in Attic drama, but their scholarly specialities and approaches were otherwise completely different, and never converged. Tom regarded his wife’s scholarship with something close to reverence. His easy sociability, Bertie-Woosterish charm and talent for making connections undoubtedly made her better known as a person on the classical scene than she would have been as a tutor in Oxford, irrespective of her published work. Madge had a strong and vivid personality, while being nonetheless rather shy and reserved. When, in the late 1950s, Tom was invited to go as a lecturer on a Hellenic Cruise bringing Madge as a ‘hostess’, she reacted with a mixture of amusement and trepidation. ‘I would so much rather have prepared a couple of sites’, she said.

\(^7\) He published as A.D. Knox; see Knox (1922), (1923), and (1932).

\(^8\) Dale (1948).
plaintively. Her solution was to enrol a friend, ‘a daughter of the manse’, to join the party. Much more congenial were the academic visits that the couple paid to Australia, New Zealand, the Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton and (twice) to Stanford, California. She was much impressed by the liveliness of mind of the American graduate students whom she taught, but also by what seemed to her their ignorance. She found New York ‘exhilarating’; her one serious complaint about the US was the lack of good bacon.

Tom was a man of prodigious energy and dynamism. He published fifty books or monographs and over 100 articles. He also had a remarkable memory. In seminars, he would produce references from memory complete with page numbers: ‘Wilamowitz, Analecta Euripidea, page 52’. He would then look modestly pleased, like one who has just performed a successful party trick. In addition to his own research and writing, Tom worked with characteristic energy, and with the support of like-minded fellow professors, to make London a great centre for the study of Classics. He organized a series of seminars, and, above all, founded, in collaboration with Eric Turner, the Institute of Classical Studies, with its library, Bulletin (BICS), and monographs. In this enterprise, Madge was a keen supporter. His creation suffered from the Swinnerton-Dyer restructuring of London University, but the Bulletin and monographs survive.

In 1952, Madge was appointed to a readership in Greek at Birkbeck College. In 1957, she was elected a Fellow of the British Academy and in 1959 was promoted to a personal chair. Dorothy Tarrant had become the first woman to hold a chair of Greek in Britain, when, in 1936, she was appointed head of department at Bedford College, London. Large, benign, bespectacled, with wispy bun and soup-plate hat, Tarrant exemplified a completely different style of woman academic from Madge.

Both Tom and Madge were infinitely generous in encouraging and helping young people, and Madge was a devoted teacher who never lost the dutifulness of the traditional Oxford woman-tutor. Throughout her time at Birkbeck, she taught the first-year general-degree class in Latin

9 Wilamowitz (1875).

10 These were the cuts and reorganization imposed on the University after the reports of the new Committee on Academic Organization, chaired by Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer, which was established in 1980. See further Harte (2000) 281–4.
prose composition. This was a peculiarly irksome chore, since students were allowed to re-sit. This meant that every year there would be some pupils left over from the year before. So Madge had to produce year after year an endless supply of fresh passages with fair copies. When I once suggested that, as Professor of Greek, she might give it up, she seemed surprised: ‘Oh? Well, *someone* has to do it’. She was a little shocked when her successor as reader in Greek (quite reasonably, as it seemed to me) refused to take it on.

In the early 1960s, Madge’s health deteriorated, and she took early retirement in 1963. On visits to Stanford, she had found much relief from her asthma, so the plan was formed that on Tom’s retirement the couple would move there. But Madge died early in 1967, and Tom went to Stanford alone. He died there in 1974.

In the study of Greek metre, Madge followed in the empirical tradition of Gottfried Hermann.\(^{11}\) This required first of all the rejection of analysis into disparate ‘feet’, as practised by metricians of later antiquity, in particular Hephaestion—a proceeding likened by Hermann to trying to dissect an animal by chopping it into slices of even thickness. Instead, the method relies essentially on pattern-recognition, together with the observation of context. In the mid-twentieth century, Madge still felt the need to reject explicitly Hephaestion’s type of analysis, as well as some of the more recent aberrations, such as the nineteenth-century theory of Rossbach and Westphal, who sought by dint of much pulling about of quantities to assimilate the rhythms of ancient Greece to those of modern western music.\(^{12}\) Her chief *bêtes noires*, however, were the self-validating theories into which the subject tends to lure ingenious scholars, or, as she put it herself, ‘the kind of subjective game which one can so easily play with infinitely malleable sequences of Greek syllables’.\(^{13}\) She also followed Hermann in insisting on the essential connection between metrical and textual study. The more immediate

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\(^{11}\) Hermann (1772–1848), the Leipzig philologist, published seminal studies of ancient metre including *De metris poetarum graecorum et romanorum* (Leipzig: Fleischer, 1796), *Handbuch der Metrik* (Leipzig: Fleischer, 1799) and *Elementa doctrinae metricae* (Leipzig: Fleischer, 1816).

\(^{12}\) On the collaboration and publications between the 1850s and 1880s of Rudolph Westphal (a student of Hermann’s), and his brother-in-law August Rossbach, see Sandys (1903) vol. 3, 157–8.

\(^{13}\) Dale (1962) 171.
predecessor whom she most admired was Paul Maas, although her own style was less austere than his, closer, perhaps, to that of Wilamowitz.\textsuperscript{14}

*The Lyric Metres of Greek Drama (LM)* is not a handbook.\textsuperscript{15} The writers of handbooks have usually done their thinking, and present the results cut and dried. Madge’s work is rather an exploration of the ways in which the Attic dramatists express themselves through lyric rhythms. A particular quality of the book is the way in which it enables the reader to hear, as it were, a highly knowledgeable and scrupulous scholar thinking. In that respect it has something in common with Hermann’s *De metris poetarum graecorum et romanorum*.\textsuperscript{16}

Madge was convinced that it was possible up to a point to hear and enjoy Greek poetic rhythms, and she did herself develop a remarkable sensitivity of ear. In my second term as a graduate student, L.J.D. Richardson, then professor of Greek at Cardiff, sent her some recitative anapaests of his own composition. She picked out one catalectic dimeter, looked puzzled: ‘That sounds wrong’. I set to work, and, sure enough, it *was* ‘wrong’. That produced my first publication.\textsuperscript{17} That same sensitivity enabled Madge to detect corruption in Greek poetic texts.

*LM* is not to be read uncritically. Some parts were dubious at the time; some others have been rendered out of date by more recent study. D.L. Page, who greatly admired Madge’s work, and based his undergraduate lectures of the 1950s on it, used to recommend *LM* warmly to his audience, with one proviso: they were on no account to read the chapter on dochmiacs. This is an exaggeration, but the chapter does indeed begin with two errors. First, thirty-two species of dochmiac have not ‘been counted’. That is the mathematically possible number of forms, of which some half-dozen have never been found. This matters in that observation of the possible but unused forms reveals something about the rhythmic preferences of the poets. Then, ˘˘˘ˉ˘ ˘ is not the ‘commonest’ of dochmiac, although it may be regarded as the primary form. The commonest form is ˘˘˘˘˘. Page went on to supervise the work of N.C. Conomis, whose article provides an important supplement and corrective to *LM*.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{14} See Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1921) and Maas (1923). \textsuperscript{15} Dale (1948). \textsuperscript{16} Hermann (1796). \textsuperscript{17} Parker (1958). \textsuperscript{18} Conomis (1964).
Further, the category ‘prosodiac-enoplian’, which Madge classified as aeolic, looks something of a rag-bag, as her list of cola shows.19 M. L. West wipes out the category altogether.20 K. Itsumi provides a collection of material and rigorous analysis which shows that, while such a genre (he calls it simply ‘enoplian’) exists, its affinities in history and context are not with aeolo-choriambic, but rather with dactylo-epitrite.21

It is infinitely tantalizing that when Madge was preparing the second edition of LM she said on one occasion that the book needed to be completely re-written, which was, of course, out of the question. The second edition, with only very minor changes, came out after her death in 1968. Nonetheless, LM as it stands has, in English-speaking countries at least, revolutionized the way in which Greek lyric metre is understood and taught, and remains a key text for anyone interested in the subject. Reviewing the first edition, J.D. Denniston endorsed the publisher’s description of it as ‘a highly important work of original scholarship’.22 He made a number of pertinent criticisms, but ended by calling it ‘a first-class work which every serious student of Greek poetry will find helpful and no editor . . . of a Greek play can afford to neglect’; that remains true.

In a series of three articles in Classical Quarterly, Madge was inspired by Maas’s ‘De’ code for dactylo-epitrite to try to devise a similar code (the ‘sd’ code) for the more enigmatic ‘other half’ of Pindar, a code which she extended to other types of metre.23 The underlying intention was to penetrate to the essential components of Greek poetic rhythm, by-passing problems of analysis, in the same way as the De code by-passes the problem of whether to attach anceps to what precedes or to what follows. It was a brave and interesting experiment, but it is fair, I think, to say that the old method of pattern-recognition, combined with the study of how the various metrical types have developed from their origins (as far as we can trace them) in different parts of the Greek world still serves us better.24 Here, Madge was hampered in some degree by the lack for most of her working life of up-to-date editions of early lyric. Lobel and Page published their Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta only in 1955 and

Page his *Poetae Melici Graeci* in 1962, while extensive fragments of Stesichorus have come to light much later still.

**Metrical Analyses of Tragic Choruses** were put together after Madge’s death with infinite pains, first by Tom (typing one-handed), then by his colleagues at UCL, Eric Handley and Margaret Cunningham, from her working notebooks. Madge had committed herself to producing the Analyses in the very early days of the *BICS Supplements*, to please Tom, one suspects, for the work would have seemed bound to be a best-seller to help the new series on its way. But from the way in which Madge spoke of the project, it seemed clear that she lacked enthusiasm for it, and she had made no start when she died. The volumes are invaluable as a replacement for Otto Schröder’s *Cantica* of 1907–28, but one asks oneself whether Madge herself would have kept to the inconvenient classification by types of metre. Further, readers need to bear in mind that the scansions were made at different dates throughout Madge’s career, so that it cannot be assumed that all represent her mature views. The comments were apparently put together from jottings, or deduced from *LM*.

Apart from her metrical work, Madge is well known for her two editions of plays by Euripides: *Alcestis* (1954) and *Helen* (1967). Her editions have incurred criticism as thin and slight, and in that of *Helen* in particular one is tempted to see the signs of failing health. But she was naturally a succinct writer, and if a point needs treatment it gets it. It is typical that the audience at which she aimed above all was undergraduates. Perhaps, however, she tended to overestimate the linguistic skills of undergraduates, even in her own time. She was a fine and precise linguist herself, as is evident from her commentaries. Reginald Winnington-Ingram, surely the finest literary critic among classical scholars of that generation, suggested tentatively that ‘it may be that there are dark corners in the mind of Euripides that her very honesty and taste prevented her from reaching.’ That is certainly interesting. But the

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26 For an up-to-date overview of Stesichorus’ works, see Krummen (2009).
28 Otto Karl Schröder, German Gymnasium teacher and scholar, who between these years published metrical analyses of the lyric metres of all three Greek tragedians and Aristophanes.
29 Dale (1954) and (1967).
30 Winnington-Ingram (1967) 431.
qualities that give her editions their exceptional and lasting value are her love for and sense of the live theatre and her understanding of how the tragedians express themselves within the conventions of the genre, together with a gift for the telling phrase.

Those same qualities emerge in the non-technical essays in her *Collected Papers*. One might mention in particular those on Sophocles’ *Electra* (which makes one wish that she had written more about the poet), on ‘The Chorus in the Action of Greek Tragedy’, on the stage-set of Attic Old Comedy (‘Dale on Doors’) and on Aristophanes’ *Acharnians*. This last would make a first-rate introduction for anyone beginning on the study of the poet. It will not do for an interpreter of Aristophanes to be literal-minded, and Madge was not literal-minded. On the contrary, she had a rare understanding of the joyously improvisatory and anti-realistic character of the genre. Among other pleasures of the collection are two pieces closer to her special interest, but designed for a non-specialist audience: her Birkbeck Inaugural Lecture, ‘Words, Music and Dance’ and ‘Speech-Rhythm, Verse-Rhythm and Song’, delivered to the Federation of University Women of New Zealand, which draws its illustrations from medieval Latin and English Lyric (from Chaucer to W.S. Gilbert), while also touching on German, Swedish, and Russian.

In an academic world where the ultimate crime is ‘missing’ some ‘important’ article and a ten-page paper may be deemed to need a two-page bibliography, it is remarkably refreshing to encounter a writer who, though meticulous in giving references, relied above all on an intimate knowledge of the texts and on her own collections of data. To re-read Madge’s work now is to renew one’s acquaintance with a scholar of exceptional brilliance and charm who, as Reginald Winnington-Ingram put it, ‘loved great literature’ and ‘hated bad scholarship’.

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Betty Radice and the Survival of Classics

Rowena Fowler

Betty Radice’s *Who’s Who in the Ancient World* (1971) epitomizes her lifetime commitment to making Classics accessible to a broad audience. Subtitled ‘A Handbook to the Survivors of the Greek and Roman Classics’, it offered those without a classical education a guide or *vade mecum* to the principal figures of antiquity as they have come down to us; it may also be seen as the practical outcome of Radice’s experience of fostering ‘classical literacy’ outside the academy, and as a clue to her understanding of the processes of reception. Serving for twenty-one years as Editor of Penguin Classics (‘the Library of Every Civilized Man’), Radice [FIG. 18.1] was one of the most influential forces in the reception of Greek and Latin literature by English-speaking readers. She saw more than a hundred Classical texts through the press, while herself translating Livy, Terence, Erasmus, and the younger Pliny. She worked with many of the leading classicists of her time, balancing the imperatives of commercial publishing, the demands of scholars, and the needs of students and the reading public; her major achievement was to make ‘popular’ editions of the Classics academically respectable. This chapter describes how Radice became identified with the ‘Penguiniﬁcation’ of Classics,¹ and how her experience in publishing informed her own scholarship. I hope to build up a picture of a woman whose life in Classics made a unique contribution to its survival.

¹ The term ‘Penguiniﬁcation’ (not in the *Oxford English Dictionary*) is ﬁrst recorded in Saunders (1975). The less colourful ‘Penguinization’ is also sometimes used.
Born in 1912 in Hessle near Hull, where her father was a solicitor, Betty Dawson (as she then was) grew up in a bookish professional family.2 The landscape of the East Riding of Yorkshire was to remain important to her throughout her life; a strong sense of place is an enduring element in her response to classical writers.3 At Newland High School, Hull, then a girls’ grammar school, she was well taught in Latin, but learned Greek mainly on her own (during the train journey to school), with some coaching from a master at Hymers College, her brother’s school;4 in 1931 she won a Scholarship to read Classics at

2 For a brief biography see Wynn (1987). Betty Radice was never in Who’s Who, the annual British guide to prominent people, and is not yet included in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

3 For instance in her Introduction to Horace, who, ‘Like many of us lucky enough to have been born in a region of character … never lost the feeling that [Apulia] was where he belonged’, Radice (1983), 10.

St Hilda’s College, Oxford. After graduating with a First in 1935 she married De Lisle Radice and moved to London, where he was a civil servant.

