

A NEW RENAISSANCE? CLASSICS AT CORPUS CHRISTI IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

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ABSTRACT

The history of Classics at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, is followed from its renaissance foundation (1517) to a new scholarly renaissance in the 19th and 20th centuries. Three Fellows are identified whose work embodied a change from the use of Latin to the introduction of English: Thomas Cokayne, Basil Kennett, and Thomas Burgess. The 1850 Royal Commission led to significant changes in the status and organisation of Oxford colleges; these are related to changes in secondary schooling. The career of Arthur Sidgwick is taken as an illuminating case. The history of classical Chairs is considered, in particular the Corpus Chair of Latin first occupied by John Conington and later by Robinson Ellis, Henry Nettleship, and Eduard Fraenkel. The varieties of scholarship in the late 19th and 20th centuries are compared.

KEYWORDS

Corpus Christi College, Oxford; renaissance; Thomas Cokayne; Basil Kennett; Thomas Burgess; Mathematical Tripos; John Conington; Frederick Paley; Royal Commission; Tutors; Thomas Case; Arthur Sidgwick; Bertrand Russell; Liddell and Scott; Corpus Chair of Latin; Robinson Ellis; Henry Nettleship; Edward Hicks; Arthur Haigh; Classical Archaeology; Percy Gardner; Edward Perry Warren; Eduard Fraenkel; A.E. Housman; Kenneth Dover; Iris Murdoch; Ewen Bowie

The 500th anniversary of Corpus Christi College, Oxford was celebrated in 2017 with a conference whose papers were later published under the title *Renaissance College*.¹ The present paper argues that the renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was not the last renaissance to affect both Corpus Christi College and

¹ J. Watts (ed.), *Renaissance College: Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in Context, 1450–1600. History of Universities XXXII/1–2*, 2019. The present paper is based on a contribution to the 2017 conference which for obvious reasons was not included in the published volume, which dealt exclusively with an earlier period. My thanks to John Watts and Jas’ Elsner for the original invitation, and to Moti Feingold and Robin Darwall-Smith for help of various kinds. This paper is dedicated to Sheldon Rothblatt.

Classics.² It discusses what was seen in the nineteenth century as a potential new renaissance, this time not so much in culture as in scholarship; not within humanism, but within the humanities, in a period when they were being remapped and institutionalised. The resurgence of classical scholarship in the nineteenth century has often been seen as a result of the expanding interest in extra-textual fields such as history and archaeology; but there were, as we shall see, other kinds of scholarly renaissance.

This whole process was bound up with changes in the institutions and curricula of Oxford and Cambridge, and I shall keep an eye on this wider context, while maintaining a focus on Oxford, and especially on Corpus. I begin by briefly mentioning a few stepping-stones across the gulf between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries: the work of three members of Corpus Christi whose works share a striking feature that looks forward to the nineteenth century, the use of English. The first is Thomas Cokayne (1587–1638), whose dictionary of New Testament Greek was published twenty years after his death.³ This was the first Greek–English dictionary ever made, English glosses replacing the usual Latin; three years later, it was made to seem even more approachable by being reprinted under the title, *An English–Greek Dictionary*.⁴ This move away from Latin can also be glimpsed at Corpus, where the regular use of the language in the Hall died out in the reign of Charles II. The second member I want to mention is Basil Kennett, Fellow, Tutor, and finally (1714–15) President of the college, whose first book, published in 1696, reflected the linguistic transition in its title: *Romae antiquae notitia, or, The Antiquities of Rome*.⁵ A pioneering example of its genre, this was enormously successful, its eighteenth and final edition appearing as late as 1820. Kennett also translated several works into English from French, then the leading vernacular language of Europe. The third is Thomas Burgess (1756–1837), elected Fellow and Tutor in 1783, who had

² On the plurality of renaissances, see J. Goody, *Renaissance: One or Many?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); cf. P. Burke, ‘Jack Goody and the comparative history of renaissances’, *Theory, Culture and Society* 26 (2009), 16–31.

³ Cokayne’s membership is recorded in his *ODNB* entry, which relies on Wood’s *Athenae Oxonienses*. He is not mentioned in the college records, nor is he listed in Foster’s *Alumni Oxonienses*.

⁴ The Lexicon was published in 1658 as *A Greek English Lexicon, Containing the Derivations and Various Significations of All the Words in the New Testament* (London: L. Lloyd): for this and the 1661 retitled version (London: L. Lloyd), see J. Lee, *History of New Testament Lexicography* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2003), 88–92.

⁵ *Romae antiquae notitia, or, The Antiquities of Rome* (London: A. Swall and T. Child, 1696).

been publishing on classical subjects since he was an undergraduate.⁶ Burgess left Oxford in 1791 as chaplain to the bishop of Durham; he himself was later appointed bishop of St David's and then of Salisbury. He thus became an early example of that curious (largely nineteenth-century) phenomenon the Greek Play Bishop, an ecclesiastical dignitary appointed in part because of his classical scholarship.⁷ Among the publications overshadowed by his large theological output was the *Museum Litterarium Oxoniense* (n. 6), which appeared in two parts in 1792 and 1797. This was all that surfaced of an original plan for a quarterly classical journal which Burgess had offered to the Clarendon Press in 1791. The Delegates of the Press were not happy that one of the articles was written in English; ironically the Vice-Chancellor of the day, and so ex officio chairman of the Delegates, was John Cooke, President of Corpus. A century later, the Press was still unhappy about publishing both journals and translations into English.⁸

1. Introduction

During the lifetimes of these three men, from the 1580s to the 1830s, the locus of power in Oxford and Cambridge moved from the universities to their colleges. While life in continental universities revolved around faculties, professors and lectures, in England the tutoring of students in residential colleges moved to centre stage.⁹ By the early nineteenth century, most continental universities had been destroyed or reconstructed in the wake of the French Revolution and Napoleonic rule. Oxford and Cambridge, confessional and collegiate, remained untouched,

⁶ Burgess had had work printed at the Clarendon Press since 1778, and carried out commissions for the Delegates, e.g. on the *Marmora Oxoniensia*. His *Musei Oxoniensis litterarii conspectus: accedunt pro speciminibus Corayii emendationes in Hippocratem; Vulcanii, Casauboni, Uptoni, Sanctamandi, Jortini notae in Arist. de poet* appeared in 1792 (Oxford: J. Fletcher); his *Musei Oxoniensis litterarii speciminum fasciculus secundus: Quo continentur observationes in Hippocratem, Aristophanem, Herodotum, Platonem, Novi Foederis scriptores, & Horatium; et supplementum Tyrwhitti editionis Aristotelis libri de poetica* in 1797 (London: P. Elmsley et al.).

⁷ A. Burns and C.A. Stray, 'The Greek-play bishop: polemic, prosopography and nineteenth-century prelates', *Historical Journal* 54.4 (2011), 1013–38.

⁸ Stray, 'Classics', in S. Eliot (ed.), *The History of Oxford University Press. Volume II: 1780–1896* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 435–70, at 440 and 464.

