

Classical Scholarship and Its History

Trends in Classics – Scholarship in the Making



Edited by

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Volume 1

Classical Scholarship and Its History

From the Renaissance to the Present

Essays in Honour of Christopher Stray

Edited by
Stephen Harrison and Christopher Pelling

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Preface

The germ of this volume was a day conference celebrating the work of Chris Stray and his 75th birthday, held at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in October 2018. We are most grateful to Corpus and its Centre for the Study of Greek and Roman Antiquity (especially its Director, Constanze Güthenke) for hosting and sponsoring the event, to Mary Beard, who was a key part of the occasion but was sadly unable to contribute to the volume, and to those who attended for their lively comments and discussion.

We are most grateful to the contributors to this volume for their agreement to participate and for their patience and practical assistance with the editorial and publication process, and especially to De Gruyter for taking on this volume in their new strand 'Scholarship in the Making' in the series Trends in Classics; we thank Franco Montanari and Antonios Rengakos as editors of Trends in Classics for their kind acceptance, and Marco Acquafredda at De Gruyter for his efficient management of the publication.

Our fuller tribute to Chris Stray appears in the introduction below, but we would like to thank him for his full support of this project: it is unusual indeed for the recipient of a *Festschrift* not only to read and comment on most of the volume's papers before publication but also to write a paper in it, but we think the book is much the better for both these elements.

SJH & CBRP

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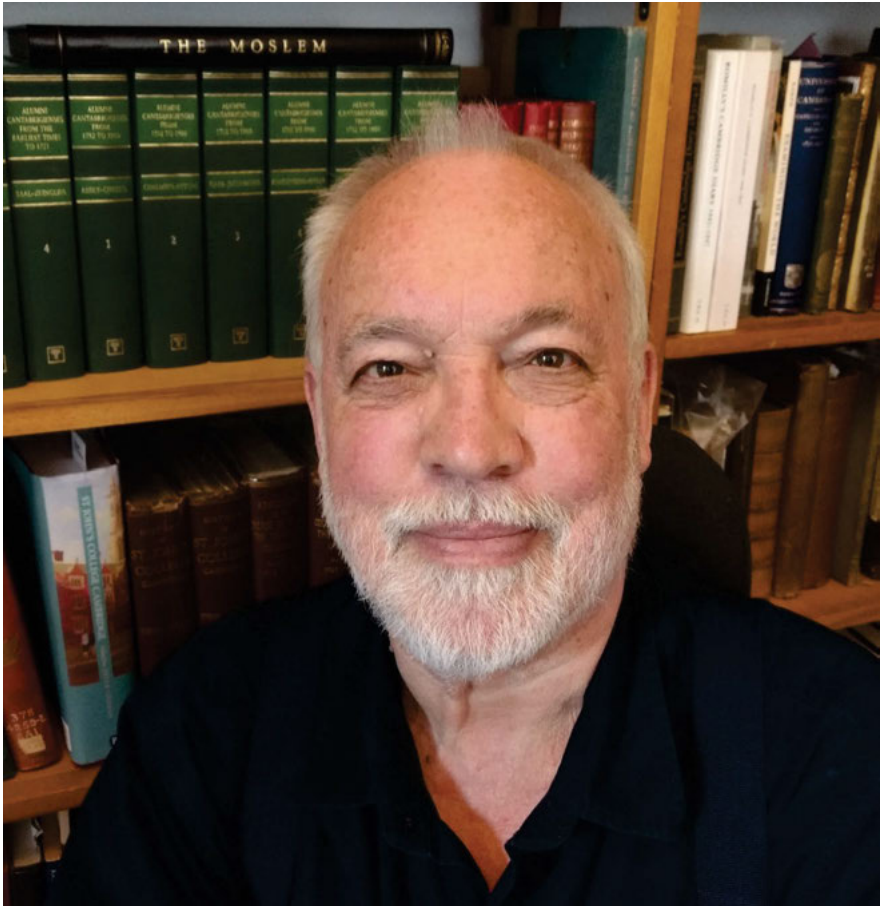


Fig. 1: Chris Stray (photo: Margaret Kenna).