Betty Radice had five children. At first, while bringing up a growing family, she combined marriage and motherhood with freelance scholarship, tutoring in Classics, English, and Philosophy, and working on her translation of Pliny’s letters. Friends were impressed by the way she ran the household without missing out on the social and cultural life she and her husband enjoyed or compromising her intellectual work: she ‘could write a paragraph, edit a text, or translate a few lines while dinner cooked’.5 Later, as a Penguin editor, she generally worked from home, at the family house in Highgate or the Oxfordshire cottage, sitting with her translators at the kitchen table. Younger colleagues anticipating ‘learned discourse’ would find her as happy to talk about her garden, grandchildren, or tortoises.6

Radice’s connection with Penguin Books began when she sent a sample of her Pliny translation to E.V. Rieu, the Founder Editor of Penguin Classics, who commissioned it for his list. She learned her craft as a working translator, answerable to her editor, David Duguid, from whom she gained valuable insights into how a publisher steers an author into print.7 She also helped Rieu with reading and correspondence. In 1959, when Radice was already 47, she began paid work for Penguin Classics:8 as assistant and then deputy to Rieu and, after Rieu’s retirement, as joint editor (she was eventually appointed sole Editor in 1974).

Rieu’s influence on Radice was powerful and enduring, but she took over at a moment when publishing was going through one of its many periods of upheaval. First she had to keep the peace between Rieu and a brash General Editor: ‘the Edwardian old fogey and the half-educated

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5 Wynn (1987), 35. 6 William Radice (1989), 24. 7 See Hare (1995), 301. 8 Radice was paid fees and a retainer: in 1971 this amounted to £250 p.a. for a female editor and £400 for a male (Internal Memorandum: Radice to Dieter Pevsner, 1 June 1972, Betty Radice Papers, Penguin Archive, University of Bristol). She also earned a 1% royalty for every book on her list and separate fees for reading, revising, and editing individual titles: her pay for a typical year, 1971, came to £1,245. (Emulating Radice, who thought it useful to append a table of relative money values to her Pliny translation, I note that in 1971 the starting salary for a university lecturer was £1,491.) All the correspondence referred to in the following notes can be found in the Penguin Archive held by the University of Bristol Library Special Collections.
upstart, as they termed each other. The longer-term task was to work out an editorial policy for the Classics list that responded to social and educational changes and opportunities but was firm enough to withstand critics with particular aims to promote (or grudges to pursue). From the Rieu era (after his death in 1964) Radice inherited 150 titles, selected according to Rieu’s sense of a canon of the ‘Classic’ which had been inaugurated in January 1946 with the Odyssey. Radice was responsible for the whole of Penguin Classics (including literatures from all parts of the world, with their own special advisors), overseeing and if necessary weeding the list, revising existing editions, and commissioning new ones. Unlike other Penguins, which were usually affordable paperback reprints, Penguin Classics mainly consisted of work specially written or commissioned for the series. Radice aimed to publish about six titles a year; almost all literatures had their champions, and the correspondence files are full of suggestions: for the Serbo-Croat epic, for instance, or Ming Dynasty vernacular novel. Radice explained each time that Penguins ‘must appeal to the general reader’—and ‘must sell’. She evaluated each case individually, for its interest and literary value, and the quality of its English translation, rather than attempting any balance or token representation across literatures. Some would-be translators sent in unreadable samples or crackpot ideas (for example ‘to re-translate Ovid’s Metamorphoses to increase its appeal for modern readers by involving invaders from outer space’); meanwhile important texts, such as Sappho, or Virgil’s Georgics, failed to find a suitable translator. Other gaps in the list which needed urgently to be addressed included (from Greek) Aristophanes, Aristotle, Pindar, and much of Plato, and (from Latin) Catullus, Livy, Ovid, and much of Cicero.

E.V. Rieu’s advice to translators had been ‘to tell the story in fluent English and not to worry about the finer points’. Radice argued for the place of scholarship in ‘popular’ editions and modified the earlier

9 Radice (1984a), 17.
10 When Radice took over the list a ‘sure reprint’ required a sales figure of approximately 2,500; the figure was subsequently increased (Radice to Peter Calvocoressi, Editor-in-Chief, 11 September 1973).
12 R.A.B. Mynors withdrew from his contract as he was dissatisfied with his Georgics translation; the L.P. Wilkinson translation was published in 1982. On the problem of finding a Sappho translator, see Crowe (2012b), 88–94.
13 P.J. Rhodes (personal communication).
Penguin convention of the plain text, adding line references, bibliographies, maps, explanatory notes, and indexes. In the early 1960s, some classicists still regarded translations either as a second-best resort for readers with no Greek or Latin or as furtive cribs for 'weaklings unable to construe'.14 ‘I came from a different world’, wrote Radice;15 she knew that students (and their teachers) who were expected to know the ancient languages still needed good translations with proper apparatuses. She worked with teachers and academics through bodies such as JACT (Joint Association of Classics Teachers) and the Classical Association to meet the demands of syllabuses and she accurately pinpointed the moment (1970–71) when classics as a university subject began to be taught through translated texts—when the Penguin might be the only version students would encounter.

Another significant departure from earlier policy was Radice’s commitment to translating verse as verse; she had always demurred from Rieu’s preference for prose.16 Verse translation would remain one of her major challenges, adding to her search for academics who could write good English, the pursuit of poets who knew ancient languages. Her outstanding successes were the Greek Anthology of Peter Jay, the Horace Odes and Martial Epigrams of James Michie (a rare example of the inclusion of the original Latin as a facing text), and the Catullus of Peter Whigham.

Early in her editorship, Radice weathered two major controversies in which the quality of scholarship and style of translation of Penguin Classics came under fire. In 1968, M.I. Finley was asked by the Penguin management to review the whole of their Classics list. Since there was no clear prior agreement about the status of his advice, Finley and Radice clashed repeatedly over his rebarbative judgements. Both appealed to the General Editor, so the episode is well documented. ‘Our critic carves his way through the Penguin Classics’, Radice noted drily; Finley retorted that she was too tolerant of bad work by ‘retired schoolmasters, barristers and journalists’.17 Radice came to ‘dread the sight of the Cambridge postmark’ which heralded the next mordant onslaught: ‘I do appreciate’,

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16 She also argued for parallel texts in the case of poetry, though this was usually rejected on grounds of cost.
17 Betty Radice to Dieter Pevsner, 5 December 1968.
she wrote to Finley, ‘how the building up of what the TLS calls your famous bite is a very useful ploy in the gamesmanship of the academic rat-race’. Finley and Radice were poles apart in their personal style and critical and ideological position but many of Finley’s strictures were accurate; Radice would be the first to agree that some Penguin Classics—the Philip Vellacott Sophocles for instance—were outdated and amateurish. She held her ground against Finley, however, in the three areas where she rightly believed she had the edge on him: in Latin (Finley specialized in Greek), in medieval texts, and in the translation of poetry.

Verse translation was at the centre of the second major controversy, again in 1968, when the journal Arion devoted nearly a hundred pages to ‘Penguin Classics: A Report on Two Decades’. Arion, under its editor D.S. Carne-Ross, was committed to creative and original translation; the reviews in the report, many of them miniature essays in comparative translation, repeatedly dismissed the Penguin versions as tame, sedate, and blandly readable. Many were mediocre; some very bad indeed; Greek tragedy was ‘a disaster area’. E.V. Rieu’s own Odyssey (one of the best-selling paperbacks of all time, as Edith Hall has shown) is novelistic, ‘cliché-ridden prose’. The accusation of ‘readableness’ exposed the distance between Carne-Ross and Radice and went to the heart of Radice’s editorial instincts, which were to render the style of the ancient texts accessible, comprehensible, and fluent—to make the reader feel ‘at home’ with the author. Radice’s published reply in a way proved Arion’s point as she pressed her claim ‘to be scholarly without being pedantic’ and ‘to write good contemporary prose that is not ephemeral’. Such balanced, reasonable words seem to replicate the stylistic compromises which, for Arion, mask the difficulty, strangeness, and ‘unhomeliness’ of the ancient text. This basic divergence of points of view would resurface in many of the Penguin translators’ accounts of their practice; in Trevor J. Saunders’ account of Plato’s Laws, for example, where ‘The Greekness

18 Betty Radice to Moses Finlay, 10 September 1970. 19 Radice had an ongoing battle trying to replace the Vellacott with the Fagles translation, but was in an embarrassing position because Vellacott’s daughter Julia was her Business Manager. The Fagles volume was not published until 1982, after which the Vellacott was still kept in print.

of the Greek should not poke through the Englishness of the English.\textsuperscript{25} Rieu’s theory of ‘equivalent effect’—the idea that the English version should evoke the same style and atmosphere as the original—is not of course borne out by most of the early Penguins, which all tend to sound alike. Robert Crowe has analysed eleven passages from different authors (including Greek and Latin, prose and verse) to demonstrate the uniformity of their ‘flavourless’ prose.\textsuperscript{26}

Radice conceded to Arion that Penguin could be more adventurous in its translations, perhaps commissioning versions of the same text in different styles, such as a volume of Greek plays by five different hands.\textsuperscript{27} But she makes explicit the irreconcilable difference between Penguin and Arion in their relationship (both Carne-Ross and Radice call it their ‘responsibility’) to the original text. Adopting Arion’s own method Radice compares Ted Hughes’ adaptation of Seneca’s Oedipus, printed in Arion and then playing in London at the National Theatre,\textsuperscript{28} with the Penguin translation by E.F. Watling. She finds Hughes’ version ‘exciting and provocative’ and feels the power of his ‘searing words’—‘and yet how much of this is Seneca?\textsuperscript{29} The ancient authors are not always amenable to our own tastes or assimilable to topical concerns: ‘Translation is more than a subjective impression’.\textsuperscript{30} Radice upheld this view of ‘creative’ translation throughout her career, as can be seen in her Introduction to W.G. Shepherd’s Propertius in 1985, the year of her death. She acknowledges Pound’s howlers (what a later generation might call ‘creative misreadings’ of Propertius) along with his galvanizing effect on translation and reception. But ‘Sextus Pound syndrome’, as Radice and Shepherd referred to it, offers no escape for the hard-pressed translator of the complete text, who is not free just to pick out the plums of wit and wordplay.

Once assured that translations were complete, accurate, and clearly expressed, Radice encouraged individual writers to trust their own idiom. For example, she welcomed Dorothea Wender’s ‘crisp, telling’ version of

\begin{itemize}
\item Saunders (1975), 155.
\item Crowe (2012b), 109–10.
\item The only Penguin Classic to include more than one translation of the same text is Jay’s Greek Anthology, see Jay (1981).
\item In the famous production by Peter Brook (1968). In the entry for Oedipus in Who’s Who in the Ancient World Radice includes the Hughes adaptation of Seneca, along with versions by Corneille, Cocteau, Gide, and Pasolini; see Radice (1971a), 177–8.
\item Radice (1969b), 135.
\item Radice (1969b), 134.
\end{itemize}
Theognis, only changing Americanisms such as ‘buddies’. Wender pleaded for the retention of ‘lush’ (US for a drunk): ‘what a pity that useful word isn’t British-English. How do you get along without it?’\(^{31}\) Wender’s emphatic style is a match for Theognis, whom she characterizes in her Introduction as ‘savage, paranoid, bigoted, bitter, narrow, pompous, self-pitying’.\(^{32}\) Her ‘Note on the text’ declares unashamedly ‘Some of these poems are better than others . . . I have marked the ones I like best with a *’.\(^{33}\) The two women developed a warm working relationship: ‘You are one of the best editors I’ve ever encountered’, Wender wrote to Radice, ‘and certainly the best classics editor.’\(^{34}\)

Radice’s relationships with individual collaborators ranged from lucid advice to tactful chivvying and from the collegiality of equals to friendly ‘tutorials’, and, as W.G. Shepherd remembers, something resembling the relationship of trainer and athlete.\(^{35}\) Her annotations on manuscripts could comprise a learned, pithy commentary or a single exclamation mark. A comment from the files summarizes her general approach: ‘You really have to work through the draft, improving the style, and then confirm you have not gone too far from the Greek.’\(^{36}\) In discussion of individual words and points of tone and style she warned against anything too awkward or ephemeral, for instance, ‘girlcott’, coined on analogy with ‘boycott’, or ‘pig-singer’: ‘You can’t say “pig-singer” because it’ll be read as one who sings not one who singes’.\(^{37}\) Although Radice accepted some Latin and Greek words where they were already naturalized or familiar she preferred more learned or technical terms to be rendered in English. She objected, for instance, to ‘outlandish-looking’ transliterated Greek (zeugitai, apagoge) in Aristotle’s Athenian Constitution.\(^{38}\) In Erasmus’ Praise of Folly, where Folly claims to be an ignorant woman even while interspersing her Latin discourse with Greek, Radice’s own translation neatly signals the ‘Greek’ words by putting the English in inverted commas.

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\(^{31}\) Dorothea Wender to Betty Radice, 22 December 1971.  
\(^{32}\) Wender (1973), 92. 
\(^{33}\) Wender (1973), 95.  
\(^{34}\) Wender to Radice, 15 September 1977. 
\(^{35}\) Shepherd (1987), 163–4, and 174. Editorial correspondence is often interspersed with personal news, including trying to find homes for kittens (Jane Gardner to Radice, 23 August 1965). 
\(^{36}\) Radice to a translator, 25 March 1982. 
\(^{37}\) Radice to Sommerstein, regarding his Aristophanes translations, 2 March 1973. 
\(^{38}\) Radice to P.J. Rhodes, 6 April 1981.
A famous story of E.V. Rieu records his asking a prospective translator of Juvenal, over lunch at the Athenæum, ‘Now, my boy, what are we going to do about the smut?’ During Radice’s editorship, which began after the Chatterley judgement, there was no overall prohibition of four-letter words; obscenities in Aristophanes, Ovid, Catullus, Horace, and Juvenal should be rendered as faithfully as possible without being cheap or vulgar. Her concern was always for linguistic rather than sexual decorum—for finding the right words and tone for the context. Younger or more reticent male colleagues found Radice straightforward and robust; she supported Niall Rudd in letting ‘honesty take precedence over propriety’ in Horace’s Satires and reassured Alan Sommerstein who had started off ‘rather chickenish’ on Aristophanes. The issue of bowdlerization in Penguin Classics has been discussed by Robert Crowe, who concludes from the archival evidence that there was no one policy but a complex and flexible practice of ‘behind-the-scenes extemporization’ and collaborative discussion. Disappointingly, no details exist of the ‘hilarious & fruitful’ meeting between Rieu, Radice, and the translator David Barrett over the Thesmophoriazusae.

Translating sex was a minor issue compared with the Sisyphean task of managing authors. Recalcitrant or unpunctual contributors had to be chased; Peter Green’s Ovid, notoriously, was thirteen years in the making, during which, as he disarmingly admits, he had to be ‘encouraged, argued with, gently bullied, briskly cajoled, or tactfully steered away from the shoals of procrastination, Angst, and unreasonable polemic by her diplomatic ministrations’. On the other hand some translations arrived felicitously out of the blue; Radice had nothing against (good) unsolicited manuscripts and made quick and lucidly expressed decisions. One of the most fruitful of these contacts was with Peter Jay (just about to go up to Oxford), whose natural ear for poetry Radice at once recognized. Jay began by recommending the poetry of Palamas, which he hoped might sound as good in Greek as it did (in Peter Levi’s translation) in English.