⁹ L.W.B. Brockliss, 'The European university in the age of revolution, 1789–1850', in M.G. Brock and M.C. Curthoys (eds), *The History of the University of Oxford, Volume VI: Nineteenth-century Oxford, Part 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 77–133.

except in their conservative reaction, especially strong in Oxford, to the alarming developments across the Channel. The Oxford statutes of the 1800s setting up the first university degree examinations, in *literae humaniores* and in *scientia naturalis*, constituted a response to such moral alarms, and had disciplinary as well as intellectual motivations. It is relevant, I think, that in the 1790s a welcome was extended in Oxford to French priests fleeing revolutionary France.¹⁰ At that point, Cambridge already had a degree examination, the Senate House Examination, later known as the Mathematical Tripos, whose origins date to the early eighteenth century and which rested on the laurels of the university's local hero, Isaac Newton.¹¹ In Cambridge, the major concern in the 1800s about France was that the new-fangled analytical algebra developed there might invade its examinations and marginalise Newtonian calculus — something which began to happen in the following decade.¹² Cambridge's Anglicanism was of a more liberal variety than Oxford's: subscription to the 39 articles of the Church, for example, was demanded only on graduation, rather than at matriculation as at Oxford. The other major difference between the two universities was that the colleges exerted more influence at Oxford; something which persisted well into the twentieth century, when the combination of tutorial power and a largely humanistic curriculum remained a central feature till World War II.¹³

As this might suggest, there was a correlation between institutional structures and curricula. Oxford was dominated by its colleges and by the humanities teaching of college Tutors; in Cambridge the central examination-driven teaching of mathematics formed a powerful counterweight to collegiate Classics. Thus the two universities related differently to their feeder schools; until the end of the nineteenth century, the public schools' curricula were overwhelmingly classical, and pupils who went on to Oxford experienced more of the same, while in Cambridge they also had to struggle with mathematics, often from scratch.¹⁴ Until the 1850s

¹⁰ Several colleges gave them financial support, and OUP printed a Bible for their use: A. Flanders and S. Colclough, 'The Bible Press', in S. Eliot (ed.), *The History of Oxford University Press. Volume II: 1780–1896* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 357–402, at 356–7.

¹¹ J. Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment: Science, Religion and Politics from the Restoration to the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

¹² A. Warwick, *Masters of Theory: Cambridge and the Rise of Mathematical Physics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

¹³ J. Morrell, *Science at Oxford, 1914–1939: Transforming an Arts University* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁴ When John Wright entered Trinity College in 1813, his Tutor John Hudson told him, 'Don't be alarmed at your scanty progress in the mathematics. When I first

the classical honours examination could only be entered after passing the mathematics examination at a high level. What complicated this picture was that while in Cambridge the classical curriculum was till the 1870s dominated by the linguistic and literary training characteristic of the public schools, in Oxford the curriculum developed in a different way. In line with the alarms underlying the 1800 examination statute, it became a high-risk and high-ambition control mechanism, and was described as such by John Conington, in 1854 elected the first Corpus Professor of Latin.

Cambridge [...] imparts an education, valuable not so much for itself, as for the excellent discipline which prepares the mind to pass from the investigation of abstract intellectual truth to the contemplation of moral subjects. Oxford, on the contrary, seeks without any such medium to arrive at the higher ground at once [...] leading the mind, before it has been sufficiently disciplined, to investigate the highest and most sacred subjects at once.¹⁵

This denunciation of risky precocity was written while Conington was a sixth-former at Rugby, so was itself precocious.

The first part of the Oxford classical course led to Honour Moderations, an examination in literary texts, but the second part, *Literae Humaniores* or Greats, focused on ancient history and philosophy, though modern texts could also be used to illuminate the issues raised by ancient authors. In Cambridge, many students from public schools had no problems with the Classics, but could not cope with the mathematics they needed; in Oxford, they sailed through Mods, but often did badly in the unfamiliar fields of Greats, especially the philosophy.¹⁶

Collegiate culture encouraged immersion in Classics, as well as familiarity with Latin as the language of academic life, lectures, and disputations, though that was fading after 1800. Men soaked in classical

entered college, Sir, I knew less of them than you do.' J.M.F. Wright, *Alma Mater: or, Seven Years at the University of Cambridge* (London: Black, Young and Young, 1827), 6. Quoted from the modern edited reissue, C.A. Stray (ed.), *Student Life in Nineteenth-Century Cambridge; John Wright's Alma Mater* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2023), 2.

¹⁵ Letter of 19 May 1843, J. Conington, *Miscellaneous Writings*, ed. J.A. Symonds (London: Longmans Green, 1872), 1.xviii.

¹⁶ Mods (Honour Moderations, the first part of the classical course) largely replicated the sixth-form public-school curriculum.

literature quoted from it, as James Boswell said, ‘to produce an instantaneous strong impression’.¹⁷ They also composed in Latin and Greek, something relatively rare on the continent. A favourite occupation was capping quotations. In the early 1840s three Cambridge undergraduates went on a 12-mile walk, capping in Latin as they went, each from a different author.¹⁸ But it was one of those men, Frederick Paley, who a few years later wrote dismissively of this kind of literary immersion:

The revived-classic age is passing away. [...] Our idea of an accomplished man and a scholar is something far beyond that of an accomplished proficient in the dead languages. [...] It is [...] rare to meet with one of the venerable school of classical sexagenarians [...] who [...] spout Virgil over their soup at dinner, and Cicero and Seneca in their sermons. [...] The superficial and second-hand learning of the *renaissance* gave place to original processes of investigation.¹⁹

Paley went on to contrast this school with that of ‘the Germans and their English followers’; adding as a middle term the work of the Cambridge scholar Richard Porson and his followers, who focused on the critical study of Greek texts.²⁰ Such contrasts will re-emerge shortly.

¹⁷ ‘A highly classical phrase [may be used] to produce an instantaneous strong expression’: J. Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), 2.501 (April 1773), where the subject is the use of scriptural phrases in secular conversation. Cf. Stray, ‘Scholars, gentlemen and schoolboys: the authority of Latin in nineteenth- and twentieth-century England’, in C. Burnett and N. Mann (eds), *Britannia Latina: Latin in the Culture of Great Britain from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 194–208.

¹⁸ Thomas Whytehead, Frederick Paley and John Howson walked from Easingwold to York, quoting respectively from Virgil, Ovid and Horace: J. Howson, *Poetical Remains of Rev. Thomas Whytehead*, 1877, x. Whytehead became a missionary in New Zealand, translated the Bible into Maori and died aged 28. Paley, grandson of the famous William Paley of the *Evidences*, was expelled from his college on suspicion of encouraging conversion to Catholicism, converted in 1846, and became a private tutor and a prolific editor of classical texts. Howson became a headmaster, and later Dean of Chester. Cf. the Horatian stanza-completing competition between two later undergraduates, Henry Sidgwick and Edward Bowen, in 1858: A. and E.M. Sidgwick, *Henry Sidgwick: A Memoir* (London: Macmillan, 1906), 26; cf. Stray, *Classics Transformed: Schools, Universities, and Society in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 67.

¹⁹ F.A. Paley, ‘Classical studies as pursued in the English universities’, *The Rambler: A Catholic Journal and Review of Home and Foreign Literature, Politics, Science, Music, and the Fine Arts* 4 (1849), 357–71, at 357–8.