Stephen Harrison and Christopher Pelling

Introduction

This volume celebrates the career and scholarly achievements of Christopher Stray, and originated in a conference held in Oxford in 2018 to celebrate his 75th birthday; that year also saw the publication by OUP of his collected papers on the history of UK scholarship, *Classics in Britain: Scholarship, Education, and Publishing 1800–2000* (Stray 2018a).¹

It is unusual for a single scholar practically to reorient an entire sub-field of study, but this is what Chris Stray has done for the history of UK classical scholarship. His remarkable combination of interests in the sociology of scholars and scholarship, in the history of the book and of publishing, and (especially) in the detailed intellectual contextualisation of classical scholarship as a form of classical reception has fundamentally changed the way the history of British classics and its study is viewed. His co-editorship of *A Companion to Classical Receptions* with Lorna Hardwick, the doyenne of UK classical reception studies (Stray and Hardwick 2008), rightly identifies him as a key figure in that currently lively and central discipline.

As Constanze Güthenke has noted (Güthenke 2018), a generation ago the history of classical scholarship still consisted largely of accounts of particular scholars and groups of scholars written by other scholars (e.g. Sandys 1903–8, Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1921 and 1982, Pfeiffer 1976, and Brink 1986), from a broadly biographical and ‘heroic individual’ perspective. In these works scholars often sought to find their own place in the great tradition, choosing to praise or blame those whose work they admired or deprecated, and to identify with particular schools or trends, and there were few attempts to provide a broader, more nuanced and less prosopographical perspective.

Stray’s epoch-making monograph *Classics transformed: schools, universities, and society in England, 1830–1960* (Stray 1998a) came into the debate as a wholly fresh voice. Informed by sociology (it was a revised version of his 1994 Swansea PhD in that discipline), coal-face classroom experience (at both secondary and tertiary level), an impressive grasp of the history of classical publishing (both high scholarship and humble textbooks) and of UK educational institutions (both schools and universities), and a rich knowledge of many archival sources, it pro-

¹ All references to Chris Stray’s works in this introduction refer to the full bibliography of his scholarship at the end of this volume.

vided a history of classical teaching and scholarship which for the first time integrated it with larger social and cultural patterns in the UK of the period covered, a time in which British classics was shaped as a formal discipline, grew to its apogee, and suffered some eclipse and decline. It was warmly reviewed, won the Runciman Award of the Anglo-Hellenic League for a publication on a Greek topic from antiquity to the present, and is still available in print more than twenty years later.

Remarkably, this book was published in the author's fifties, after a quarter-century of research in which he had never held a substantive university post, a telling index of the marginality of the history of classical scholarship in that period. After undergraduate study at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge (1963–6) and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education at the London Institute of Education (1966–7), he taught classics at the independent Latymer Upper School in West London (1967–9) and then at North-Western Polytechnic, now the University of North London (1969–70).

In 1970 he met and married Margaret Kenna, anthropologist of Greece, already then at the University of Wales, Swansea (now Swansea University), where she taught for forty years, and moved to Wales, commuting to the University of Bristol for a Diploma in Social Science (1971–2). Thereafter at Swansea he gained an MSc Econ. by thesis (1977) entitled 'Classics in crisis: the changing forms and current decline of Classics as exemplary curricular knowledge, with special reference to the experience of Classics teachers in South Wales' (this involved teaching Latin for several terms at a local comprehensive school), and the PhD in Sociology (1994) which underlay his 1998 book, entitled 'Culture and Discipline: The reconstruction of Classics in England 1830–1930'.

This rich breadth of education and experience underlies his remarkable expertise in the sociological and pedagogical context of UK classics. Alongside this sits a profound knowledge of classical publications of every kind, which has been a continuing strand in his research and publications, from his establishment with Ian Michael of *The Textbook Colloquium* (1988–2009) and its journal *Paradigm* (see Michael 1997) through his splendid pamphlet *Grinders and Grammars: A Victorian Controversy. The Text of Thirty-Six Letters Printed in The Times following the Publication of Kennedy's Public School Latin Primer in September 1866, with an Introduction and Notes* (Stray 1995a) to a set of major edited volumes over the last decade or so: *Classical Books: Scholarship and Publishing in Britain Since 1800* (Stray 2007a), *Classical Dictionaries: Past, Present and Future* (Stray 2010a), *Expurgating the Classics: Editing Out in Greek and Latin* (Harrison and Stray 2012), *Sophocles' Jebb: A Life in Letters* (Stray 2013), *Classical Commentaries: Studies in the History of an Academic Genre* (Kraus and Stray 2015), and *Liddell and Scott:*

The History, Methodology and Languages of the World's Leading Lexicon of Ancient Greek (Stray, Clarke and Katz 2018).