40 Radice to Rudd, 5 June 1971; to Sommerstein, 3 March 1972.
41 Crowe (2012a), 209. 42 Crowe (2012a), 210, fn. 16.
43 Green (1987), 92. Radice’s letters to and about Green are some of the most dramatic and entertaining in her files.
44 Modern Greek poetry was not Radice’s responsibility; the influential Four Greek Poets (1966) was brought out in the Penguin Modern European Poets series. Jay went on to find
he discussed his own and others’ translations of the Homeric Hymns, Greek lyric poetry, and Catullus before embarking on his brilliant Greek Anthology, a selection of 850 of the original poems, with translations by Jay himself, and an array of poets such as Tony Harrison, Peter Porter, Peter Whigham, Fleur Adcock, and Alistair Elliott. Another unsolicited approach was from Alan Sommerstein, who sent Radice his translation of Aristophanes’ Lysistrata. David Barrett’s translation of three of the plays (The Frogs and Other Plays, 1963) had already appeared, but a contracted second volume was long overdue, and Radice appreciated the vitality of Sommerstein’s work. Her diplomatic solution was to commission Barrett and Sommerstein as joint editors for The Birds and Other Plays (1978).

Much care went into the choice of cover. Radice took over the list just as the original medallion covers, which defined Penguin Classics for a whole generation of readers, were replaced by the ‘Black’ photographic covers which match the text to an image from an appropriate historical period or illustrate its reception. Unlike Rieu, who hated the new design, Radice enjoyed letting translators have a say in the development of the art work. ‘If we have a Pompey on the front of Caesar’s Civil War,’ Jane Mitchell asked, ‘could it be one of the worried-looking ones?’ A frowning Pompey was duly selected.

Radice’s personal experience as an editor lent authority to her practice as scholar-translator. One of the translations that the Arion report had singled out for criticism was her own Terence, which was accused of being ‘relentlessly nice’. In her rebuttal she argued that the fault wasn’t hers: Terence’s ‘Latin is beautiful but lacks variety . . . the Romans themselves found him lacking in vis comica . . . I confess I was often tempted to improve on the original, and should have been more “creative” had the Anvil Press (Radice was an advisory editor) which published translations of many of the major Modern Greek poets.

45 Radice handled the Anthology in its early stages; it then appeared in hardback under the Allen Lane imprint in the UK and OUP in the US (1973). She oversaw a revised version for Penguin Classics in 1981.

46 On Radice’s suggestion Sommerstein offered a more scholarly edition of Aristophanes to the Loeb series, and when that failed to appear, to Aris and Philips, thereby inaugurating their successful series of bilingual texts: see Sommerstein (2006).

I done so.48 Her translations from Latin (Pliny, Terence, Livy, Erasmus, and the Letters of Abelard and Heloise) include very different styles and genres, testing her ideal of a readable English in which the texture of the ancient language may still be felt. She admitted, as few academic classicists have done, the sheer grind their work demands; of Pliny’s Panegyr
cus, which she edited for Loeb, she wrote: ‘One’s admiration for the stamina of [Pliny’s] invited audience grows’, and again: the wordiness of Pliny’s Panegyricus ‘nearly killed me. Generations of Roman historians to come will bless my name, for they can read their right-hand Loeb pages and no more’.49 Although Loeb translations (unlike Penguins) are essentially guides to the original language rather than reading texts Radice still aimed for a well-formed English prose, comparable to that of her Penguin Pliny Letters, which is still the preferred translation today. She enjoyed the intellectual tussle with three Erasmus texts for A.H.T. Levi’s collected edition (and translated him, as one reviewer said, with ‘both exactitude and vivacity’)50 but complained that it was ‘such fearfully difficult allusive Latin that the back has fallen off my Lewis & Short big dictionary’.51 In her Introduction to the Penguin Horace Complete Odes and Epodes she quotes Byron (‘Then farewell Horace; whom I hated so’), to warn that construing a text can destroy its pleasure and seriously damage our relationship with its author.52 She hopes the English can still convey something of the ‘surprising, dense’ style and ‘shifting’ tone of the Latin, so that for both translator and reader a fresh version can act ‘as a kind of liberation, a release into meeting the demands that Horace makes of us as a poet’.53

Radice’s Herculean labour for the Loeb edition of the Panegyricus was distilled into her essay in Greece and Rome which is still considered the best short introduction.54 It offered a broader readership an overview of a text generally considered ‘indispensable but unreadable’ and established a durable framework for future scholarship: ‘raising many of the issues that were to be further explored in the succeeding generation, including historical, rhetorical and stylistic matters, and the “new side of

Pliny” that familiarity with the Panegyricus makes available to readers of his Letters.\textsuperscript{55}

The Letters themselves, which came out in 1963, remain her most important work as a Latinist. Together with the Oxford Classical Texts edition of R.A.B. Mynors (1963) and the Historical and Social Commentary of A.N. Sherwin-White (1966), to both of which she had access before they were published, Radice’s translation brought the best of current Pliny scholarship to English-speaking readers. More than fifty years later her assumption that we can read the letters as the expression of a time and a personality seems too uncomplicated; critical theories of the construction of the self through writing and more recent studies of ‘epistolarity’ and of the rhetoric of authorship make us wary of accepting such self-conscious texts as a ‘Self-Portrait’.\textsuperscript{56} Even the layout of Pliny’s much-loved Tuscan villa, of which Radice provides a reconstruction, may owe more to literary exigency than architectural fact. There is a gulf between post-structural readings and Radice’s observation on the iter harenosum (‘sandy path’, Book 2, Letter 17) leading to the villa at Laurentum that ‘There are still sandy side-roads in Italy’.\textsuperscript{57} Nevertheless, modern accounts of Pliny are happy to take Radice as a point of departure, even while refuting her approach point by point.\textsuperscript{58} As always in her Introductions Radice is adept at characterizing earlier translations (Melmoth’s ‘cloud of verbiage’) and interested in the afterlife of the text; Pliny’s descriptions, of the Temple of Clitumnus or of the curious spring at his native Como, are measured against her own responses and those of earlier visitors: Da Vinci, Byron, Corot, and Carducci.\textsuperscript{59}

Although Radice came to her other two classical Latin authors, Terence and Livy, less by choice than by chance, her Penguin versions are consistent with her standards of translation and scholarship. The Introduction to the Comedies describes the kind of second-century BC audience that Terence’s plays would have demanded and traces their reception in performance and in European literature, including the

\textsuperscript{55} Rees (2012), 31.

\textsuperscript{56} Radice published a selection from her edition with the Folio Society as Pliny, A Self-Portrait in Letters; Radice (1978). Her sophisticated understanding of epistolary relationships and of the ‘literariness’ of letters is in fact demonstrated in the Introduction to her translation of Abelard and Heloise; Radice (1974).

\textsuperscript{57} Radice (1963), 30.  

\textsuperscript{58} See, for example, Henderson (2003).

\textsuperscript{59} Radice (1963), 31–2.
French translation of an earlier woman scholar, Madame Dacier.\(^{60}\) In English she finds a good prose version of the *Andria* as early as 1598; she later published a handsome fine press edition of this Elizabethan translation.\(^{61}\) Radice’s description of Terence’s style as highly verbal and ‘colloquial but elegant’ has to stand in for any textual pleasure in the English, which is well written but unengaging. It may be that her characterization of Terentian ‘classic high comedy’ as a sophisticated and articulate mode more akin to Lope de Vega or Molière than to Shakespeare goes some way to explaining its lack of appeal to modern English readers (her translation is not intended as a performance text). Radice’s Livy offers a way of judging the distinctiveness of her approach since she worked on two of the four Penguin volumes, taking over from Aubrey de Selincourt. Her Introduction to books XXI–XXX (published as *The War with Hannibal*) discusses the challenges of Livy’s virtuosic style, particularly the vivid narrative moments and dramatic set speeches, reading him rather as a serially published nineteenth-century historical novel such as *Romola*.\(^{62}\) As always she is particularly interested in reception: the continuing fear and fascination of Hannibal in the Roman imagination, Livy’s importance in the Renaissance and in later drama and political writing.

If we look up Hannibal, or Livy, in *Who’s Who in the Ancient World* we can follow a network of associations that is almost like hypertext before the letter: Radice insisted on a system of cross-references and a complete index in full-size print which would itself be fun to browse in.\(^{63}\) Livy, for instance, leads to Coriolanus, Castor and Pollux, Mantegna and Rubens; Terence not just to *Two Gentlemen of Verona* but to a tenth-century nun and a nineteenth-century headmaster. Rather than compiling ‘yet another potted classical dictionary’ she presented ‘certain classical personalities as they have survived in art, music and literature’.\(^{64}\) Her approach sits well in our current climate: classical figures, mythical or historical, are understood to ‘survive’ through their reception, rather than existing independently of images or texts. The range of *Who’s Who* is capacious, with unusually good coverage of medieval and modern

\(^{60}\) Radice (1976), 11–29.

\(^{61}\) Bernard (1971).

\(^{62}\) Radice (1965).

\(^{63}\) Radice (1971a).

\(^{64}\) Radice to Desmond Briggs (editor at her hardback publisher, Blond), 20 September 1969.
(including Modern Greek) references. Radice’s Introduction ends with an extraordinary evocation of Picasso’s Minotaur—‘sensuous, amorous, awkwardly beautiful’—through which a new myth is created for one of the least-loved figures of antiquity.65 Her book may be seen as a kind of benign labyrinth crafted by a scholar for whom ‘daedal’ and ‘daedalian’ are still ‘usable English adjectives.’66

Betty Radice broadened the canon of the ‘Classics’ and encouraged and diversified their readership. She upheld academic standards in popular editions while experiencing at first hand the pains and privileges of classical scholarship. She combined meticulous philological accuracy with an ear for tone and style, a concern with the literary qualities of the text, and a special interest in its later reception and influence: all, as she herself wrote in the persona of Erasmus’ Folly, for ‘a paper-covered book under the emblem of some bird from the snowy wastes of the antipodes, not even the owl of Minerva’.67

65 Radice (1971a), 44. 66 See entry on Daedalus, Radice (1971a), 97. 67 Radice (1987), 254.
Simone Weil
Receiving the Iliad

Barbara K. Gold

Our first impression of Simone Weil’s essay, ‘The Iliad, or, The Poem of Force,’ is that of a clear, cold, dry wind that stings us awake and drives the mist away from our eyes.1

This chapter is a discussion not of Homer’s Iliad, but of Simone Weil’s interpretation or reception of Homer. Although she was not a classical scholar by profession, her place in this volume is more than justified by the enormous impact that this profoundly original essay has on the way that the Iliad is taught and discussed both within and beyond the Academy. My central contention is that this influential essay is informed by Simone Weil’s identity as a woman author who is writing about war. For those not familiar with this remarkable woman, I will first fill in some details about her life, writings, and socio-historical context, since they are all entirely relevant to her reception of Homer’s Iliad and indeed explain much about her singular reaction to the Iliad.

Weil was born in Paris in 1909 to an agnostic Jewish family. Weil’s father was a physician from Alsace; her mother also had aspirations to be a doctor, but her own father, a wealthy Jewish businessman, would not allow it. Both Simone Weil and her brother André (a brilliant mathematician at an early age who was later at The Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton) were precocious. Due perhaps partly to her mother’s phobias about germs and food, Simone Weil developed early an aversion

to close contact with people and serious problems with eating; these persisted into her adulthood.

Weil was a bright student, who studied and mastered Greek very early in her schooling. [FIG. 19.1] She finished first in the entrance exam for the École Normale Supérieure (with Simone de Beauvoir coming in second), graduating in 1931 with a degree in Philosophy. Her quite opinionated political sympathies were well developed early on. While in school, after the Russian Revolution, she was accused of being a Communist by a classmate. ‘Not at all,’ she retorted, ‘I am a Bolshevik!’

Although Weil was always physically weak and did nothing to help better her condition, she accomplished an enormous amount, both physically and intellectually, in her short thirty-four years. She taught philosophy and Greek, while also working at manual labor in factories

Fig. 19.1 Portrait photograph of Simone Weil, aged 13, taken on a visit to Baden-Baden. Reproduced courtesy of the Rees papers archive, UCL special collections, London.

and fields so as to put herself in the place of workers. Her writing never floated free from her life—everything she thought and wrote was based on her lived experience.

Weil was always emotionally aligned with workers rather than with her colleagues. After being fired from her teaching job (either for being in a protest march or because she was Jewish) and working, unsuccessfully, at a Renault factory, she served as a volunteer in the Spanish Civil War in 1936 for the loyalist, Republican side. She was at that point a Marxist, but after witnessing the horrors of war in Spain, she became disillusioned with Communism, Marxism, and Anarchism, abandoning also her earlier pacifist leanings.

In the mid-1930s, Weil became attracted to Christianity, undergoing several mystical experiences. She converted from Judaism to Christianity in 1938, although she refused to be baptized into the Catholic Church.3 As World War II began, the Weils remained in France. Simone worked in a vineyard and continued to write. Her family left the worsening Nazi persecutions in 1940, going first to Casablanca and then the United States. Simone managed to get to London, leaving her parents behind. Once in London, Weil tried first to convince the leader of the French resistance to create a corps of nurses to go to the front lines, which she intended to join. When that did not work, she planned to be dropped behind enemy lines to work with the Resistance. All this time, she refused to eat more than the rations that a soldier, poor person or worker would have received. She died aged thirty-four at a sanatorium in Kent, England, either of tuberculosis or of malnutrition (there is debate about whether she hastened her own death by her overly ascetic practices, whether she was insane, or whether she died of illness. Weil herself said that she was ‘decreating’ herself to return to God).4

Weil’s prolific output runs to some sixteen volumes, astounding for one who died so young. Her early writings, from 1931 to 1936, focused on contemporary issues and problems. After her several mystical experiences, she turned to religious writings. Her ‘The Iliad or the Poem of Force’ was written in 1939–1940, before and after the fall of France and the beginning


4 See Pétrement (1976) 537; Gray (2001) 215–17 and 212: ‘She died of something that might be called (depending on how you look at it) an illness—her pathological need to share the sufferings of others.’
of the Nazi occupation in May–June 1940, and it was clearly influenced by that catastrophic event.\(^5\) This work was originally published anonymously, addressed to her countrymen, under the acrostic pseudonym Émile Novis (an anagram of Simone Weil), in the *Cahiers du Sud*, a literary monthly published in Marseille for which she wrote frequently. It first appeared in English translation in 1945 in the journal *Politics*, translated by Mary McCarthy, and has subsequently been reissued some thirteen times by Pendle Hill, a Quaker center and publishing house which was interested in its pacifist argument. Another of her best-known works, *La Pesanteur et la grâce* (*Gravity and Grace*), was compiled from her many notebooks by Gustave Thibon, a Catholic theologian whom she had known and who became her posthumous editor. This work treats the idea, fundamental to her thinking, of ‘Force’ or ‘Gravity’ or the undeveloped, primitive forces in human beings (the other ‘Force’ is God’s grace or light; cf. her *Waiting for God* [*Attente de Dieu*]).\(^6\)

Weil’s work on the *Iliad* has been called a translation by some, an interpretation by others. This raises questions about what a translation is or ought to be. How far can a translator get from the text before the new product ceases to have enough relationship to the original to be regarded as a translation? Does a translator need to know the original language? What is the difference between a translation, an adaptation, an interpretation, a transformation, a metamorphosis, or a cultural equivalent? Is a translator bound to reproduce a certain aspect of a text: its poetic feeling, its action, its structure, its thought? Is she allowed to import her own terms of reference? Can she not import her own terms of reference? Can she import ‘into the text something that is not there at all’?\(^7\)

Weil certainly imports elements into Homer that Homer never could have imagined: Christianity for one. She clearly domesticates the *Iliad*, an act that always runs the risk of making the original misunderstood, rather than foreignizing or exoticizing it. Sometimes she is accused of getting it wrong (and we can disagree about what ‘wrong’ translation is).\(^8\)

\(^5\) Weil was so attached to the *Iliad* that she packed it in a suitcase to take when the Vichy police detained her and took her to a police station. Gray (2001: 166) says that she packed her copy of the *Iliad* ‘without which she never left the house’.