²⁰ Paley, *op. cit.*, 358. For Porson and his followers, see Stray, ‘The rise and fall of Porsonism’, *Cambridge Classical Journal* 53 (2007), 40–71. Paley himself was a follower of German scholarship: as an undergraduate he had (anonymously) translated

2. The 1850 Royal Commission and after

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Oxford was affected by state intervention in the form of a series of Royal Commissions, the first of which was established in 1850. The grip of the Anglican church was loosened, and a secular, professional career line developed for academics.²¹ The balance of wealth and power began to shift, though slowly, from the colleges to the university. Linked to both these changes was the growing importance of professors and research, on the model of the German universities. In the second half of the century, this was in tension with the prevailing collegiate and tutorial ethos of Oxford, a tension reflected in the contrasting beliefs of Mark Pattison and Benjamin Jowett.²²

3. Tutors

The rise of the tutorial function in the colleges can be seen in both universities, where in the larger colleges the allocation of students to fellows for pastoral care became concentrated on one or two fellows in the middle of the eighteenth century. These Tutors took over the organisation of teaching, appointing Assistant Tutors to give lectures in classics and mathematics and running their ‘sides’, as they were called, as autonomous entities. Students’ payments for food, wine and furniture were made to their Tutors, who banked payments in personal accounts; all this was entirely separate from the college accounts, and was only integrated, and the Tutors’ autonomy reined in, towards the end of the nineteenth century. The Tutors were in fact operating a franchise, rather as the college cooks did, who made such profits from the supply of food that they were reputed to be paid more than the heads of their colleges.

The 1850 Royal Commission made provision for college teaching officers or tutors — not the Tutors I have just referred to, whose duties were fundamentally pastoral, but men who taught specific subjects —

a German treatise on ancient history into English to make it more accessible to undergraduates: G. Schoemann, *A Dissertation on the Assemblies of the Athenians* (Cambridge: W.P. Grant, 1838).

²¹ A.J. Engel, *From Clergyman to Don: The Rise of the Academic Profession in Nineteenth-century Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

²² H.S. Jones, *Intellect and Character in Victorian England: Mark Pattison and the Invention of the Don* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

‘official tutors’, as they were often called.²³ Tutors were appointed in mathematics and in the new subjects which emerged in the third quarter of the century, including Law and History, but the majority were classical, concentrating on either Mods or Greats, reflecting the continuing dominance of Classics at Oxford. The need to provide teaching in a wider range of subjects led to a sharing of college resources, for example in the intercollegiate lecturing schemes that began in the 1850s. The increased pressure on resources was felt especially by small colleges and those with above-average intellectual ambitions: and Corpus qualified on both counts.

4. A new kind of don? Schools and universities

As a result of the Royal Commission’s recommendations, it became possible to hold college fellowships without residing. After 1854 young college Fellows left Oxford and Cambridge to teach in public schools, and they were noticeable presences in the two most liberal schools, Harrow and Rugby.²⁴ By the 1850s the public-school sector had expanded, helped by the growing rail network, and boys were staying on into their late teens. The sixth forms in such schools as Harrow, Rugby and Shrewsbury were reaching levels of classical training that equalled or exceeded those of the first year of university. Already in 1831 a Shrewsbury sixth-former, Thomas Brancker, had won the Ireland classical scholarship before going up to Oxford, defeating among others Robert Scott, later Master of Balliol, and William Gladstone.²⁵ Thirty years later, in 1861, the seventeen-year old Thomas Case won a scholarship from Rugby to Balliol, but his headmaster thought him too young to take it up. Case became a Tutor at Corpus in 1876, Fellow in 1882 and was president of the college from 1904 to 1925. In his evidence to the 1922 Royal Commission on Oxford and Cambridge, Case argued against keeping boys too long at school, instancing his own experience, and concluding that: ‘masters of boys are not the best teachers of men; and men they are, at 18 and 19’.²⁶

²³ These Tutors are to be distinguished from the college Tutors whose duties were in great part pastoral, though they also taught. This latter group had organised themselves as the Tutors’ Association in the late 1840s, and gave evidence to the Royal Commission.

²⁴ C. Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism: University Liberals and the Challenge of Democracy, 1860–86* (London: Allen Lane, 1976), 68.

²⁵ J. Morley, *Life of W.E. Gladstone* (London: Macmillan, 1903), 1.61–2.

²⁶ Thomas Case, president of Corpus 1904–25, unpublished evidence to the 1922 (Asquith) Royal Commission, Cambridge University Library, Cam.a.922.4.2. His remarks may reflect the tensions between Greats dons and the Mods Tutors they often

5. Arthur Sidgwick

What is remarkable about this is that Case had for a quarter of a century been a colleague of a man who had been both an outstanding master of boys at Case's school, Rugby, and a celebrated teacher of men at their college, Corpus Christi. Arthur Sidgwick was one of the young graduates who had gained college fellowships but moved to a public school to teach. Sidgwick, like his elder brother Henry before him, read Classics at Trinity College, Cambridge; he became a Fellow of Trinity in 1864.²⁷ His eldest brother, William, also a classicist, was Fellow and Tutor of Merton, next door to Corpus; in 1871 Merton was a pioneer in allowing Fellows to marry, and William married in the following year.²⁸

Arthur Sidgwick taught at Rugby till 1879, when he moved to Corpus as a Tutor, becoming a Fellow in 1882, when the new statutes opened fellowships to married men — he had married in 1873 and had three children. By then he had already gained a reputation as the author of school editions of Greek and Latin literature, and of an introduction to Greek prose composition which is still in print.²⁹ This influential book rejected the tradition of short, boring and often ludicrous sentences in favour of connected prose passages, in order, as Sidgwick wrote, to avoid dullness in a subject which was necessarily difficult for learners.³⁰ In his obituary of Sidgwick, Gilbert Murray wrote that it was 'generally regarded as the best Greek prose book in the world, and probably the only Greek Prose book which boys read for their amusement in their spare time'.³¹

This linkage between schools and universities developed in the 1870s through movement in the opposite direction, as public school headmasters became heads of colleges, some of them bringing Assistant

saw as inferior beings: see Donald Russell, 'The study of classical literature at Oxford, 1936–1988', in Stray (ed.), *Oxford Classics: Teaching and Learning 1800–2000* (London: Duckworth, 2007), 219–38, at 237.

²⁷ Henry was Senior Classic in 1859 and was elected to a fellowship that year; Arthur was 2nd Classic in 1863 and was elected in 1864.

²⁸ William was a classical Tutor, but also taught Logic and Political Economy — at Oriel 1867–8, and then at University College Bristol, for Alfred Marshall. See P. Groenewegen, *A Soaring Eagle: Alfred Marshall 1842–1924* (Aldershot, Edward Elgar, 1998), 300 n. 86. William Sidgwick relinquished his orders in 1871.

²⁹ First published 1876; a key followed in 1877. A revised edition by J.F. Mountford appeared in 1951. Four years later, in 1880, Sidgwick brought out an elementary book, *A First Greek Writer*, which reached a 4th edition in 1887.

³⁰ He stresses this in the prefaces to both *Greek Prose Composition* and *A First Greek Writer*.