Stray's revisionary and richer perspective has also been effectively applied in the re-evaluation of some of the heroic individuals traditionally identified in the history of scholarship, firmly contextualising them in their broader cultural and social environment: *Gilbert Murray Reassessed. Hellenism, Theatre, and International Politics* (Stray 2007) and *Rediscovering E.R. Dodds: Scholarship, Education, Poetry, and the Paranormal* (Stray, Pelling and Harrison 2019) look at the fascinating range of activities of the UK's two most famous twentieth-century Greek scholars, while *A.E. Housman: Classical Scholar* (Butterfield and Stray 2009) does the same for its most celebrated twentieth-century Latinist.

His lens has also been trained on the chief institutions of UK classical learning, including both Oxford and Cambridge: there are volumes on *Classics in 19th and 20th Century Cambridge: Curriculum, Culture and Community* (Stray 1998), *The Owl of Minerva. The Cambridge praelections of 1906* (Stray 2005), and *Oxford Classics: Teaching and Learning 1800–2000* (Stray 2007), and he was the natural choice for editing the centenary history of the national UK body for the promotion of classics, *The Classical Association: The First Century 1903–2003* (Stray 2003). The international reception of UK scholarship has also been important for him, e.g. in *British Classics Beyond England: Its Impact Inside and Outside the Academy* (Hallett and Stray 2009).

Appropriately, these and other volumes were often written with the aid of prestigious attachments to leading academic institutions: as a Visiting Fellow at Wolfson College, Cambridge (1996–8), as a Jackson Brothers Fellow at the Beinecke Library, Yale University (2005) and as a Member of the School of Historical Studies of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton (2012). He was an Associate Fellow at the Institute of Classical Studies, University of London (2010–18) and has been Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of History and Classics at Swansea University since 1988; he is a welcome regular visitor at Oxford, where he is a well-known figure at a range of archives and libraries and has co-organised a number of memorable colloquia underlying some of the volumes listed above.

The main business of this volume opens with a chapter by Lorna Hardwick which looks at the assumptions behind and systems that underlie modern studies of the ancient world, and where the discipline might be heading against the broader background of contemporary public intellectual discourse. After this orientation, we find a group of three chapters focussed on the early modern period. Edith Hall

examines the origin of the term ‘classics’ in English from its origins in the later 17C in reference to the Delphin series of Greek and Latin authors in France to its emergence as a label for a subject of study in 18C Britain, in a period of greater self-consciousness about education and ambitions to distinguish the new Anglican gentlemanly classical curriculum from the Continental model, and one where the discussion of Dryden’s 1697 translation of Virgil followed by Pope’s Homer are inseparable from that cultural dispute, while Robert Kaster looks at the emergence of the vulgate text of Seneca’s *De beneficiis* from its first printing in 1475 to Gronovius’ magisterial edition of 1649, which dominated subsequent scholarship and led to a two-century fallow period where few advances were made. Michael Clarke looks at Thomas Jefferson’s surprising pairing of Dares Phrygius and Homer as poets of Troy in his assessment of contemporary classical education, showing that the founder of the University of Virginia actually meant the twelfth-century Anglo-Latin epic adaptation by Joseph of Exeter, which in fact circulated under Dares’ name in the period; this is a splendid example of how serendipitous and surprising the history of scholarship and classical publishing can be.

A following trio of chapters then looks at the history of classical scholarship in the Cambridge and Oxford of the Victorian period, through ‘thick’ analysis of academic figures and frameworks (see especially Stray 2018a). David Butterfield considers the career of Richard Shilleto (1809–76), the leading classical coach of Victorian Cambridge (as well as being a ‘friend of ale’ and a Tory activist) while James Clackson looks at the history of comparative philology and its embedding in Cambridge classics since 1883, an important motivation behind key interactions between classicists and linguists which remain fundamental to the field. On Oxford, Stephen Harrison considers the career arc of John Conington, the first Corpus Professor of Latin at Oxford (1854–69), who began as a Hellenist but produced key work on Virgil and other Latin topics in a relatively short tenure of his chair; his popular verse translations of Horace and Vergil served to diffuse his subject most effectively by appealing to contemporary literary fashion.