\(^6\) The concept of Force is found in her *Oppression and Liberty*, written in 1934.

\(^7\) Carne-Ross (2010b) 162.

\(^8\) Many contemporary translations, for example, insert somewhat jarring terms and objects that are thought by some readers to detract from the original context. See William
Many critics, for example, have faulted her for her interpretation of Priam’s supplication to Achilles in Book 24. 468ff.9 Here are Lombardo’s translations of two sections of this passage, followed by Weil’s:

*Passion sometimes blinds a man so completely
That he kills one of his own countrymen.
In exile, he comes into a wealthy house,
And everyone stares at him with wonder. (Lombardo; II. 24.
511–14 [=480–84], Lombardo’s italics)

As when hard misery seizes someone when in his own land
he has murdered, and when he arrives at the home of another,
some rich man; a shiver seizes those who look at him;
so Achilles shivered seeing the godlike Priam.
The others too shivered looking at one another. (Weil, #11)10

He spoke, and sorrow for his own father
Welled up in Achilles. He took Priam’s hand
And gently pushed the old man away.
The two of them remembered. Priam,
Huddled in grief at Achilles’ feet, cried
And moaned softly for his man-slaying Hector.
And Achilles cried for his father and
For Patroclus. The sound filled the room. (Lombardo; II. 24.
544–51 [=507–12])

He spoke. The other, thinking of his father, desired to weep;
Taking him by the arm, he pushed the old man away a little,
Both were remembering, one Hector slayer of men,
and he huddled in tears at Achilles’ feet, against the earth;
but Achilles wept for his father and then too for
Patroclus; their sobbing filled the hut. (Weil, #12).

In her commentary on these passages, Weil compares Priam supplicating Achilles to ‘the sight of a dead body’ (*un cadavre*) (Weil, #11) and later says, ‘Not through insensitivity does Achilles push to the ground the old

Logan’s review of Alice Oswald’s *Memorial: A Version of Homer’s Iliad* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011) in the *New York Times* 23 December 2012. He complains mildly about Oswald’s ‘accretion of a few modern artifacts like parachutes and motorbikes’ and goes after the late Christopher Logue’s ‘take-no-prisoners adaptation’, which ‘equipped the warriors with helicopters and Uzis’.

9 So Holoka says ‘Weil’s comment on 24. 480–4 is a rare case of misunderstanding or misrepresentation’ (2003: 74).

10 All citations from Simone Weil’s *The Iliad or the Poem of Force* are taken from the 2003 Holoka edition; I use his numbering.
man clutching his knees’ (Weil, #13). Priam, in other words, is an example of a living being reduced to the status of a thing or object by force (Weil’s main thesis in this essay). Rather, in Homer, Priam is being compared to a murderer arriving at someone’s home in supplication. Further, Weil (#11) says that a ‘shiver’ (frisson) seizes those who look at Priam, but the word in the Greek, which she translates as ‘shiver’, is thambos, ‘wonder’ (which is repeated twice again in verbal form in Il. 24. 483 and 484); so Lombardo says: ‘and everyone stares at him with wonder.’

In lines 507–12, Achilles, who now knows the identity of his visitor and supplicant, thinks of his own father, takes Priam’s hand, and gently (êka) pushes the old man away. Weil prefaces this passage by saying ‘soon the very presence of the miserable one is forgotten’ and then translates line 508 as ‘taking him by the arm, he pushed the old man away a little’. This is followed by her comment that Achilles pushes Priam to the ground (Weil, #12–13). Weil’s translation of ‘êka’ (‘gently’) with ‘a little’ (‘un peu’) mistakes the gesture that Achilles makes here. Priam has not turned into a dead body and has not ceased to be noticed by Achilles. Rather, Achilles may be indicating, gently, that Priam should stop playing the role of suppliant, or he may be too anguished to continue the physically intimate gesture that Priam proffers. Far from becoming an invisible thing to Achilles, Priam has become all too human. Weil tries too hard here to fit Priam into the ‘victim of force’ theme she has postulated throughout, and thus the meaning that nearly every other reader of this passage gives to this pivotal scene is replaced by another interpretation.

This ‘misreading’, if it is one, and other possible misreadings do not, however, vitiate Weil’s entire encounter with the Iliad, as some...
would have it. But what she ends up with is not Homer’s *Iliad*. It is Simone Weil’s *Iliad*.15

There are two reasons why I find Simone Weil’s work and her reception of Homer so compelling. I am drawn to her absolute ethical integrity, her passionate defense of her ideas, her vision of the *Iliad*—whether right or wrong—as a reflection of real life.16 So Ferber believes that when Simone Weil says, ‘‘Such is the Nature of force”, we are not to ask whether she means force in Homer or force in life. Homer is life.’17

Weil claims that the *Iliad* is ‘‘the loveliest, the purest of mirrors’ (Weil, #1). In a sense, her essay is not even about the *Iliad* as much as it is a document of its own time, a reflection of the terrible time and place in which Weil lived.18 She is responding to her context by using the violent world of the *Iliad* to try to contextualize her own time and explain it, to herself and to her country-folk. The violence, seen through Homer’s eyes, the Homeric scenes, the Homeric deaths and mutilations—these are not personalized as much as they are an ‘anguished response to the defeated and enslaved, . . . in its perception of the dehumanization, the reciprocal enslavement of the victors and the defeated in a total war’.19

Her sparse, plainspoken, lucid prose conveys this anguish simply and clearly.20 More than most of us, Weil felt this in her very soul and responded to this aspect of Homer. As Summers says, ‘‘That anyone of left sympathies could see anything pitiable in the triumphant German armies of Hitler was remarkable enough; that a Frenchwoman and a Jew who passionately identified with the defeated and the oppressed could do

15 The issue of the ‘translation’ of Homer by Simone Weil is further complicated by the fact that we have Holoka or McCarthy translating Simone Weil’s text from the French. Thus we are twice removed from Homer’s Greek. As Carne-Ross says about Logue’s *Patrocleia*, Weil ‘has managed to get inside the poem again and has discovered that, after all these years, it is still breathing’ (Carne-Ross (2010b) 164).

16 Cf. Kenneth Burke’s comment that literary works could serve as ‘equipment for living’ by revealing familiar narrative patterns that would make sense of new and chaotic situations (cited by Benfey (2005) vii).


20 However, she was also accused in her lifetime of having a ‘feminine’ style of thought which was ‘highly abstract and abstruse, of a rapid dialectic . . . under which I could feel deep instincts and tacit decisions perhaps hardly reflected upon’ (McLellan (1990) 262, quoting from Jacques Cabaud, *Simone Weil: A Fellowship in Love* [New York, 1965], p. 340). The ‘I’ in the quote is the priest René de Naurois, a chaplain who visited Weil in the hospital.
so struck me as miraculous.\textsuperscript{21} Such ethical reading or critique is not regarded by some as a particularly sophisticated or even valid approach to reading or responding to literature. But, as Wayne Booth has said, ‘we can no longer pretend that ethical criticism is passé. It is practiced everywhere, often surreptitiously, often guiltily, and often badly, partly because it is the most difficult of all critical modes, but partly because we have so little serious talk about why it is important, what purposes it serves, and how it might be done well.’\textsuperscript{22}

The second aspect of Weil’s work that exerts a powerful attraction is her description of the victims of war as slaves, as the objects of force, as objectified counters that move through the battlefield without any agency, any power to stave off the inevitable. So too Hannah Arendt talks about the automatism of violence: ‘vengeance, which incloses both doer and sufferer in the relentless automatism of the action process, which by itself need never come to an end.’\textsuperscript{23} Weil says:

The true hero, the true subject matter, the center of the \textit{Iliad} is force (Weil, #1). . . Force is that which makes a thing of whoever submits to it. Exercised to the extreme, it makes the human being a thing quite literally, that is, a dead body. Someone was there and, the next moment, no one (Weil, #2) . . . One need not be dead to be a thing—force can also make a still living human being into a thing. (Weil, #7)

This can apply to Hector (Weil, #3; cf. \textit{Il.} 22.401–4), to women such as Chryseis (Weil, #15; cf. \textit{Il.} 1.29–31), to enslaved women such as Andromache (Weil, #16; cf. \textit{Il.} 6. 456–58), to slaves in general (Weil, #21), and to prisoners. Even those who think they can control force are subject to it: ‘Those to whom fate has loaned force perish through their over-reliance on it’ (Weil, #34). War seems to fighting heroes to be ‘a game, a holiday free from care’ (Weil, #51) . . . the lives one destroys are like playthings broken by a child and just as inconsequential; heroism is histrionic and besmirched by boasting’ (Weil, #52).

Such depictions of the objectifying power of force bring to the surface two underlying aspects of Weil’s text, both suggested but neither realized: pacifism and feminism. Weil was, for a time, a pacifist until she recanted when she finally realized her ‘overriding obligation to work for Hitler’s

destruction in about 1939’. She was never, as far as I can tell, a proto-feminist. But she had a deep empathy with those turned into objects by power and violence; those victims include for her all human beings, but she especially singles out women and slaves in various passages. Anyone, of course, can be objectified (this is Weil’s overarching theory), but when we think of humans reduced to objects, indeed reduced to body parts, whether through physical violence or as the object of the gaze, it is women who most often suffer this fate.

We come then to my central claim: that Simone Weil’s identity as a woman author who is writing about war is significant for a number of reasons. First, Weil is one of very few women until recently to have translated and commented on the Iliad (another was her close contemporary, Rachel Bespaloff, who was also from a Jewish family, fled the war with her Ukrainian husband and her daughter and arrived in New York within weeks of the Weil family’s arrival, and wrote her own reaction to the Iliad—On the Iliad—which seems to respond to Weil’s ‘The Iliad or the Poem of Force’.

It remains true today that relatively few women choose to translate classical epics. Among classical translators and scholars, Sarah Ruden has been celebrated in the press recently for being a rare female translator of Vergil’s Aeneid. Most female classical scholars who work on Homer have chosen the Odyssey—a poem that does not often speak of war and violence and that includes a number of female characters—and not his

25 This is not meant to be essentializing. My interest is in how we are conditioned both to write and to read/receive in a gendered way.
26 Recently a number of female scholars have translated and written commentaries on the Iliad. See the on-going Basler Iliaskommentar, a series from the University of Basel that has produced several volumes and has more in process. While the two lead editors are male scholars (Anton Bierl and Joachim Latacz), many of the editors of the individual volumes are female (e.g., Marina Coray, Martha Krieter-Spiro, Magdalene Stoevesandt, Katharina Wesselmann). See also two books of the Iliad published by women in the Cambridge Greek and Latin series: Barbara Graziosi/Johannes Haubold (Book 6, published in 2010) and Irene J.F. de Jong (Book 22, published in 2012).
bloody Iliad. It is a rare woman who is attracted by the raw violence of this epic.

Most recently, Alice Oswald, a British poet, has written a remarkable meditation on the Iliad entitled Memorial. Her slim volume is subtitled An Excavation of the Iliad in the British version. Like Simone Weil, Oswald pares the lengthy epic of the Iliad down to its bare bones, abandoning the narrative and concentrating on only two pieces of the Iliad: a list of the men who died, together with their biographies, and similes following each biography that bring a very human dimension to the terrible list of the war-dead. She calls her translation of the Iliad—or her version of it—an ‘oral cemetery’. Like Weil, she sees life snuffed out, living beings turned into nothing:

Poor Archeptolemos
Someone was there
And the next moment no one (Memorial, p. 33)

Like leaves
Sometimes they light their green flames
And are fed by the earth
And sometimes it snuffs them out (Memorial, p. 15)

Like Weil’s ‘The Iliad or the Poem of Force’, Oswald’s Memorial is ‘Homeric, with very little Homer in it’. Homer’s epic is stripped down to its horrifying, bare violence. And also, like Weil, Oswald is accused by a male reviewer of ‘playing fast and loose’ with Homer and his similes, and is taken to task for her ‘Frankenstein transplant of similes from the original’, for misunderstanding Homer, and for turning her narrator into a ‘gum-chewing Valley girl’.

One only need read some of the descriptions of what makes the Iliad so appealing to male critics and translators to understand why it might repel women critics and translators. So Daniel Mendelsohn, in a review of Stanley Lombardo’s 1997 Iliad translation, says that this version ‘goes for a tight-lippedsoldierly toughness—a post Vietnam Iliad’. In a recent

28 Nancy Felson, Regarding Penelope: From Character to Poetics (Princeton, 1994); Lillian E. Doherty, Siren Songs: Gender, Audiences, and Narrators in the Odyssey (Ann Arbor, MI, 1995).
31 Logan (2012).
32 Mendelsohn (2011) 81.
review in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* of various *Iliad* translations, Willis Regier quotes George Steiner’s answer to the question ‘Why are there so many *Iliads* in English?’ Steiner’s answer, Regier says, can be boiled down to two words: noble manliness.\(^\text{33}\) Here is Steiner: ‘There shines through the *Iliad* an idealized yet also unflinching vision of masculinity, of an order of values and mutual recognitions radically virile.’\(^\text{34}\) ‘Small wonder’ then, Regier claims, that ‘the epic has appealed to warrior nations like England and the United States’ (p. 1). And small wonder, I would claim, that such a work might not often attract women with its radical virility, or that, when it does attract women, they choose to approach it differently.

In his *Chronicle of Higher Education* review, Regier cites or mentions some thirty-one translators of or commentators on the *Iliad*. Not one is a woman. The only woman mentioned at all is Barbara Graziosi, who wrote the introduction to a translation of the *Iliad* by Anthony Verity (Oxford, 2011).\(^\text{35}\)

Even the description of how translators approach the act of translating such a robust work can be outrageously virile. William Ewart Gladstone, four-time Prime Minister of England in the nineteenth century and translator of the *Iliad* into ballad stanzas, proclaimed of his task: ‘I have involuntarily conceived of the poem as a fortress high-walled and impregnable, and of the open space around as covered with the dead bodies of his translators, who have perished in their gallant but unsuccessful efforts to scale the walls.’\(^\text{36}\) Imagine the slight, physically frail Simone Weil attempting to scale these walls. Regier seems obsessed with the virile act of translating Homer. His piece is shot through with masculine and military metaphors: Richard Martin provides a ‘storied shield and dazzling armor’ in his introduction to Lattimore’s reissued *Iliad*; the new edition of Lattimore is ‘tall and muscular’; Regier refers to ‘the joy of war’; Lattimore’s *Iliad* ‘is best for those who want to feel the epic from the loins up’.

Why then would someone like Simone Weil be drawn to translating a work so virile in nature and one that has attracted so many male

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\(^{33}\) Regier (2012).


\(^{35}\) See notes 26–27 in this chapter for recent female translators and commentators on the *Iliad*.

translators? Weil was clearly driven by both her experience growing up during the Spanish Civil War and under the Nazi occupation of her native France. War was all around her. She was led too by an early and unusually deep-seated response to and repulsion from the violence of war and the effects it has on all human beings, victims and victors alike, turning them into things or objects, like slaves or women.\textsuperscript{37} She was, then, attracted (if we can use this word) not by ‘the joys of war’ but by its devastating, bloody, life-robbing ability to turn everything into ‘all day permanent red’, as Christopher Logue so vividly put it in his version of the \textit{Iliad}.\textsuperscript{38} Writing about and translating Homer’s \textit{Iliad}—the story of a war so long ago—helped Weil to cope with and try to explain her wars, the Spanish Civil War and World War II.