³¹ Murray, obituary of Sidgwick: Bodleian Library, MSS Gilbert Murray, 502, ff. 88–91.

Masters with them who became Fellows. George Bradley, Headmaster of Marlborough College, became Master of University College in 1870, and then brought one of his Assistant Masters to be a College Tutor. A few years later he recruited Henry Butcher, a classical Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, from his post at Eton. Butcher later went to Edinburgh as Professor of Greek — yet another example of a career which moved between school and university. In 1877 Hugo Harper, headmaster of Sherborne school, became principal of Jesus College, Oxford; two years later John Percival, Headmaster of Clifton College, became President of Trinity College, Oxford. In each case, men who had become used to being absolute rulers met opposition within their new domains.

Nowadays a move from school to university teaching would be seen as a promotion. Not so in the 1860s, when we can find cases of men moving in the other direction, and for several reasons. First, some found that the life of a college Tutor was so busy that they had no time for their own reading and writing. In 1885, thanking Richard Jebb for sending him the latest volume of his edition of Sophocles, Arthur Sidgwick wrote that ‘I shall not have time to read it I fear till the next vac.’³² Second, it was often possible to secure higher salaries in schools, especially as housemasters in charge of boarding houses. Third, schoolmasters could marry while college Fellows could not, at least until statute reform allowed marriage, as it did in Corpus in 1882.

In many cases the experience of schoolmastering complemented scholarship, producing enlightened and informed teaching and also, as in Sidgwick’s case, approachable and long-lasting textbooks. In the terms of Thomas Case’s complaint, which I quoted above, skilled masters of boys could also be effective teachers of men. But as the factors that I have listed suggest, it was not easy for colleges to recruit men from schools to a life of hard work and celibacy.

Sidgwick belonged to a circle of friends including his brother Henry and Frederick Myers, both of Trinity College Cambridge; John Addington Symonds; and Graham Dakyns, a schoolmaster at Clifton. In 1869 Sidgwick stayed with Symonds, who recorded that ‘he is unaltered: as of old indolent in manner and voice, crystalline in thought and speech, abundant in silence, deep in feeling, real all through.’³³ All the members of the circle had homosexual inclinations, most notoriously Symonds, some of whose most revealing poems were suppressed after his friends’

³² Sidgwick to Jebb, n.d. [1885], in author’s possession. T.E. Page agreed to write a biography of his teacher Benjamin Kennedy after Kennedy’s death in 1889, but found that his housemasterly duties left him no time for the work.

³³ A.K. Regis (ed.), *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds: A Critical Edition* (London: Palgrave, 2016), 387.

alarmed reaction to them. Those of them who visited Arthur Sidgwick while he was teaching at Rugby were concerned to see that he sat his favourite pupil, Arthur Lushington, next to him in his classroom.³⁴ In his diary for 1868, Sidgwick described him in Greek as the most beautiful and enticing of boys.³⁵ Later on, after falling for and marrying the sister of a colleague, Sidgwick recorded, again in Greek, that on their wedding night ‘with her lips she made my shame holy’; which suggests that he was referring to fellatio. In her exploration of Sidgwick’s diaries, Emily Rutherford has established that he used the Greek letter μ to mark days when his wife was menstruating, and this first occurs in the entry for their wedding day. A message from his bride to be, copied into the diary, declares that ‘I love you dangerously. You shall have all of me all night’. After the wedding, the diary records their frequent ‘embraces’, that is, sexual intercourse. Apart from this message, everything I have cited was written in Greek, Sidgwick’s favourite medium of comment and self-expression through his adult life, as he moved from the love of a boy to that of a woman.³⁶ One might compare the sixteen-year old Bertrand Russell’s use of transliterated Greek to conceal his theological doubts from his grandmother.³⁷ Sidgwick’s command of Greek was on display in the verses he contributed to the *Pelican Record* at Corpus, the first college magazine in Oxford, which he edited from its first appearance in 1891. Earlier on, the campaign he and his liberal colleagues waged against the conservative Headmaster of Rugby Henry Hayman, whose sacking is recorded on the same page of Sidgwick’s diary, was accompanied by Greek iambs written by Sidgwick as a running commentary on the action. It is also apparent in his long-lived manual of Greek prose composition, first published in 1876 and still in print today (n. 29 above). It includes a glossary of Greek particles in which Sidgwick suggests that

³⁴ P. Grosskurth, *John Addington Symonds: A Biography* (London: Longmans, 1964), 115, cf. 108–9.

³⁵ Bodleian Library, Arthur Sidgwick’s diary 2.268 (7 April 1868): see E. Rutherford, ‘Arthur Sidgwick’s *Greek Prose Composition*: Gender, affect and sociability in the late-Victorian university’, *Journal of British Studies* 56 (2017), 91–116.

³⁶ Sidgwick was as comfortable with Greek as with English. One might compare his contemporary Edmund Lushington (no relation of Arthur Lushington), whose love of Greek has been described as constituting ‘the definition of his identity: J.O. Waller, *A Circle of Friends: The Tennysons and the Lushingtons of Park House* (Columbus OH: Ohio State University Press, 1986), 64. All four men married, but Henry Sidgwick had no children and may not have consummated his marriage, while Symonds, who had three children, reached an understanding with his wife which allowed him to have affairs with men, notably a Venetian gondolier.

³⁷ B. Russell, *My Philosophical Development* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1959), 21–6.

‘the particle $\delta\eta$ [...] sometimes corresponds to a wink or twinkle of the eye.’³⁸

Soon after his arrival at Corpus in the spring of 1879, Sidgwick responded to a questionnaire sent out by a Cambridge committee considering whether Greek should be made optional in schools.³⁹ Asked what the value of Greek was for pupils, he replied:

Accuracy is promoted by a complicated accident; liveliness and interest by rich literature; sense and judgment by a language remote in idiom from learners vernacular, and rich and varied literature; subtlety of mind may be exercised by many studies, but by none more than a language which has a delicate and complex syntax, capable of expressing fine shades of thought with precision: a language too which by its reach of particles to a real scholar can almost be said to give action and intonation.⁴⁰

That last sentence is almost a performative utterance, to employ Oxford philosophical terminology, in the way it enacts, as it describes, the embodied flexibility of linguistic production. Sidgwick, then, was practising the old renaissance mode which Paley had slighted in his discussion of 1849: renaissance by saturation in literature and re-creation in language. In this tradition, he belonged to a lineage which included Thomas Evans, another fluent and enthusiastic composer in Greek, who taught Sidgwick at Rugby. Of Evans it was said that ‘No man can ever have taken a more genuine interest in the particle GE. [...] If you went a walk with him ... those two letters would furnish food for reflexion for hours and hours’.⁴¹ Since Sidgwick was in effect soaked in Greek, it is perhaps apt that in his house in the Woodstock Road he had the Greek alphabet pasted up onto the bathroom walls, so that his children could

³⁸ A Sidgwick, *Introduction to Greek Prose Composition* (London: Rivington, 1876), 230.

³⁹ The questionnaire arrived in mid-June, Sidgwick replied on 15 July. He was offered the tutorship on 9 Dec 1878, to start at the beginning of Easter term 1879. This was the third term of the academic year, followed by Trinity; the two together came to be called Trinity, a nomenclature formalised in 1917. In 1879 Easter term began on 16 April.