In a similar vein, Primo Levi tried to describe the dehumanizing power of force in the Nazi death camps in his \textit{Survival in Auschwitz}: ‘the drowned . . . form the backbone of the camp, an anonymous mass . . . of non-men who march and labor in silence, the divine spark dead within them . . . one hesitates to call them living; one hesitates to call their death death.’\textsuperscript{39}

Weil tried for a time to be a pacifist, but she abandoned that stance (as many did in World War II, even Quakers) in the face of such barbaric cruelty and slaughter. Weil explains her position in her last letter, an \textit{apologia} really, written from New York in 1942 before she left for London, for her final journal:

Ever since the day when I decided, after a very painful inner struggle, that in spite of my pacifist inclinations it had become an overriding obligation in my eyes to work for Hitler’s destruction . . . my resolve has not altered; and that day was the one on which Hitler entered Prague—in May 1939, if I remember right. My decision was tardy, perhaps . . . and I bitterly reproach myself for it.\textsuperscript{40}

Male critics have faulted Weil for, among other things, not understanding the joy of Homeric warfare. George Steiner refers to her ‘deeply felt but bizarre interpretation of the \textit{Iliad} as a poem of suffering—a reading almost blind to the wild joy and ferocity of archaic warfare which makes the epic blaze’.\textsuperscript{41} Steiner is right in one respect: Weil does not see the wild

\textsuperscript{37} For Weil’s own experience of watching factory workers (including herself) being turned into slaves, see her \textit{Waiting for God}, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{38} Logue (2003).
\textsuperscript{39} Levi (1961/1958) 82.
\textsuperscript{40} Benfey (2005) xxii.
\textsuperscript{41} Steiner (1993) 4.
joy of warfare. Warfare for her is soul-killing, not joyous. Likewise, Seth Schein, in his *The Mortal Hero*, calls Weil an eloquent and influential interpreter of Homer, but he levels several charges against her: hers is not an ‘accurate reading of the poem’ (83); she ‘displaces onto the *Iliad* [her] emotional and moral repugnance to the atrocities Nazi Germany inflicted on its victims’ (82); and she gives a one-sided interpretation that ‘fails to recognize the nobility and glory of the slayers along with the humanity and pathos of the slain’, tacitly substituting ‘for its social and cultural values her own spiritual categories’ (83). These ‘flaws . . . are grounded not in the poem but in her view of life’ (83).

To be sure, Weil does displace onto the *Iliad* her moral repugnance to the atrocities around her in France, but is it not true that we all read and receive such monumental works in the light of our own situations and preoccupations? If one reads Christopher Logue’s ‘translations’ or versions of Homer’s *Iliad*, for example, his *Patrocleia or All Day Permanent Red*, one finds exactly the same phenomenon: a vastly rewritten version of the *Iliad*, which also draws on experiences out of World War II to make sense of brutal warfare in any place, any time.42 Translations can take many forms, can reflect more or less of the translator’s personal situation and context, and can bear a close or less close relationship to the original. Those that depart the farthest are not necessarily the weakest. One might ask why Weil seems the target of so much criticism from (male) critics for her ‘misunderstanding’ of the *Iliad* when others, like Logue, are not. Homer’s ‘meaning’ and his attitude toward war are not, indeed, perfectly clear, and, like Weil, he shows an impartiality towards Greeks and Trojans, victims and victors, that lends itself to an interpretation such as we find in Weil (or Logue).43 Weil is not, as has

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42 See on this Carne-Ross (2010b); Benfey (2005) xiii and n.5. Benfey talks about Logue’s ‘creatively “rewritten” passages from the *Iliad*’ (and indeed Logue’s (2003) work is entitled *All Day Permanent Red: The First Battle Scenes of Homer’s Iliad Rewritten*). Logue juxtaposes ‘the Russian advance on Berlin with sulking Achilles’ (Benfey (2005) xiii, n.5).

43 Although Weil certainly responded to a Homer that did not take sides. Homer’s impartiality is not self-evident to all readers of the *Iliad*. Many readers have seen a pro-Greek undercurrent. See M. Stoevesandt, *Feinde—Gegner—Opfer. Zur Darstellung der Trojaner in den Kampfszenen der Ilias* (Basel: Schwabe, 2005). See also the reviews by Irene J.F. de Jong (*Mnemosyne* 60 [2007], 669–70) and M.M. Willcock (*Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 3 May 2006). Stoevesandt posits that Homer is not impartial and that he makes the Greeks more prominent in the epic, more successful in battle, and more efficient at killing the enemy.
been claimed, influenced by her personal views any more than many male translators have been.

Another interesting piece of Weil’s gendered approach to the world of Homer is her propensity to make her statements about war often through the mouths and eyes of female characters. So in paragraph #5, we see Andromache and her servants heating water for Hector’s bath to have ready for him when he returns home from battle (Il. 22.442–46) (I give first Weil’s commentary, then her version of this scene, then further commentary):

Still more moving and painfully contrastive is the sudden evoking and immediate effacing of another world, the distant, fragile, touching world of peace, of the family, a world where each man means more than anything to those around him. (Weil, #5)

She called to her fair-haired servants in the house to put by the fire a large tripod, in order that there might be a warm bath for Hector on his return from combat. So naïve! She knew not that far indeed from warm baths Achilles’ arm had beaten him down, because of green-eyed Athena.

(II. 22.442–46)

Truly, he was far from warm baths, that hapless man. Nor was he alone. Nearly all of the Iliad takes place far from warm baths. Nearly all human life has always taken place far from warm baths. (Weil, #6)

‘Nearly all human life has always taken place far from warm baths.’ If we think of troops at war today, in the mountains of Afghanistan, in the cities of Syria, in northern Nigeria, we know just what this means, but when focalized through Andromache, it takes on a personal and especially sorrowful cast since we readers know—as she did not—that Hector is not coming home. As Graziosi points out, women in Homer’s Iliad ‘make powerful statements against violence—and even against the courage of their own men’.44 She cites Andromache telling Hector that his own courage will kill him and make her a widow (II. 6.431–32), and then Hector reacting by picking up his baby son and praying that he might be even stronger than his father and bring home more booty (II. 6.476–81), thus missing Andromache’s point entirely. (It is interesting too that it is a woman commentator who brings out such woman-focalized, personal, and touching scenes, which often feature familial relationships.)

Weil also highlights scenes with the recently enslaved (Chryseis, Weil, #15, Il. 1.29–31), the about to be enslaved (Andromache, Weil, #16, Il. 6.456–58), and someone enslaved speaking to the soul of someone recently killed (so both are objects: Briseis to Patroclus, Weil, #20, Il. 19.291–300). Weil seems often to pick up on such scenes (among the relatively few scenes that she actually includes in her essay), revealing a special awareness of how such human relationships have an impact on the impersonal violence and force of war.

There is one final way in which Simone Weil’s focalizing seems to me to be gendered. Many writers and filmmakers have described women as dehumanized, objectified receivers of the gaze—so dehumanized that they no longer have agency or even unbroken bodies. They are nothing more than differentiated body parts, former human beings now dead, or suppliants, or enslaved. Such beings, or things, do not even have a whole body; they are ‘a bundle of flesh, nerves and muscles that twitch’ (Weil, #10), ‘no more than matter’ (Weil, #9), ‘things for life . . . a hybrid of man and corpse’ (Weil, #14); someone who loses his or her ‘entire inner life’ (Weil, #21).

Such descriptions of inert human beings, turned into body fragments, deprived of any free will or connection to the living, recall the way women are often described, focalized, and objectified in film and in literature. Weil assumes the typically male gaze in order to show that all humans, not just women, are compelled by Force or Fate to lose their humanity and their very identities, and to become objects of people’s violent fantasies; she has, consciously or unconsciously, adopted the lens so often turned on women, and she turns it on all human beings. Everyone in ‘The Iliad or the Poem of Force’ is reduced to the status of a woman or a slave. No one escapes the effect of Force.

46 See Benfey (2005) xiii: ‘It is striking how few aspects of the Iliad Weil dwells on in an essay of forty pages or so, and how much she leaves out.’


48 The victims are also nameless in Weil. Levi too says that the Nazi victims have no story, are faceless (1961/1958: 82). Benfey points to Goya’s paintings of war, which had, he believes, an enormous effect on Weil’s (and Bespaloff’s) interpretations of the Iliad; an exhibit of Goya’s works in the Museum of Art in Geneva was visited repeatedly by Weil (Benfey 2005 xi; for Bespaloff, see Benfey 2005 xix). In Goya’s depictions of the war-dead during Napoleon’s invasion of Spain between 1808 and 1814, there are no names and there is no narrative given.
In conclusion, we must ask how Simone Weil is regarded today, and why, if she was so wrong in her translations and her commentary, we still read and admire her. As James Holoka says, ‘the value of Weil’s essay lies in her distinctive outlook on the human condition, quite apart from the accuracy of its representation of Homer’s actual worldview (insofar as it may be recaptured).’\(^49\) T. S. Eliot, in his preface to Weil’s *The Need for Roots*, addresses the problem of whether it is important that we agree or disagree with Simone Weil or think she is right about the *Iliad*:

In trying to understand her, we must not be distracted—as is only too likely to happen on a first reading—by considering how far, and at what points, we agree or disagree. We must simply expose ourselves to the personality of a woman of genius, of a kind of genius akin to that of the saints… Our first experience of Simone Weil should not be expressible in terms of approval or dissent. I cannot conceive of anybody’s agreeing with all of her views, or of not disagreeing violently with some of them. But agreement and rejection are secondary: what matters is to make contact with a great soul. Simone Weil was one who might have become a saint.\(^50\)

If we are wedded to a historicist view of Homer (difficult in any case since we have no real knowledge of the historical context) or to a ‘literal’ translation of the *Iliad*, we might agree with Steiner’s assessment of Weil’s work as ‘a perverse reading of the *Iliad*’.\(^51\) But we could also agree with Simonsuuri that Weil’s work is ‘a useful legitimate misreading of a kind that is vital for the tradition of literature’,\(^52\) and McLane-Iles calls the whole heroic basis of Homeric action and character into question when she says that ‘Weil uses the centrality of force to deconstruct the myth of heroism. The deconstruction of this myth, the leveling of all human character, serves to… deconstruct the myth of power and false absolutes.’\(^53\)

Our reaction to Weil depends entirely on what we are looking for in her text and what we expect a ‘translation’ to deliver. Certainly we can agree that Weil’s essay on and translation of the *Iliad* is a ‘passionately

\(^{49}\) Holoka (2003) 11. \(^{50}\) T. S. Eliot (1952) vi. 
\(^{52}\) Simonsuuri (1985) 169. On the topic of how we can grapple with such an uncertain past, see Frischer (2014) 2, who is commenting on Winckelmann’s ‘imaginative reconstruction of the Greek and Roman past’ (quote from Harloe’s book on Winckelmann, p. xxi). 
\(^{53}\) McLane-Iles (1987) 90; cf. Holoka (2003) 17, n.48 (with one error in the transcription of the quote: read ‘absolutes’ for ‘attributes’ as the last word).
one-sided reading of the *Iliad*, without devaluing her work. Does Weil diminish the meaning of heroism in the *Iliad* when she says that ‘the true hero . . . the center of the *Iliad* is force’ (‘Le vrai héros . . ., le centre de *L’Iliade*, c’est la force,’ Weil, #1)? . . . ‘The force that men wield, the force that subdues men, in the face of which human flesh shrinks back’ (Weil, #1)? Or, is Weil looking to her own experience in wartime France to problematize the whole concept of the heroic?55

Critics have long struggled to express what it is about Weil that compels us to keep reading her version of Homer. She has attracted a widely varying band of followers and mixed reviews. Sheila Murnaghan, in an assessment of Weil’s essay, ends by saying that the new edition by Holoka ‘gives the essay an ongoing currency that it certainly deserves and helps us to appreciate it for what it is: a shaft of light illuminating one aspect of a complicated poem and an inspiring example of how an ancient Greek text can serve a modern reader struggling with her own life and times’.56 Similarly, Oliver Taplin says that Weil’s essay ‘was not written for scholars and is not argued in the academic mode: it none the less conveys a fundamental understanding of the *Iliad*.57 Susan Sontag, reviewing a collection of Weil’s essays in 1963, compares the respectful reader of Weil to Alcibiades’ courting of Socrates. We are, Sontag says, moved and nourished by Simone Weil’s seriousness, as we acknowledge ‘the presence of mystery in the world’, mystery that ‘the secure possession of the truth, an objective truth, denies’. Weil, she says, ‘as a historical writer is tendentious, exhaustive and infuriatingly certain’. Few of her readers, Sontag says, probably share her ideas, and we need not share her extreme views on religion, asceticism, and history to admire her ‘scathing originality’, her ‘personal authority’, her ‘seriousness’, and her ‘manifest willingness to sacrifice’ herself for her truths. All these things are more important than her views.58

In Simone Weil’s ‘The *Iliad* or the Poem of Force’, then, we get a stark, one-sided view of war, of heroism, and of the relationships between

54 Clarke (1981) 293.
55 Weil says, in a letter to Jean Posternak in regard to T.E. Lawrence’s *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, ‘never since the *Iliad* . . . has a war been described with such sincerity, with such a total absence of heroic rhetoric’ (Pétrremont (1976) 329).
people of different genders, ranks, and ethnic groups; of what it means to be a part of a community at war. As in the case of Alice Oswald or Christopher Logue, Weil gives us a compelling view of Homer's *Iliad* unlike any we have seen before. Whether we agree or disagree is hardly the point.
Jacqueline de Romilly was not just a female classicist but a collector of 'firsts' among female classicists, at least in France, as was noted in all the obituaries and tributes that appeared at her death in December 2010.\(^1\)

Born in 1913, she was the first girl to win a prize in the Concours Général (a nationwide competition for secondary school students) coming first in 'version latine' (translation from Latin to French) and second in Greek.\(^2\)

The occasion was marked by this photograph of her at the Sorbonne holding the books she received as her prize. [FIG. 20.1] De Romilly subsequently became one of the first women to study at the prestigious Ecole Normale Supérieure at the rue d’Ulm in Paris, the first female member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres in 1975, succeeding the linguist Pierre Chantraine, and the first female professor at the Collège de France in 1989.\(^3\)

1 See, for example, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/culture-obituaries/books-obituaries/8287232/Jacqueline-de-Romilly.html (consulted 29 December 2014), the obituary by Monique Trédé published in the journal of the Ecole Normale Supérieure, Archicube 13 bis (February 2013) and available at http://www.archicubes.ens.fr/lassociation/m%C3%A9moire-normalienne/notices/jacqueline-david-%C3%A9pouse-de-romilly-1933l (consulted 29 December 2014) and Bouvier (2011). I would like to thank Monique Trédé, Alexandre Grandazzi, and Pierre Ducrey for taking the time to answer my questions and to elucidate various aspects of de Romilly’s life and activities as an academic and teacher.

2 It is worth noting that composing a French ‘version’ is an art: a good version has to be accurate, reflecting the development of the thought in the original, while standing as a work of literary merit in its own right.

3 At the time of writing, there are six female professors at the Collège de France out of a total of forty.
remains one of only seven women ever to have been elected to that august institution to this day. Even here, she became a first of sorts in that, unlike Yourcenar who had refused to wear the Academicians’ green and gold suit, de Romilly had hers specially adapted with a skirt to replace the trousers and an embroidered handbag instead of the traditional sword (subsequent female academicians have opted for the sword though, as Margaret Thatcher showed, the handbag can have martial connotations of its own). As her positions at the Collège de France and the Académie Française show, she was well known far beyond the walls of academia and her own discipline of classics. In particular, her vigorous campaigns for the importance of classical Greek language, literature, and culture brought her to the attention of a wide audience in France, Greece—where she was awarded honorary citizenship—and beyond.