⁴⁰ Arthur Sidgwick to the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, 15 July 1879. Cambridge University Library, Add MS 5944/39/16, iv.

⁴¹ J.E.B. Mayor, obituary of T.S. Evans, *The Eagle* (St John’s College, Cambridge), 1889, 469. Evans taught at Rugby from 1847 to 1862. He was one of those Cambridge classicists whose incompetence at mathematics barred them from an Honours degree: see C.A. Stray and C. Collard. ‘Classics strikes back: T.S. Evans’s *Mathematogonia*’, *Cambridge Classical Journal* 69 (2023), 1–33.

learn it as they performed their ablutions. The same approach to learning Greek was adopted by J.D. Denniston in his celebrated book on the Greek particles: 'I have cited more examples than previous writers have done. The reader should be enabled to *bathe* in examples [...] the mere process of semi-quiescent immersion may help him'.⁴²

Sidgwick's scholarship was recognised in his appointment as university reader in Greek in 1894, and by his being commissioned to produce the Oxford Classical Text of Aeschylus⁴³ and then in 1903 to organise a revision of Liddell and Scott's Greek–English lexicon. The Regius Professor of Greek, Ingram Bywater, thought that Sidgwick's popularity on both Oxford and Cambridge would help him to enlist support from other scholars. But he seems not to have done anything, and resigned in 1911 when asked for a progress report. His copy of the lexicon, now in the Corpus Christi College library, shows no signs of the annotation one might expect from a reviser. Sidgwick himself had no illusions about his abilities: he told a friend in 1894 that 'I conceive my function as being to distribute, not produce knowledge: and that is what I aim at'.⁴⁴ He told Gilbert Murray about his textual editing, 'in evaluation I am naught'.⁴⁵

A simple explanation for Sidgwick's lack of progress on Liddell and Scott is that he was busy working for liberal political causes and in support of women's education. He was one of the liberal dons who taught ladies' classes in the early 1870s, and Elizabeth Wordsworth, founding principal of Lady Margaret Hall, later referred to his 'fresh lectures on Plato's Republic', adding that 'To attend his classes on Plato and Aristophanes was a kind of intellectual luxury'.⁴⁶ In addition to all this, he was active in running college societies. He was treasurer of clubs for thirty years, and founded the Consolidated Clubs. No wonder it was said

⁴² J.D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934), vi.

⁴³ 'His edition [1900] was antiquated in method, for he adhered too regularly to the famous Medicean codex, reluctantly accepting superior readings from more recent manuscripts and still more reluctantly any conjectures which he judged not too discrepant with transmitted readings.' C. Collard, 'Arthur Sidgwick', in R.B. Todd (ed.), *Dictionary of British Classicists* (Bristol: Thoemmes, 2004), 893–4.

⁴⁴ Arthur Sidgwick to William Everett, 16 Nov 1894. Boston, Massachusetts Historical Society, William Everett papers, box 5.

⁴⁵ F. West, *Gilbert Murray*, 18.

⁴⁶ E. Wordsworth, *Glimpses of the Past* (London: Mowbray [1911], revised edn. 1913), 151. She adds that his lectures on the Republic 'never seemed to lose their freshness', though she allowed that this might have been credited to Plato rather than to Sidgwick (151–2).

of him, ‘He is the college’.⁴⁷ No wonder, either, that in 1904 he was a leading contender for the mastership of the college. When he lost out to Thomas Case, he declared ‘I am content’. The letter to his Cambridge counterpart Henry Jackson in which he wrote those words displays his humility and self-knowledge, and also his generosity in his assessment of his rival; it can be read in the excellent history of the college by Thomas Charles-Edwards and Julian Reid.⁴⁸

6. Professors

One of the most notable proposals of the 1850 Royal Commission was that professorial chairs should be established which would be funded by colleges. Hence the attachment of college names to some chairs – the Corpus Chair of Latin, the Lincoln Chair of Classical Archaeology.

The foundation of the Oxford Latin Chair in 1854 was among the consequences of the Oxford Commission’s report. Reviewing the inaugural lecture of John Conington, the first incumbent, Richard Monckton Milnes declared that the appointment of a Professor of Latin at Oxford was

in itself a strong proof of the diminution of the classical spirit. This very eulogy of the Latin language reads like a funeral oration over that condition of study, when the colloquialisms of life, the banter of youth, the academic sports [...] the principles of philosophy, and the verities of religion, spoke the great common diction.⁴⁹

The current holder of the Latin Chair, Tobias Reinhardt, is the eleventh Corpus Professor. The complete list – Conington, Palmer, Nettleship, Ellis, Clark, Fraenkel, Mynors, Nisbet, Winterbottom, Hardie, Reinhardt – rings out like a long peal of bells. Two of them might be described as cracked bells, as they were rather strange men. John Conington (1824–69), remembered now for his work on Virgil, had long and difficult struggles with religious belief. He avoided ordination, but in the year of his appointment as professor had a religious crisis. He was peculiar in

⁴⁷ Collard, ‘Arthur Sidgwick’ (n. 43).

⁴⁸ T. Charles-Edwards and J. Reid, *Corpus Christi College, Oxford: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 338–40.

⁴⁹ R.M. Milnes, Review of John Conington’s ‘On the Academical Study of Latin’, *Edinburgh Review* 105 (1857), 493–515, at 512. Milnes was referring to the use of Latin as an international medium of communication, but he was a keen student of ‘diction’ of other kinds; collections of idiosyncratic phraseology and pronunciation abound in his commonplace books (Cambridge, Trinity College Library, Houghton G.1–16).

appearance and manner, his nickname in Oxford being ‘the sick vulture’.⁵⁰ His shortsightedness meant that there was much he failed to notice; of one thing he did see, the comet of 1858, he said that he did not think ‘that phenomenon ought to be encouraged.’⁵¹ Yet Conington was a serious man: in the early 1860s he organised reading parties for the ablest students throughout the university. He apparently wanted the colleges to be abolished, leaving only the university.⁵²

Robinson Ellis, the next Corpus Professor but one, also had his peculiarities. George Grundy recalled his appearance:

His outward appearance was remarkable. He was a thin, tall figure with a pronounced stoop. His face was very thin and wrinkled, and adorned with a short, thin, straggling beard. He always wore a very ancient suit of black cloth whose sheen was mainly due to age, and a top hat which had the same characteristic. His feet were large, but his boots were so much larger that the toes of them turned up like the prow of a gondola.⁵³

Ellis produced several editions of Catullus, some making life difficult for the Clarendon Press’s compositors by their extensive use of rubricated lettering. He then turned to more obscure Latin authors, to the annoyance of the Press, who felt obliged to publish the work of the university’s professor of Latin, but lost money on his books. In the end they asked him to produce editions of authors that more people wanted to read. The best-remembered verdict on Ellis is unfortunately A.E. Housman’s, that he had ‘the intellect of an idiot child’.⁵⁴

One of the major influences on classical scholarship in late-Victorian Oxford was the German tradition of *Alttertumswissenschaft*, the systematic study of the ancient world, which was evident in the work of the second Corpus Professor of Latin, Henry Nettleship (1878–93). Nettleship had been to lectures and seminars in Berlin in 1865, and had been impressed by the teaching of Mommsen, Emil Hübner and Moriz Haupt, and also of Jacob Bernays of Bonn. Nettleship brought from his time in Berlin an enthusiasm for the pedagogical form of the seminar, and its first appearance in Oxford was in 1879, when Nettleship ran what he

⁵⁰ W. Tuckwell, *Reminiscences of Oxford* (London: Smith Elder, 1900), 207.