De Romilly herself pointed out in late interviews that many of her ‘firsts’ were due to an accident of history: all these doors were opening to
women just as she arrived at them. It is certainly true, as we shall see later, that the twentieth century brought with it a widening of female access to education and, in particular, to fields such as classics that had previously been male preserves. Being born in 1913, however, also meant that de Romilly’s personal—and to some extent her professional—life was deeply marked by two World Wars. This was true of her whole generation but these conflicts had a particularly profound impact on her life: the first killed her father, Maxime David, who died at the Somme in 1914, while the second deprived her temporarily of her profession and forced her into hiding because of the Vichy régime’s racial laws as, despite her aristocratic sounding name, in Vichy France she was technically Jewish both through her father and by marriage.

All this makes de Romilly a complex figure to present. I have chosen to treat her academic achievements first before tackling then the altogether more complicated task of discussing her personal life, which she guarded carefully during her lifetime, and then turning to the interplay between the personal and the academic in her work. The personal, I think, turns out to permeate the scholarly and this is why I will return to certain aspects of de Romilly’s life and work, examining them from these different angles.

Opening doors

De Romilly’s life serves as an illustration of women’s increasing access to Greek and to education in early twentieth-century France. 1930, the year in which she won her prizes at the Concours Général, was the very first year in which girls were allowed to compete (what the male competitors thought about this, and about her success, does not seem to have been recorded). The fact that she was equipped to enter the Greek competition at all was due to the introduction of Greek into girls’ schools just a few years earlier when she was in the third year of secondary school (the centralized organization of the French education system means that changes like this generally take place across the board rather than being the initiative of individual schools). Because there was no tradition

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4 See the documentary entitled *Jacqueline de Romilly: La vigie grecque*, directed by Bernard Jourdain (2008).
of teaching Greek at her school, or at any other girls’ school, male teachers had to be brought in especially for the lessons.

The success of the young Jacqueline David in the Concours Général was an event of national importance and she herself said that it was the achievement that she was most proud of in her life. She was certainly in illustrious company: the list of previous winners is like a Paris street directory or library catalogue—Léon Blum, Jean Jaurès, Raymond Poincaré, and Baudelaire, André Maurois, Alfred Jarry, Jean Giraudoux, and Semprun. To this day, Jacqueline de Romilly is the only woman named on the list of famous prize-winners on the concours website even though many prizes have been won by female competitors since then.5 At the time, her achievement was celebrated in articles in the press, carefully collected in a book by her mother.6 A contrasting photograph taken at the same time showed her with a saucepan in her hand. It was taken by the 1930s version of the paparazzi who besieged her flat demanding photographs, Jacqueline’s mother only relented when they said that they wanted a domestic picture of her in the kitchen.7

Her other firsts also reflected the greater presence of woman in society and in education but, at first, this progress, at least as far as the academic world was concerned, was far from linear. De Romilly herself was one of two girls among the thirty students accepted into the Ecole Normale Supérieure on the rue d’Ulm in Paris in 1933. At that time, girls usually attended the Ecole Normale de Jeunes Filles, situated outside Paris at Sèvres, which was set up in the late nineteenth century to train female teachers for the newly created secondary schools for girls but, because Greek was not taught at Sèvres, de Romilly was allowed to take her place at the rue d’Ulm alongside her male counterparts.8 In de Romilly’s day, the Ecole de Sèvres prepared its students for a lesser teaching exam which only qualified them to teach in the equivalent of secondary school up to

6 De Romilly can be seen talking about this book and looking through it near the beginning of the documentary Jacqueline de Romilly: La vigie grecque.
7 De Romilly and Grandazzi (2003), 12–13.
8 For a thorough and illuminating overview of the gender differences in the exam system and in the Ecoles normales in the twentieth century, see Efthymiou, (2003). Between 1910 and 1939, forty-one girls were able to take advantage of the lack of any regulation specifically excluding them from the rue d’Ulm until this loophole was closed; see Efthymiou (2003), paragraph 7. De Romilly herself explains the situation briefly in her interview with Alexander Grandazzi: de Romilly and Grandazzi (2003), 12–15.
GCSE in British terms so any girl with serious academic ambitions and ability would take the entrance examination for the rue d’Ulm with her male contemporaries in the hope of a post in a lycée, teaching students in the final three years of secondary education, or at a university. The division between male and female was therefore one of academically constructed gender rather than biological sex. In later years, until the fusion of the two schools in 1985, the introduction of Greek at Sèvres meant that girls were again educated separately in classics. De Romilly’s contemporaries at Sèvres studied for the less prestigious teaching qualifications reserved for women, she, however, was able in 1935 to sit the same competitive exam (‘concours’), the Agrégation de Lettres, as her male contemporaries and her success qualified her to teach French literature, Latin, and Greek at the lycée. She taught in schools before and after the war, as many French academics still do at the beginning of their careers, and was awarded a PhD in 1947. Her first university post was at Lille from 1949 to 1957, then she taught at the Sorbonne from 1957 to 1973, the year of her election to the Collège de France (a chair she held concurrently with visiting positions in universities in the United States). By all accounts, De Romilly saw her sex as being as much of an accident as her Jewishness and referred to herself consistently in the approved masculine form as ‘un professeur’, never resorting to the increasingly widespread feminine form, ‘une professeure’ (a usage that has not been recognized by the Académie française of which she herself was a member).

De Romilly the Author

By the time of her death in 2010 Jacqueline de Romilly had published fifteen books with University presses alongside countless articles. In later life she began a campaign to promote Classical Greek language and

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9 De Romilly commuted to this job from her home in Paris and remarked that the train between Paris and Lille was like an interdisciplinary seminar where all the Paris-based professors met and talked; De Romilly and Grandazzi (2003), 40–1.

10 Her book on *Time in Greek Tragedy* was the published version of a series of lectures given at Cornell in 1967.

11 The move to feminize titles and names of professions is not recent. The French feminist Hubertine Auclert proposed it in *Le radical* of 18 April 1898, recalling similar demands made by women during the French Revolution; see Taieb (2005), 31.

culture which saw her publish many volumes on the subject of education, alongside popularizing works on Greek culture and on particular figures in ancient history and literature. She also started a vigorous campaign to defend the study of Greek, Latin, and French literature in schools, aided by her status as a member of the Académie française and by her popularity as an author on ancient Greece. In 1992 she set up an association (‘Sauvegarde des Enseignements Littéraires’ or SEL) to save the teaching of literature (‘lettres’) in French schools which is still active.

Among her major publications, the first in terms of chronology and, many would say in quality, was her work on Thucydides: her thesis, defended and published in 1947 as *Thucydide et l’impérialisme athénien*, followed by *Histoire et raison chez Thucydide* in 1956, and the Budé edition of the historian with facing translation which appeared in several volumes between 1953 and 1972. These were followed by works on tragedy, the history of ideas, rhetoric, and Athenian democracy. Her more popularizing books began to appear in the late 1980s. These took the form of biographies of attractive and intriguing figures from Greek literature and history, such as *Alcibiade ou les dangers de l’ambition* (*Alcibiades: the Dangers of Ambition*) in 1995 and *Hector* in 1997, and arguments for the importance of ancient Greece in the modern world, such as *Pourquoi la Grèce?* (*Why Greece?*) in 1992, that went along with her campaigning work to save the study of Greek, Latin, and French literature. In these later works the personal voice of the passionate Hellenist emerges. It was this passion and her deep conviction that the ‘luminosity’ of Ancient Greece, the triumph of reason and tolerance that it embodied, could and should be a beacon to modern Europe that made her a national figure in Greece as well as in France and earned her honorary Greek nationality in 1995.
Alongside the lengthy list of academic and popular publications on Greek history, literature, and culture, there were more personal works whose existence makes it both easier and more ethical to talk about the life of a woman who, by all accounts, was gracious and friendly but not given to speaking about her private life. *Une certain idée de la Grèce* (A Certain Vision of Greece), published in 2003, consists of a series of interviews on her life and work with her former student, then colleague, Alexandre Grandazzi. The stream of publications (produced with great difficulty as her eyesight failed) did not stop with her death: in accordance with her instructions, a book that she had written about her mother, the novelist Jeanne Malvoisin David in 1977, entitled simply *Jeanne*, appeared in 2011. The book was written as a form of therapy after Jeanne’s death and only circulated among a small circle of close friends and family. One of these friends, the publisher Bernard de Fallois, who brought out most of her late works, encouraged her to publish and she agreed on condition that the book only appeared after her death.  

Another posthumous publication was *Ce que je crois* (What I believe) written in 1974 in the wake of the events of May 1968 when France was convulsed by widespread student unrest and left-wing demonstrations that permanently marked the political and cultural landscape. Unlike many of her colleagues in French universities, de Romilly saw the events of 1968 and particularly their impact on French culture and society more as a threat than as a new dawn. This book contains her reflections on ‘what the experience of the Greeks can help us to believe in the year of change 1974’. What they could teach, according to this book, was resilience, a belief in life and what it had to offer in the face of the horrors of war. These posthumous publications mean that it is easier to talk about her private life, and her personal beliefs, now than it would have been at any point during her long life.

Before venturing into the personal, however, I will discuss her academic career, books, and teaching. As she relates vividly in *Jeanne*, the Second World War represented a hiatus in de Romilly’s professional...
life. First she was forbidden to teach by the Vichy government’s racial laws that went further, in this respect, than the German authorities themselves and thus found herself excluded from the teaching career she loved. Later in the war when the Germans occupied the whole of France, she was forced into hiding. On her return to Paris, she went straight back to the library at the Ecole Normale where she found an eminent professor in a fury at not being able to get his hands on the latest volume of the journal *Gnomon*. As she said in a late interview, it was both absurd, compared to the dangers she had just survived, and a touching sign of normality. Just three years after the liberation, in 1947, she produced her thesis *Thucydide et l’impérialism athénien* followed by *Histoire et raison chez Thucydide* in 1956.

It is not possible, in the space of a single chapter, to do justice to de Romilly’s rich academic output so, in what follows, I will try to characterize it in broad terms. In terms of method, the great contribution of her thesis was in its literary approach to the work of Thucydides which until then had been studied either as a purely historical document or from an analytical point of view (in the sense of the analytical approach to Homer) trying to distinguish layers of composition. De Romilly’s particular achievement was, through her careful analysis of the vocabulary and ideas, to find unity in the speeches, connections between pairs of speeches and interactions between the speeches and the narrative i.e. to approach it as a literary unit. To do this, she applied similar skills to those that won her the prize at the Concours Général and opened academic doors in her early years: a careful attention to language, details of vocabulary, and to the structure both of sentences and of longer passages. These qualities would have been further developed under the guidance of her supervisor, Louis Bodin, a traditional philological scholar who never wrote a thesis himself but whose articles show that same concern for the precise sense of words and the interaction between individual words and the overall structure of the sentence. These are qualities which still characterize the French approach to classics and are enshrined in the agrégation and other nationally set exams.

18 De Romilly describes her experiences during the war in her book about her mother, who was with her; see de Romilly (2011), 172–97.

19 This and other interviews referred to are included in the documentary *Jacqueline de Romilly: la vigie grecque*. 
The danger of habits of minute analysis is, of course, that they can remain just that: precise observations of details. De Romilly’s work on Thucydides, however, goes far beyond this to propose what Gomme characterizes in a review published in 1949 as a ‘detailed and profound’ study of Athenian imperialism and its development from Pericles to Alcibiades that is closely interwoven with a study of Thucydides’ attitudes towards it.\(^{20}\) This was traditional rigorous philology combined with the history of ideas, in particular the ideas of the author, Thucydides, and of politics. This practice of using precise attention to vocabulary as a way into the ideas contained within a text was something that she passed on, in turn, to her students.

Thucydides remained de Romilly’s first interest and one that was intimately interwoven with her youth as will be explored in more detail later. But he was certainly not the only classical author she worked on. In the late 1950s and early 1960s (coinciding with her tenure at the Sorbonne) she turned her attention to tragedy starting with *La crainte et l’angoisse dans le theatre d’Eschyle* (*Fear and Anxiety in the Theatre of Aeschylus*) in 1958, an analysis of the depiction of the phenomena of fear and apprehension that she found to be expressed with particular vividness, as both psychological and physiological phenomena in Aeschylus. In *L’Evolution du pathétique: d’Eschyle à Euripide* (*Developments in the Representation of Emotion and Suffering from Aeschylus to Euripides*) in 1961, she broadened her perspective to compare the ways in which the three tragedians (though Sophocles plays a minor role), represented suffering and the acts that cause it, ranging from spectacular effects to the expression of uncertainty by a character. The evolution in question is identified as a shift from Aeschylus’ interest in action to Euripides’ focus on the psychological effects of those actions; the approach is resolutely literary and centred on the authors: differences in the treatment of the deaths of Hippolytus in Euripides and Heracles in Sophocles are put down to questions of individual choice by authors and not, for example, to differences in the status of these two heroes.

*Time in Greek Tragedy*, published first in English in 1968 and based on a series of lectures given at Cornell in the previous year, attempted to identify each tragedian’s philosophy of time, examining its role in the

\(^{20}\) Gomme (1949), 17.
dramatic structure as well as metaphors and other expressions of time. De Romilly also remained interested in political thought, applying her analytical approach to the meanings of words to her treatment of nomos (law or custom) and hubris (arrogant or excessive thought or behaviour) in *La loi dans la pensée grecque* (*The Law in Greek Thought*) in 1971 and was one of the first to attempt to rehabilitate the Sophists, most notably with *Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece*, published in 1975, on the power of the word in Greek thought and its domestication by philosophers and orators.

This last book was published while she held the chair of Greece and the Formation of Moral and Political Thought (the title of each chair is specifically designed for its occupant) at the Collège de France. It was her seminars there that gave rise to the book that was perhaps most characteristic of her later academic work: *La Douceur dans la pensée grecque* (*Gentleness in Greek Thought*) published in 1979. It is impossible to find a single English equivalent to ‘douceur’ whose range of meaning encompasses ‘gentleness’, ‘compassion’, and ‘softness’, as well as, quite literally, ‘sweetness’ and de Romilly freely admits in the introduction to the work that there is no single Greek term that shares the same range of meaning. The Greek concepts are varied, from *epieikeia* (reasonableness or fairness) and *praotēs* (mildness) to *philanthropia* (benevolence towards others). Above all, she aimed to counterbalance the prevailing image of the Greeks as warlike and driven by the ceaseless competition to be the best, *aristoi*. Interestingly, she makes an explicit link between this work and other studies by female classicists of the ‘softer’ qualities of Greek culture: Helen North’s *Sophrosyne* (1966) and Grace Macurdy’s *The Quality of Mercy* (1940) though the latter is cited as an example of the dangers of trying to encompass too much in a single volume.21 This study exemplifies the main currents that de Romilly would go on to develop: the search for evidence of ancient moral and political thought in texts (this time she dramatically extends her range to include Plutarch and the early Christians), the desire to see universal values embodied in Greek culture and to see these values perpetuated in the Greece of her day.22

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21 De Romilly (1979), 2, n.2. Carl Von Erffa’s 1937 study of *aidōs* (a term with a wide range of meaning encompassing reverence, respect, and shame) is also mentioned.

22 Ibid., 4: ‘On ne peut... pas mettre le pied dans la Grèce actuelle sans retrouver des survivances de cet idéal, qui a résisté à toutes les misères et à toutes les secousses de
The Collège de France, to which de Romilly was elected in 1973, is simultaneously a hothouse of research and a disseminator of information to the general public. The lectures are open to all and sundry. De Romilly’s desire to communicate her subject to a wider world is evident even in academic books like *L’Évolution du pathétique d’Eschyle à Euripide*, published in 1961, which is entirely free from untransliterated Greek. It is even more evident in the openly popularizing books like *Hector* and *Alcibiade or Pourquoi la Grèce* that belong to the last phase of her work. These are not academic works, instead they are intensely vivid and personal sketches of the characters—in the case of Alcibiades almost a historical novel—full of direct addresses to the reader. I have to admit that I was intensely disappointed with *Alcibiade* the first time I opened it but I realize now that that was because I was reading it for entirely the wrong reasons. I was looking for a French equivalent of David Gribble’s (1999) rigorous analysis of the depiction of Alcibiades in various sources for a course I was teaching. If I had read the introduction first, as I should have done, I would have realized that de Romilly had set out to present this figure to a general reader with a minimum of explicit analysis of sources. Her book *Hector* is written in a similar vein and clearly achieves her aim of making the *Iliad* accessible to non-specialists, like this French reader who posted the following statement in English in 2007: ‘Finishing this book left me in a state of euphoria... It gave me the feeling (oh, I know that it’s only illusory and transitory), that the *Iliad* was wide open to me and gave out all its secrets. It sounds very presumptuous to write that I felt as if I understood everything about the *Iliad*, because obviously I don’t, but I got some essential keys, and it made my reading a lot more enjoyable.’ De Romilly’s own aims in these works went further, however: she set out to provide an example of behaviour to the young (a very Platonic view of reading). Her popularizing works on Athenian democracy present it as a model for the modern world, an ideal of debate and
free enquiry, where polytheism ensured a certain degree of tolerance. This phase of her work is one that she openly qualifies as ‘propaganda’ for Ancient Greece.26

Reading or re-reading de Romilly’s academic and autobiographical works, I am struck by a series of contradictions or apparent contradictions. First, there is the contrast between the minute analysis of the thesis and the broader brush that characterizes her later work, not only the overtly popularizing publications. This is paralleled by the marked contrast between her clear sighted analysis and her admiration of Thucydides for his own perspicuity and reason and the idealization of the ancient world that characterizes the later work. All this makes it impossible to ignore the link between the personal and the scholarly, the psychological and the scientific. A further apparent paradox is the contrast between her unwillingness to talk about herself and the deeply personal nature of much of her work, not to mention the intimate posthumous revelations about her family and her life.

De Romilly and Athens

As far as the idealization of Classical Greece (i.e. mostly Athens) and Greek democracy goes, that can be explained by the desire to proselytize, to present the ideal despite the fact that this meant leaving out aspects of the system that have become crucial to our understanding of ancient Athens. However, the search for the exemplary led to a great deal of glossing over tensions and contradictions in classical Athenian society in the later work. Athenian democracy is held up again and again as an ideal, Eumenides, for example, is extolled as celebration of that democracy and its fundamental principle the rule of law. ‘Is it possible to find a more determined, noble and regal endeavour than that which allows Athena, through her persuasive skills, to induce the Erinyes to set aside their wrath?’ she asks, leaving aside the many questions raised by Athena’s intervention.27 In her work on Thucydides, however, de Romilly had analysed the dire consequences for Athens of its pursuit of Empire and no one could claim that she was unaware of the restrictions and exclusions

26 De Romilly and Grandazzi (2003), 204.
27 De Romilly (2012), 70: ‘Est-il effort plus obstiné, plus noble, plus royal, que celui par lequel Athéna, grâce à la persuasion, obtient des Erinyes qu’elles renoncent à leur courroux.’
that limited Athenian democracy. In fact, her book *Problèmes de la démocratie grecque* (*Ancient Greek Democracy and its Problems*), published in 1975, was a study of the ancient critiques of democracy and its dangers—anarchy, the blind passions of the mob—which identified education as the remedy.28 The fact that women, not to mention slaves, were entirely excluded from the Athenian democratic process is merely acknowledged in passing, just as de Romilly acknowledges the fact that the right to speak at the Athenian assembly was likely in practice to have been limited to an elite group. All this is said but the implications are not followed through. There is no attempt (that I have found) to reflect on what it must have meant for Athenian society to be predicated on the violence and degradation implicit in slavery and in the subjection of women, to think of the whole as a structure in which each element is affected by what happens elsewhere in the system.

I have asked former students about this lacuna in her presentation of democracy and they have said that it became a bit of a joke—when she spoke about democracy, visitors would often ask ‘What about slavery?’, or ‘What about the position of women?’ and would be politely and charmingly batted away: these were details that didn’t matter, gender in particular was irrelevant. Her emphasis on the rational and positive aspects of Athenian culture was born of a desire to provide an inspiring and improving example to the modern reader.29 The suggestion, for example, that education is the key to a successful and peaceful democracy, free from demagoguery, has clear modern resonances and chimes with de Romilly’s own campaigning activities. But the question remains of how we are to reconcile this authorial persona, whose rose-tinted vision of ancient Athens can at times seem to be the result of pure naivety, with the perspicacious and intellectually rigorous author of the work of Thucydides. Her selective vision strikes me as particularly ironic in a scholar whose great breakthrough lay in the way she could detect patterns within a text and the importance of the dependency on the relationship of the parts for our appreciation of the whole.

28 This book has even been taken up by the French Royalist movement: http://www.allianceroyale.fr/articles/doctrine/132-problemes-de-la-democratie-athenienne- (consulted 29 December 2014).

29 It is interesting to note that an emphasis on morality was a characteristic of the women’s training given at the Ecole Normale de Sèvres which de Romilly had avoided by getting into the male establishment on the rue d’Ulm.
One of her former students, Monique Trédé, provided the key to this apparent contradiction: de Romilly was acutely aware of the tensions and contradictions running in every direction beneath the surface of her ideal Athens. She was interested, however, precisely in the ideals, and not in the realities. This is a focus that sits far more easily in the French system where ‘Lettres Classiques’ are often separate from Ancient History and Archaeology and the alternative visions of the ancient world that they can give us.30 Despite her personal friendship with Jean-Pierre Vernant, she was not drawn to the darker and stranger ancient world to which his anthropological approach to Antiquity gave rise. Her interpretation was consciously idealistic and humanist.31 This was certainly a question of academic method and of personal and intellectual choice, rather than of date, since Roger Caillois was her exact contemporary (although he died in 1978) and Vernant himself was only a year younger than she was.32

Her work raises important questions for all professional Hellenists: what sort of image of Greece should we be trying to project? Should we be looking for the exemplary and should we emphasize its sameness or its otherness? Should the needs (or perceived needs) of the modern world take precedence over the full portrayal of Antiquity with all its darker sides? In relation to de Romilly herself, however, it is difficult to avoid looking for explanations for this idealism in the circumstances of her life, particularly when her book about her mother (and thus about her own

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30 This focus on the ‘great books’ of classical literature around which the school curriculum was, and still is, based sometimes earned her the criticism of contemporary scholars who found her methods and the body of texts she studied too restricted and too redolent of the classroom.

31 De Romilly discusses this difference in approach between those who insist on the alterity of Greek culture and those, like herself, who see continuities in her interviews with Grandazzi. Her answer is that there were a series of ‘ruptures’ but that Greek thought is characterized by its universal character. De Romilly and Grandazzi (2003), 256–7. For the contrast drawn by Paul Veyne, in an article originally published in 1991, between Vernant and Foucault on the one hand and de Romilly and the liberal political philosopher Raymond Aron on the other, see Leonard (2005), 44.

32 Despite this fundamental difference in approach from Vernant—she saw their approaches as complementary rather than contradictory and certainly encouraged her students to go to Vernant’s lectures and in 1999 (when they were both well into retirement) they sent a joint letter to Le Monde in defence of classical studies published on 20 February 1999.
childhood and young adulthood overshadowed by the two World Wars) appeared after her death.

The Professor and the woman

This last area—the link between the personal and the professional—is the most difficult of all because she was not given to talking about personal things in her life, such as her Jewish origin and connection by marriage, and yet her memoir of her mother, Jeanne, is extremely intimate and opens a window, a crack at least, onto de Romilly herself. Of the posthumous books, this is the one that is by far the most revealing. Jacqueline was brought up by her mother single handed after her father Maxime David, a brilliant young philosopher from a long-established French Jewish family was killed on his first day at the Somme in 1914. He had been gradually caught up in the spirit of the war and ended up joining the army voluntarily and leaving for the Front with a friend. He was killed the moment he stepped out of the trench but it was years before Jeanne found out that she was a widow. After the war, she returned to Paris with her young daughter and found office work through connections before becoming a successful novelist publishing under the name Jeanne Maxime-David. The young Jacqueline therefore grew up with a working mother whom she saw writing constantly. She makes clear how difficult it was for a respectable woman to live alone and to keep herself in the interwar years, but also paints a picture of an idyllic household kept by an infinitely resourceful and charismatic woman who kept up numerous friendships (and perhaps some liaisons) with members of Parisian literary society until the war forced her to leave Paris. (Jeanne seems never to have picked up all the threads of her former life when she returned after the war in her mid-fifties and became dependent on her daughter as their roles were reversed.)

It is in this book too that de Romilly explains very briefly how she acquired the name we know her by. In 1940, she married the publisher Michel Worms de Romilly, a member of a branch of an important banking family with a long presence in France (the family name was apparently adopted in the early nineteenth century). 1940 was not the best moment for a half Jewish woman to marry a man who was three-quarters Jewish himself and the result was that, when the racial laws were introduced by Vichy France following France's capitulation, she and her husband had, as
she put it, one Jewish grandparent too many between them. She also notes that, whereas her mother had married a Jewish man out of a spirit of provocation (not long after the Dreyfus affair), she had married a Jew by accident—the Worms de Romillys were so assimilated that Jacqueline and Michel’s wedding took place in a Catholic Church. The marriage ended in divorce in 1973. There were no children, something that was evidently a source of sadness in later life as she made clear in her conversations with Alexandre Grandazzi:

To have been Jewish under the Occupation, finishing my life alone, almost blind, without children or family, is that so marvellous? It would be madness to claim that I have been perfectly satisfied with my life! But my life as a teacher has been, from beginning to end, the one that I wished for.

The influence of her mother, Jeanne, was considerable, they lived together or close by all her life, even after her marriage. In a late interview she gives her mother full credit for the elegant dress she is wearing in the photograph taken at the time of her triumph at the Concours Général. She even attributes her interest in Thucydides to her mother. Although Jeanne herself had no interest in the author, she had found an old edition of the Greek text with a facing translation (in Latin) in 1933 and the young Jacqueline spent her summer lying in a meadow near their holiday home reading the historian in the sun. This piece of maternal serendipity launched her career. It is tempting, too, to make a connection between her mother’s success as a novelist and author and the daughter’s concern

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33 De Romilly (2011), 174–5. She adds elsewhere that, when she and her husband returned to Paris at the end of the war and tried to take advantage of the priority given to those who had suffered under the racial laws when they got their telephone reconnected, they were unable to prove to the employee’s satisfaction that they were in fact Jewish. De Romilly and Grandazzi (2003), 19.

34 Alfred Dreyfuss, a Jewish officer in the French army, was wrongly accused of selling military secrets to Germany and found guilty of treason in 1895 before finally being exonerated in 1906 after a vigorous campaign involving leading cultural and political figures. The case revealed the widespread nature of anti-Semitic sentiment in the French establishment.

35 De Romilly and Grandazzi (2003), 260: ‘Avoir été juive pendant l’Occupation, finir seule, presque aveugle, sans enfants et sans famille, est-ce vraiment sensationnel? Prétendre que tout dans ma vie m’a parfaitement plu tiendrait du délire! Mais ma vie de professeur a été, d’un bout à l’autre, celle que je souhaitais.’

36 Students note that, later in her life, she paid no attention to her appearance at all which is the impression one gets from her wild hair in later photographs.

to open up her work and what she calls over and over again ‘her Greeks’ (‘mes Grecs’) to a wider audience. Those who knew her well as a teacher and saw her lecture remarked on her charisma and presence and the fact that—unusually for a Professor—she used to come down from the lectern and walk through the rows of seats as she spoke. This theatricality is another link to Jeanne whose greatest ambition, never fully realized, was to have a play staged. Jacqueline might even have had a stage career herself: one of her mother’s theatrical friends asked one day if she could replace a child actor who was ill in a play in a Parisian theatre and this almost happened until her mother started to worry that she might catch the other girl’s illness from wearing the same costume.  

Jeanne, then, was a charismatic communicator but not an academic (though she had studied). It was the father, Maxime David to whom the thesis is dedicated, who was the academic but he of course died when she was just one year old. In the end though, it was his footsteps that she followed in: he had gone to the Ecole Normale Supérieure, where he studied philosophy, and was just embarking on a thesis on an ancient Greek subject at the outbreak of the First World War. I am well aware of the dangers of engaging in amateur psychology but it is very difficult not to wonder how much this model might have motivated the young Jacqueline, left alone with her mother. Alexandre Grandazzi did put the question to her during their conversations, pointing out in particular that she chose to work on an author, Thucydides, who analysed two phenomena—War and Imperialism—that killed her father: ‘Was there not, perhaps at an unconscious level, in your choice [of thesis topic] a sort of search or even demand for an explanation regarding the immense loss for a child that is represented by the death of a father?’ It is a very good question indeed but de Romilly is not to be drawn. She replies ‘It’s a plausible and interesting hypothesis but I don’t think that I can accept it. You are talking about the unconscious and one can of course never be certain of what is happening there! I don’t believe at all, however, that it was as you suggest. Even though I lost my father at a very young age, I had a happy childhood.’ For the outside observer, however, it is very

38 De Romilly (2011), 94, where she notes ‘J’aurais peut-être été actrice, au lieu d’être professeur’ (‘I might have been an actress instead of an academic’).  
39 De Romilly and Grandazzi (2003), 51: ‘A.G. “N’y avait-il pas dans votre choix, peut-être inconsciemment, une espèce de recherche, de demande d’explication à l’égard de cette
difficult not to make a link between the figure of Hector, the archetypal loving father (more or less the only loving father) in Greek literature and de Romilly’s own father. Moreover, in 1914 Maxime David was planning to write a thesis on *aidōs* (the sense of shame or respect), the very emotion that compelled the Homeric Hector to abandon his wife and baby and return to the battle where he died (*Iliad* 6.441–3). I have not found any explicit connection made in her work and, of course, one doesn’t need to be the child of a dead World War 1 soldier to find the figure of Hector fascinating and compelling, but the reason why I am particularly tempted to make connections like this is because of the very personal nature of much of her writing.

It is clear from her writings and from interviews that de Romilly’s love for ancient literature and for teaching was indeed deeply personal. She says more than once in interviews at the end of her life that entering the classroom enabled her to shut the door on whatever troubles were going on elsewhere in her life and to focus on a text with her students. There are many clues in her work to this feeling that Antiquity is preferable to the modern world, often expressed in terms of the exemplarity of classical figures. Thus Hector is put forward openly as a model for young people in the late twentieth century, commenting on the Trojan prince’s exhortations to his troops, she talks about the importance of the word to the ancient Greeks: “It is moving to see how morality at the time, which was so widely based on the opinion of others, is constantly reinforced in speeches of praise, of advice and remonstrations. This aspect will survive in Plato. This din of words is not comparable to the blind yelling of our sports spectators. Rather, it is an encouragement to good and to generosity. Hector shows everyone the path of true courage. This is the reason why it is useful to read such texts in class.”