⁵¹ H. Nettleship, ‘Conington, John’, *DNB* (1885–1900) 12, 13–17.

⁵² J.W. Mackail, *James Leigh Strachan-Davidson, Master of Balliol: A Memoir* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 25.

⁵³ G.B. Grundy, *Fifty-five Years at Oxford: An Unconventional Autobiography* (London: Methuen, 1945), 112.

⁵⁴ P.G. Naiditch, *A.E. Housman at University College* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 48.

called a ‘class’ on textual criticism. The seminar form was taken up by a few other scholars, including the Berlin-trained Russian legal historian Paul Vinogradoff. But after World War I it lay dormant in Oxford until it was revived in 1936 by a later Corpus Professor, the German Jewish refugee Eduard Fraenkel.⁵⁵

While Nettleship was a notable representative of the new generation of professors, he also belonged to the first wave of schoolmaster dons, as he moved from a fellowship at Lincoln (1862) to teaching at Harrow before he returned to Oxford in 1872 as a Tutor and Fellow at Corpus.⁵⁶ In 1878 Nettleship was elected to the Corpus Chair of Latin, and was replaced as Tutor by Arthur Sidgwick. Sidgwick’s central place in the life of the college was based on his success as a Tutor, attracting first-class candidates from leading public schools, notably Rugby and St Paul’s. Of the 86 undergraduates who took examinations from 1886 to 1890, 60 went in for Mods, though only 37 went on to Greats.⁵⁷ Classical mods teaching was thus at the core of the college’s efforts. But we should perhaps not see Mods and Greats teaching as entirely separate worlds.

Let me briefly take two examples. Edward Lee Hicks was elected Fellow and Tutor in 1866. Incidentally one of the essays he wrote in his fellowship examination was a comparison of the influence on progress of small communities compared with large ones. Hicks was a very successful teacher of language and literature, but also gave lectures on antiquities, often using Greek inscriptions, on which he became a leading expert, publishing a standard collection in 1882,⁵⁸ later co-edited with Sir George

⁵⁵ Nettleship published an essay on ‘The Present Relations between Classical Research and Classical Education in England’, in which he pointed out the great value of the professorial lecture in Germany: *Essays on the Endowment of Research by Various Writers* (London: H.S. King, 1876), 244–68. Fraenkel’s seminar on Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* (1936–42) was a major event in the history of Oxford Classics, and an important social phenomenon which had erotic overtones: Stray, ‘Eduard Fraenkel: an exploration’, *Syllecta Classica* 25 (2014), 113–72.

⁵⁶ In general, see S.J. Harrison, ‘Henry Nettleship and the beginning of modern Latin studies in Oxford’, in Stray (ed.), *Oxford Classics: Teaching and learning 1800–2000* (London: Duckworth), 107–16. Sidgwick’s election to a fellowship is something of a mystery. He was appointed Tutor on 16 November 1872, and on 11 December was elected to a fellowship — despite the fact that he had married in 1870. This must have been known to the College, and in fact the president, John Matthias Wilson, had visited Nettleship in Harrow to ask him to come to Corpus. The statute revision permitting such appointments did not take place till 1882, and there is no evidence of any exceptional provision being made.

⁵⁷ Charles-Edwards and Reid, *Corpus Christi*, 320 (n. 48).

⁵⁸ E.L. Hicks, *A Manual of Greek Historical Inscriptions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1882).

Hill of the British Museum.⁵⁹ But in 1873 he went to a college living, so that he would have more time for studying inscriptions than he could have as a college Tutor. His fellowship had been a lay one, under the revised statutes of 1855, but Hicks's career continued in the Church, and he ended up as Bishop of Lincoln. His career shows a combination of secular and religious, literary and epigraphic scholarship, teaching and research. Another Corpus Tutor, Samuel Dill, compared Hicks's scholarship to that of Ingram Bywater, who succeeded Benjamin Jowett as Regius Professor of Greek in 1893, and concluded that he was 'superior to Bywater in finished scholarship [...] it was the combination of the delicate old Oxford scholarship with learning that distinguished Hicks.'⁶⁰

My second example is Arthur Haigh, classical lecturer from 1883 to 1902 and then Senior Tutor till his death in 1905. He is remembered now for his *The Attic Theatre*, of 1889, described in his preface as a study of Greek drama 'from the theatrical, as opposed to the literary, point of view'. His concern was with the staging of plays, including the stage itself, a subject on which his views collided with those of leading German scholars. A review of Haigh's book commented that:

in the younger generation of Oxford men there are several who have done much to remove from the University the reproach of classical sterility. To the small band of scholars not content with absorbing the knowledge acquired by others Mr Haigh is a noteworthy recruit. His account of the Attic Theatre combines Germanic thoroughness in research with a lucidity of expression which is certainly not German.⁶¹

The Classics which was gradually being forced away from its central position in English high culture in the second half of the century was a text-based literary subject which had formed the basis of a liberal education. Within the field of university Classics, this is reflected in the erosion of the dominance of the literary text. Archaeology not only went beyond the text, but challenged the traditional vision of textual value. The archaeologist stuck a spade into the earth and uncovered the past in the present, taking the classical out of a world of eternal value and locating it firmly in historical time. By offering physical artefacts as evidence in the present, it bypassed the aesthetic and moral communion with the permanent messages of the ancients on which was based the self-

⁵⁹ E.L. Hicks and G.F. Hill, *A Manual of Greek Historical Inscriptions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1901).

⁶⁰ S. Dill, in J.H. Fowler, *Life and Letters of Edward Lee Hicks, Bishop of Lincoln 1910–1919* (London: Christophers, 1922), 28.

⁶¹ Review of *The Attic Theatre*, *Saturday Review* 68 (1889), 41–2.

recognition of humanist literary scholars. Both its emphasis on the materiality of culture and the scientific method used for interpreting it posed challenges for the older style of scholarship. Materiality connoted the artisan, the world below that of the gentleman, whose liberal education liberated him from dependence on material necessity. In more than one sense, in fact, the new field was ‘infra dig’. Scientific method replaced Man the Measure with Man the Measurer, a knower removed from the object of knowledge. Behind it stood the spectre of the amoral world of scientific naturalism. This bleak prospect created a dilemma of special depth for the humanist scholars of the later Victorian decades, when the attenuation of Christian faith led many to look elsewhere for a source of stable value.

There was considerable resistance in Oxford to the study of classical archaeology; Percy Gardner, Lincoln Professor from 1887 to 1925, strove in vain to have it inserted into Greats. Arthur Evans offered a sarcastic couplet:

Inscriptions, exploration, archaeology,
Are incompatible with true Philology.⁶²

So here we see individual cases negotiating the way through opposed tendencies — secular and religious, English amateur vs German professional scholarship.

7. 1893: varieties of scholarship again

I have already mentioned the appointment of Ingram Bywater as Regius Professor of Greek on the death of Benjamin Jowett. Jowett and Bywater’s mentor Mark Pattison had represented the opposed ideals of tutorial and professorial work, education, and research. Bywater’s position can be seen in his article in the *Dictionary of National Biography* on Henry Nettleship:

Nettleship already possessed scholarship, in the English sense of the term; but Moriz Haupt made him aware that this was only a beginning, and that a larger and more critical view of ancient literature was requisite to make a philologist. Nettleship’s Oxford teacher Conington, who had done much towards reviving the study of Latin in the university, was a peculiar scholar, studying almost exclusively a few

⁶² Cf. Stray, *Classics Transformed* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 152 n. 28.

'best authors'; in his later years he lapsed into translation, and chose to address the general public rather than academe.

Bywater's appointment to the Greek Chair provoked a discussion of the varieties of classical scholarship in the journal *The Speaker* which echoed the categories proposed by Frederick Paley in 1849.⁶³ The writer began by explaining that Bywater's work on ancient philosophy was known mainly to specialists ('the small body of professed Greek scholars'), before distinguishing different types of scholar. There is Browning's grammarian, who 'settled hoti's business' and was 'dead from the waist down'.⁶⁴ There is or was the elegant scholar who loved versifying but little else. There is the critical scholar who is only interested in linguistic minutiae, like the lecturer who said to an enquiring undergraduate, 'It is not our business to understand Plato, but to translate him correctly'.⁶⁵ Finally, there are scholars inspired by the rise of the comparative method in philology and by archaeological discoveries, including inscriptions. There is a 'New Renaissance inspired by all this', and it is carried on by 'scholars whose work is mainly literary — whose chief work it is to put the educated public, or a select portion of them, in possession of the spirit of Greek life. We need only mention three very different types: Mr Pater, the late John Addington Symonds, and Professor Jebb.' These three were indeed very different, and not just in their work: Pater and Symonds were Oxford men, and homosexual, while Richard Jebb was a Cantab, and firmly heterosexual.

Oxford's larger vision of Classics, evident in its Greats course and the emergence of Plato as a central author, was reinforced by the college

⁶³ 'The varieties of scholarship', *The Speaker* 8 (8 Nov. 1893), 548. A similar analysis is that of Arthur Tilley, 'The development of classical learning', *National Review* 3 (1884), 163–76, which begins: 'The old type of scholarship, the name by which we have been accustomed 'a minute acquaintance with the niceties of two dead languages', is rapidly passing away from us. No longer is the skilful emendation of a Greek play the royal road to a bishopric; no longer do grave statesmen and men of learning beguile their leisure moments with doing *Humpty Dumpty* into Latin verse; a classical quotation in the House of Commons is almost an event; a false quantity falls there on unheeding ears.'

Humpty Dumpty: H. Drury's 'Humtius Dumtius', in elegiacs, is in *Arundines Cami* (Cambridge: Typis Academicis Excusus, 1841), 110–11; J.B. Poynton made a Greek version, 'to zoon oon', published in his *Versions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1936), 186–7; a rhyming Latin version, 'Ovalius Crassus', is included in C.H. Carruthers, *Aliciae per Speculum Transitus* (London; Macmillan, 1966), 66.

⁶⁴ Cf. A.D. Nuttall *Dead from the Waist Down: Scholars and Scholars in Literature and the Popular Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

⁶⁵ Anon., 'An ideal of university teaching', *The Speaker*, 14 March 1891, 307.

tutoring which became a hallmark of the university. The third element which linked these two was homosexuality; the relationship between tutor and pupil being seen by some as a version of the classical Greek relationship between the older lover and mentor and the younger lover who learned from him.⁶⁶ And this brings us back to Corpus, and to Edward Perry Warren.

Warren was a wealthy Harvard graduate who studied at New College in the 1880s and then settled in England with his lover, the archaeologist John Marshall. In their house in Lewes in Sussex, a considerable collection of art was gathered, much of it erotic. Warren gave Corpus £2,000, with a promise of more to come on his death. The eventual bequest, when Warren died in 1928, was designed to set up a College Praelectorship in Classics. It was a difficult bequest, as Warren stipulated that the praelector should not lecture to women, and that a tunnel should be built under Merton Street, presumably to protect undergraduates from what Charles Kingsley had called ‘the world that marries and is taken in marriage’. Both stipulations were eventually evaded. The first holder of the post, in 1954, was Hugh Lloyd-Jones, who had no fear of lecturing to mixed audiences. In his previous post, in Cambridge, he had married a student who had deliberately attracted his attention by sitting in the front row at his lectures wearing a revealing dress. Warren would be horrified to know that the current Praelector is female.

The year before Lloyd-Jones’s appointment saw the retirement of a scholar who shared Warren’s love of Greek vases. Remarkably enough, he was Corpus Professor of Latin from 1935 to 1953. This was Eduard Fraenkel, a German Jew who had fled his country in 1934. Fraenkel was born in 1888 in Berlin and died by his own hand in Oxford in 1970. He was one of the outstanding classical scholars of the twentieth century, known for both the depth and the breadth of his scholarship. That his best-known book, a monumental edition of Aeschylus’s *Agamemnon*, was produced during Fraenkel’s tenure of the Corpus Chair of Latin, indicates the range of his scholarship. Fraenkel was deprived of his Chair at Freiburg by the Nazi government in 1933. In 1934 Corpus gave him a room and financial support, and later that year was elected to the Corpus Chair, vacated by A.C. Clark. Fraenkel’s testimonials included one from W.M. Lindsay which began, ‘I rank Eduard Fraenkel as the greatest Latin scholar (of his time of life) in the whole world. [...] When his first book

⁶⁶ L. Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1994). For a comparison with Cambridge see Stray, ‘Curriculum and style in the collegiate university: Classics in nineteenth-century Oxbridge’, *History of Universities* 16.2 (2001), 183–218.

appeared (in 1922) it showed that a new great scholar had arisen'.⁶⁷ A.E. Housman's testimonial ended, 'I cannot say sincerely that I wish Dr. Fraenkel to obtain the Corpus professorship, as I would rather that he should be my successor in Cambridge.'⁶⁸ In agreeing to write for Fraenkel, Housman had declared that 'If your candidature proves successful, the University ought to join the chorus of Heil Hitler!'.⁶⁹

Fraenkel wrote in German and had his text translated into English by friends, including Roger Mynors, who succeeded him in the Chair in 1953. His celebrated edition of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* was published by Oxford University Press in three volumes in 1950, after a long and difficult pre-publication history.⁷⁰ The book was described within the Press as 'a Teutonic monster', but it was accepted that it was important and must be published.⁷¹ For many students of classical literature, it has been seen as the very model of a modern classical commentary. In his obituary of Fraenkel, Gordon Williams wrote that 'It is hard to view this monumental work as a whole [...] this among the two or three most

⁶⁷ Fraenkel, 'Application to the electors to the Corpus professorship of Latin', printed at Oxford University Press, 20 November 1934, 7. Lindsay was referring to Fraenkel's *Plautinisches im Plautus* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1922). Lindsay wrote to Fraenkel that when he heard from A.C. Clark of the latter's resignation from the chair, he replied that he hoped Fraenkel would succeed him: Lindsay to Fraenkel, 9 November 1934. Fraenkel letter file 1933–4, kindly lent me by Fraenkel's son Edward Fraenkel. Lindsay's testimonial went on to attack Fraenkel's *Iktus und Akzent im lateinischen Sprechvers*. On the flyleaf of the copy Fraenkel sent him, Lindsay wrote, 'Where in the world, except in Germany, would three hundred pages of this rubbish find a publisher?' When Fraenkel visited St Andrews in 1966, his host Kenneth Dover took the book out of the university library and hid it at home (Dover, *Marginal Comment* (London: Duckworth, 1994), 40).