J. de R. “C’est une hypothèse plausible et intéressante mais je ne pense pas pouvoir y souscrire. Vous parlez de l’inconscient, et on ne peut certes pas jurer de ce qui se passe sur ce plan! Je ne crois pas du tout, cependant qu’il en ait été ainsi. D’abord parce que, si j’ai perdu mon père très jeune, j’ai eu néanmoins une enfance très heureuse.”

Again, it is not necessary to delve into de Romilly’s personal life to find a motivation for the idealization and selective presentation of democracy that we find in her work (particularly in the popularizing work, where such a selective approach is part of the rhetoric of the genre). I am struck, however, by two parallels: one between this selectiveness and her selectiveness in speaking about her childhood—was it really that idyllic and trouble free? The other is a visual image that emerges in her writing and in the various interviews conducted with her—that of luminosity. Ancient Greece, by which she means Athens, is luminous. First there is the metaphorical luminosity displayed in its clear-sighted application of human reason. Her first trip to Greece, evoked in a radio interview, was also marked in her mind by the literal luminosity of the Greek sun, and the French sunshine seems to have pervaded her memory of the first discovery of Thucydides during one long hot summer in the 1930s.

To return to the passage from Hector quoted on p. 394, this is a striking argument for literature’s function as a model for life, an idea that pervades her later work and underpins her views on the moral value of a classical education. At certain moments, one feels that the balance tips and literature becomes not a model but the lens through which life is lived. A knowledge of poetry, she suggests, (this applies to Victor Hugo as much as Virgil) can heighten one’s aesthetic appreciation of the referent when one encounters it, be it a flower or a certain time of day. The same can even apply to human emotions: de Romilly recalls (without giving any sense of the date) a ‘petite bonne’ (‘little housemaid’) who worked for her and who was pregnant by her boyfriend. De Romilly heard the young woman pleading on the phone and accidentally (one assumes) uttering a half of a twelve-syllable alexandrine verse: ‘Popaul tu es cruel’ (‘Oh Paul, you are so cruel’ would be an approximation). De Romilly describes how this accidental half verse, culminating in a term used by Racine (‘cruel’) ‘showed how far she was from Hermione and Phèdre but at the same time called them in some way to her aid and touched me. I was probably nicer to the girl after that.’

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41 See, for example, de Romilly (2012), 16–18, where light is identified as being at the heart of Greek aesthetics and the Greek passion for life; de Romilly and Grandazzi (2003), 36.

42 De Romilly (2011), 141 cf. de Romilly and Grandazzi (2003), 49–50 and 266.

43 De Romilly (2012), 94.

44 De Romilly, ibid.
had to be viewed through the lens of classical French tragedy to be fully perceptible.

It is revealing too that de Romilly’s output was almost exclusively devoted to classical Athens. With the exception of the final chapters of *La douceur dans la pensée grecque* and her general survey of Greek literature there is very little mention of Greek literature in the Roman period. This lacuna was not unusual for the period, but French scholarship in the 1950s was ahead in this respect. There is no explicit reflection on transmission (though she consulted manuscripts for the Budé edition of Thucydides) or on the many and varied processes that shaped our view of classical Athens: for example on the drastic selection of tragedies made not in order to leave an image of the best possible moral and political model for future generations but to satisfy the needs of Roman schoolrooms. A focus on these issues of transmission necessarily introduces a distance, a distance that de Romilly seems not to have wanted to admit into her vision of Greece and the Greeks.

**Conclusion**

De Romilly’s career was shaped by the changes that took place over the twentieth century and that allowed her to compete with men and to win and then to take her place in institutions like the Collège de France and the Académie française that are still male dominated. Like many of the women in this volume, her father was a classical scholar even if, unlike them, he was not able to contribute to his daughter’s education. De Romilly’s mother, Jeanne, had made her own place in the heart of the Parisian literary world so that the young Jacqueline was far from an outsider: the newspaper reports of her victory at the Concours Général announced that ‘The daughter of the novelist Jeanne David has ensured a brilliant start to female participation in this famous examination’.

De Romilly’s achievements were very much her own but her social

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Bompaire’s study of Lucian, *Lucien écrivain* was published in 1958. Lucian and Philostratos had attracted attention in France since the nineteenth century.


De Romilly and Grandazzi (2003), 2: ‘La fille de la romancière Jeanne David a inauguré de très brillante façon la participation féminine à la célèbre épreuve’.
and intellectual background is a further dimension to be taken into consideration.

Her academic _ktema es aei_ (everlasting accomplishment) is uncontestedly the work on Thucydides from the beginning of her career that opened up new domains of enquiry and demonstrated how essential a command of the language and literary structure of the text was to understanding the ideas expressed within it. It is ironic, given de Romilly’s own emphasis on the timelessness and universality of Classical Greece, how contingent much of the rest of her output now seems to be on its time and place: twentieth-century France with its particular delineation of the classics and, of course, with its particular place in the two World Wars. Like others of her generation, she saw the ancient world as a way of thinking through key political questions in post-war Europe but unlike Vernant, Vidal-Naquet and others both within and outside of classics, she did so from a standpoint that was resolutely humanist.49

Appendix

I once had a brief meeting with Jacqueline de Romilly. As an undergraduate doing a joint degree in French and Classics at Oxford, I found few opportunities to link the two fields but reading French scholarship was one. De Romilly’s work (I think it must have been _L’Evolution du Pathétique_) was on one of our reading lists (and the fact that she could have got onto an Oxford Reading list in the early 1980s is in itself a remarkable achievement). What’s more the copy in the Somerville library, probably donated by her, contained a note indicating that she was an honorary fellow of the college. So when I spent a year in Paris for the French part of my course I contacted her via Nan Dunbar, another formidable female classicist. She replied inviting me to come and see her at her apartment. I wish I could say we had a wonderful conversation about Greek literature but I was only an undergraduate and I don’t remember much of the detail. But she did do two very kind things. One was to arrange access to the library at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, the other was to hand me an invitation card to a ceremony at the Académie française. Looking through her biography I can now reconstruct

49 See the brilliant analysis of the political implications of structuralist approaches to the classics in post-war France in Leonard (2005).
that as the award of the Grand Prix de l’Académie française in 1984 for her work but, until then, all that I could remember was the august surroundings, the gentlemen in their green and gold suits and de Romilly herself who spotted me at one point in the audience and gave me one of her charismatic smiles. That was a sign of the kindness and attentiveness that are mentioned by people who knew her far better and for far longer, along with her presence, particularly her piercing look and her smile. I was aware at the time of what a privilege it was to be there, an experience that will never be repeated, but it’s only now thinking back that I realize quite how extraordinary it was for a British undergraduate to have been there.
Afterword
Keeping the Fountain in Flow

Rosie Wyles

Over twenty years ago, Nancy Rabinowitz acknowledged the inherent gender prejudice embedded in the philological focus of the discipline of Classics, observing that within this narrowly defined version of the field, ‘The patriarchy is very much in evidence as we diligently cite our forefathers.’ The very act of citing our forefathers on some level reinforces the now antiquated, though one suspects not entirely dead, essentialist myth that women’s brains are not biologically equipped to do ‘rigorous’ philology. Similarly, the history of our discipline, as it has been told so far, seems to lend further support to this construct. The studies presented here, focused as they are on our ‘foremothers’, distinguished female philologists from the Renaissance to the twentieth century, challenge the rhetoric (both past and present) which claims Classics (defined as philology) as an inherently male domain. Heightening awareness of our female foremothers in Classics enables both a re-writing of the history of the discipline and a reflection on its future.

1 Rabinowitz (1993) 8. I am grateful to the editors of the ‘Classical Presences’ series, Lorna Hardwick and Jim Porter, both for the suggestion of including this Afterword as well as advice on its content.

While in 1993 Rabinowitz advocated effecting change through contesting the narrow (philological) definition of the discipline, this volume adopts a ground-breaking alternative approach to the problem. As a collection it undermines the perception of classical philology as an intrinsically masculine province through a series of case studies which demonstrate women’s continuous participation in, and contribution to, the discipline since the Renaissance. While historically the contributions of the women featured in this volume were frequently marginalized and trivialized, their surviving works speak for themselves.

By recovering the lost achievements in exacting branches of classical scholarship, and assembling the remarkable outputs of women philologists as an intergenerational community, the volume scrutinizes and exposes the dangers of the rhetoric of female prodigy. The figure of the ‘woman genius’ actually works, by exceptionism, to ‘prove the rule’ of alleged near-universal female inadequacy at demanding intellectual analysis. It also marginalizes the significance of individual examples of female scholarly excellence by isolating them historically. The essays here insist, rather, on the demonstrable reality of women’s philological competence (often acquired against the odds) as well as their role in the history of Classics. Women have participated, however invisibly, in far more branches of classical philology, for far longer, than is usually assumed. The work of some of them has also been crucial in facilitating the work of all other philologists, men included: significant examples here include the lexical work of Ada Adler, the dictionary editing by Margaret Alford, and pioneering metrical studies of A.M. Dale. As Roland Mayer’s chapter on Alford highlights, these case studies invite us to reflect on the true meaning of the cultural ‘ownership’ of the prestigious intellectual property constituted by texts in classical Greek and Latin. Other studies in the volume draw attention to the instrumental role played by women in shaping the educational and institutional developments of the subject (Gloyn on Newnham women and Ronnick on African American women). The discipline’s self-definition as an integrally male territory is therefore exposed as a social and ideological construct, albeit one which has historically met success, and discovered a means of self-perpetuation, in keeping the majority of women out through educational disadvantage and the assertion of culturally constructed normative thinking about gender.

Such norms have, as the volume has repeatedly shown, resulted in both the limiting and shaping of women’s engagement with philology.
(see especially the chapters by McCallum-Barry and Wallace). This has often been a question of perceptions of intellectual territory, reinforced by notions of what it is ‘appropriate’ for a woman to work on (love poetry but not epic; translation but not textual criticism; Xenophon but not Thucydides). Moreover (and this needs to be proposed cautiously, given the danger that the approach can be misconstrued as essentialist), there is also the problem that responses to ancient texts may indeed be informed by culturally produced gender norms conditioning women to write and read/receive in a gendered way (Gold).

Yet, while seeking to establish patterns in the history of women’s engagement with classical philology (and to identify the strategies they adopted to negotiate the stumbling-blocks impeding their participation), the volume resists the assumption of a universal experience. The cultural, and historical, relativity and variety of gender as a social construct means that, across the collection, the norms being asserted are mutable and constantly evolving. This in turn alters both the opportunities available to women and the nature of their engagement with Classics. In some cases, the women we have discussed have been shown to have faced radically different experiences and idiosyncratic career trajectories entirely dependent on their individual circumstances and contingent historical situation (Wyles).

We recognize the pervasive ways in which both discrete scholarly skills and the study of canonical authors have been thoroughly gendered, producing a hierarchy in which ‘hard’, male, ‘scientific’ classical philology is privileged over a ‘soft’, more feminine Classics (Reception Studies themselves have often been characterized by traditionally trained as intellectually flimsy and belonging to the latter category). But it is also often helpful to identify ways in which women’s experiences as philologists have in fact been paired with or have even mirrored those of their male counterparts. As Hall shows, Henry and Sarah Fielding both wrote novels and they both translated ancient Greek authors; the parallelism and sense of sibling competition was felt keenly both by them personally and by the public who read their publications. Or take Fabre-Serris’ essay, for example, in which she argues that Dacier and Vivien make Sappho their own as women; her analysis is not an essentialist, ‘gynocritical’ one (to use Elaine Showalter’s definition of that term),\(^3\) insisting that women’s unmasculine

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responses to literature are somehow ‘neurologically’ hardwired. Rather, she acknowledges, with fruitful results, that neither philological practice nor translation can ever be ‘objective’ nor free of ideological cargo. Scholarship by men or women reflects both individual experience and cultural context, so that ancient authors are in a constant state of flux and reinvention, and the gender of the scholar is one variable among many others including, for example, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, and social class.

The correlation between the historical activities of male and female classicists is, of course, central to the volume’s line of enquiry. A critical issue here is whether women have been assimilated into the male domain of scholarship or whether they have attempted and even been successful in revising the paradigm (McManus on Macurdy). One issue that urgently needs examining is the extent to which the current downgrading of the profession of academic classicist, in terms both of social status and financial remuneration, is connected with the greater proportion of women joining the profession over the last few decades. Lecturing in classics has become much more visibly female at the junior level, although men still overwhelmingly dominate the prestigious posts at elite universities, and thus are paid better and wield more executive power through the ex officio committees and funding bodies of which they are slow to relinquish patriarchal control.

As we might expect, it is not possible to produce a simple linear narrative of progress from either the future-conscious or the historical perspective. Part of the complexity here is that, historically speaking, some exemplary females have been obscured and it is only by excavating them now that we can retrospectively use them to challenge the orthodox ‘Great Men’ narrative of the history of classical scholarship (see especially the essays by Wyles and by Braginskaya on Freidenberg). Indeed, the publication of this volume itself uses the study of these women (whether they conformed to norms or not in their own lifetime) to invite a revision of the dominant, male-centred paradigm.

This volume, it is hoped, only marks the beginning of the writing of the international history of women classical scholars. Further directions for future research in the area include the exploration of more women’s educational establishments and individual women (especially those listed in the Appendix to our Introduction). More work is desperately needed on the broader cultural contexts for female philological engagement.
with Classics within individual countries, following the model of the outstanding study by Winterer (2007). This is of particular importance to building a global understanding of differences in educational developments within different countries and also of variables and shifts in gender expectations, such as are exemplified here in McCallum-Barry’s chapter. The relationship between the strands of creative and academic engagement with Classics by women could also be profitably explored; Irwin’s study of Kathleen Freeman reveals a fascinating career which combined both. Many of the studies presented here have revealed the close relationship between women philologists and female empowerment (Hall), a phenomenon already highlighted fifteen years ago by Lorna Hardwick’s ground-breaking study of the nineteenth-century translators of Greek tragedy, Anna Swanwick and Augusta Webster. A sustained study of this relationship, especially across a geographical range, would be welcome. Similarly, women philologists as champions of widening public access to the ancient Greeks and Romans has emerged from this study as an area rich with potential (Hallett on Hamilton, Irwin on Freeman, Fowler on Radice, Webb on de Romilly). More detailed and archival research into the reception of women philologists and their works (after the model established by de Baar and Rang (1996) for van Schurman) would enhance our understanding of the history of philology (and women’s place within it) immeasurably.

Finally, while considerations of space have meant that this volume singles out specific women philologists, and while we hope that it encourages future research into individual biographical subjects, this is not without an awareness of the risks (carried by research dedicated to any aspect of the history of women) of their further academic marginalization. The objective is to put women at the centre, not the periphery, of the scholarly radar. It is hoped, therefore, that once a critical mass of research has been produced, to enable a full understanding of the role that women have played in the history and formation of the discipline of Classical

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4 The broader issue of the language used to construct and define gender is also important here; see Richardson and Robinson (1994).

philology, then, mirroring the fate of the discipline of gender studies itself, the study of women philologists should be assimilated into the mainstream history of scholarship. We want their inspiring portraits and smiling faces hanging on our ancestral walls alongside those of the men, not in a different building.
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