⁶⁸ Fraenkel, 'Application', 4.

⁶⁹ Housman to Fraenkel, 12 Nov. 1934: A. Burnett, *Letters of A.E. Housman* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 2.447. Such joking uses of the phrase were not uncommon in the early 1930s. It was used in 1933 by R.W. Chapman, secretary of OUP, in correspondence on the editing of the planned *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. A colleague had recommended the employment of a general editor to keep section editors in line: Chapman commented, 'Yes, you want a performer over all — Heil Hitler!'. Office memo of 19 June 1933: OUP archives, OP 3244/021848.

⁷⁰ Stray, 'A Teutonic monster in Oxford: the making of Fraenkel's *Agamemnon*', in C.S. Kraus and C.A. Stray (eds), *Classical Commentaries: Studies in the History of an Academic Genre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 39–57.

⁷¹ Drafts in German were translated and commented on by Roger Mynors, John Beazley and Ruth Fraenkel, whose English was very good; she had translated her student friend Victor Ehrenberg's *Alexander and the Greeks*, published in 1938. Proofs sent to Fraenkel were so assiduously marked up for correction and improvement by him and his friends, however, that the correction bill soared alarmingly.

impressive works of Classical scholarship in this century'.⁷² Fraenkel's edition is monumental indeed: its three tall volumes run to nearly 1100 pages, and weigh in at almost three kilograms.

Fraenkel's *Agamemnon* was based on a celebrated seminar on the play which he ran from October 1936 to March 1942. It was through this seminar that Fraenkel made his major impact on Oxford: as Kenneth Dover, then a Balliol undergraduate and later President of Corpus, remembered in his autobiography: 'What mattered most at Oxford was Eduard Fraenkel's seminar on the *Agamemnon*'.⁷³ This brought a characteristic German pedagogical form to an institution that had hardly experienced it since Nettleship's time.⁷⁴

The seminar lasted longer than an undergraduate career, so that one can understand how the philosopher and novelist Iris Murdoch, who joined it in 1938, saw it as 'endless' in a poem which juxtaposed the Trojan War with the war that broke out in September 1939:

Do you remember Professor
Eduard Fraenkel's endless
Class on the *Agamemnon*?
Between line eighty three and line a thousand
It seemed to us our innocence
Was lost, our youth laid waste,
In that pellucid unforgiving air,
The aftermath experienced before,
Focused by dread into a lurid flicker,
A most uncanny composite of sun and rain.
Did we expect the war? What did we fear?
First love's incinerating crippling flame,
Or that it would appear
In public that we could not name
The Aorist of some unfamiliar verb.⁷⁵

⁷² G. Williams, 'Eduard Fraenkel 1888–1970', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 56 (1970), 415–42, at 428.

⁷³ Dover, *Marginal Comment* (1994), 39.

⁷⁴ Informal group sessions called 'classes' were certainly known, but tended to be humdrum occasions confined to undergraduates, largely used in language teaching or for pass examinations: R. Currie. 'The Arts and Social Sciences, 1939–1970', in *The History of the University of Oxford VIII: The Twentieth Century*, ed. B. Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 109–38; cf. J. Harris's chapter in the same volume, at 131–2.

⁷⁵ 'The Agamemnon Class, 1939', *Boston University Journal* 25.2 (1977), 57–8.

Another participant was Hugh Lloyd-Jones, who commented later that in the seminar, Fraenkel ‘went through the play in almost as much time as it took Agamemnon to capture Troy’.⁷⁶

If by the 1930s it would have seemed, at least in Britain, anomalous for a professor of Latin to edit a Greek text, Fraenkel’s position was in itself anomalous, not least as a result of the special circumstances that had brought it about. A German Jew steeped in the traditions of *Wissenschaft*, in 1934 he found himself transplanted to the heart of English Classics, in a collegiate university where classical scholarship was still based on the gentlemanly practice of composition, where the PhD had hardly taken hold, and where the influence of professors was vastly outweighed by that of the college Tutors. Jocelyn Toynbee was awarded the first classical DPhil in 1930; in 1936 there were only two graduate students working for research degrees in classical literature. Robin Nisbet, Mynors’ successor as Corpus Professor in 1970, on discovering this, commented that he was surprised there were so many.⁷⁷

When Fraenkel committed suicide in 1970, his body was found by a young Fellow of Corpus who lived in the same building. This was Ewen Bowie, the founding director in 1994 of the college’s Centre for the Study of Greco-Roman Antiquity. The original initiative came from the then president, Keith Thomas, in response to a reorganisation of the university’s entrance system. By the 1990s Corpus was the leading Oxford college in Classics. It had always had a strong commitment to the subject, and in the 1950s and 1960s had been the undergraduate college of several scholars who became distinguished in their fields. But in the 1970s and 1980s the proportion of classicists getting Firsts, and among them of those who entered an academic career in Classics, became remarkably high. Part of the explanation of this success is to be found in the College’s having in its Fellowship four classical Tutors (Greek, Latin, ancient history, ancient philosophy) as well as the Professor of Latin Literature, the University Lecturer in Byzantine Studies, the Humfrey Payne Senior Research Fellow in Classical Art and Archaeology, the University Lecturer in the Later Roman Empire, and the Warren Praelectorship in Greek.

Diplomacy was needed, and was practised, within a small college where the classical and Byzantine specialists at times approached a quarter of the total fellowship. It was also needed, and practised, within a university whose classical faculty was in this period planning to build

⁷⁶ H. Lloyd-Jones, ‘Eduard Fraenkel’, In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁷⁷ R. Nisbet, ‘The study of classical literature at Oxford, 1936–1988’, in Stray (ed.), *Oxford Classics: Teaching and Learning 1800–2000* (London: Duckworth 2007), 219–35, at 219.

its own centre, now successfully established as the Stelios Ioannou School for Research in Classical and Byzantine Studies, which opened in 2007. This was preceded, and surely to some extent inspired, by Corpus's Centre for the Study of Greek and Roman Antiquity, which has since its foundation in 1993 run a full programme of events, including lectures, seminar series and conference.⁷⁸ In the twenty-first century these two institutions have built on and maintained the new renaissance of the nineteenth and twentieth.

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⁷⁸ I would like to acknowledge my own debt to these conferences, which have led to the publication of several collaborative books, and in particular to the helpful and generous support of Stephen Harrison.