A further trio of chapters then looks at commentaries. Roy Gibson considers the history of the ‘green and yellow’ Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics now it has reached more than 100 volumes in just under half a century, and how it has developed and responded to changes in classical education and research over that period. Christopher Pelling considers the genre of ‘historical commentary’ in the form of A.W. Gomme’s Thucydides, looking at it through comparison and contrast with both its predecessors and the successor Thucydides commentaries of Andrewes/Dover and Hornblower. Finally, Christina Shuttleworth Kraus looks at US editions of school and college commentaries on Caesar’s Gallic War, a mainstay of the curriculum, especially showing how the illustrations and other

graphic content help organize information, communicate authority, and regulate the ways in which students consumed the ‘classics’.

This US turn leads to a section of three chapters with strongly international perspectives. Ward Briggs looks at the foundation of the American Philological Association, now the Society for Classical Studies, in New York in 1868 by a lecturer in aesthetics, George Fisk Comfort (1833–1910), who ten days later was instrumental in founding the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the early history of what is now the largest classical organisation worldwide. Judith Hallett reflects on how to think and theorize about the role played by gender in the emigration of classical scholars from Nazi-controlled Europe to England, Canada and the United States during the 1930’s and 1940’s, a diaspora which transformed the international discipline and profession of classics demographically and intellectually. Jas’ Elsner discusses the very recent history of the Fraenkel Room at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and its change of name to the Refugee Scholars Room, a story which incorporates the impact of *#MeToo* on the history of classical scholarship in the case of Eduard Fraenkel.

A final pair of chapters considers two types of scholarly practice. Graham Whitaker looks at the traditional and worldwide practice of the *Festschrift*, its history and development, and attempts to establish a typology of the genre. In last place, Chris Stray himself addresses the issue of scholarly collaboration, in which he himself has been such a prominent participant; though most research in Classics has been produced by individuals, he shows how collaborative scholarship has produced important results, and demonstrates its roots in universities, societies, journals — and friendships.

Chris Stray has been a true scholarly pioneer, but he has rarely been isolated in his efforts; as he himself points out in his essay in this volume, collaboration in classical scholarship, though less common than in some other disciplines, has had important results. It is notable that most of his twenty-plus books have been co-edited, and he has a remarkable capacity for effective, harmonious and sometimes hilarious teamwork to which the editors of the current volume can warmly testify. We are delighted to present to him and to the world a collection of papers which we hope will not only do honour to perhaps the most distinguished living historian of classical scholarship but also itself make a range of impressive and stimulating contributions to that discipline, as well as bringing pleasure to the honoree’s many friends, collaborators and admirers throughout the worldwide classical community.

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Part I: **Orientation and Origins**

Lorna Hardwick

Tracking Classical Scholarship: Myth, Evidence and Epistemology

The past is rubbish till scholars take the pains
to sift and sort and interpret the remains.
This chaos is the past, mounds of heaped debris
just waiting to be organised into history.

Harrison 1990, 79

Memory runs a marathon, a human mind relay
From century to century to recreate our play.
Memory, mother of the Muses, frees
from oblivion the 'Ichneutes' of Sophocles.

Harrison 1990, xxii

As so often over the years my starting point for a new project is the result of a jog supplied by Chris Stray.¹ He has identified a gap in research and thinking and has pointed me to 'the part played in the transmission of classical culture by scholarship and teaching', which is 'but rarely reflected in the pages of the journals and monographs devoted to classical reception studies' (Stray 2018a, xv). The theory and practice of classical scholarship, including classical reception, is a huge field. The history of scholarship is now increasingly recognised as an area that is not only important for analysing classical receptions and classical traditions but is also a necessary tool in reflecting on research and teaching in any aspect of classics and ancient history. Scholarship is itself a 'reception' practice that in its turn shapes all parts of the field. Stray's comments prompt investigation of norms, modes of communication, measures of authority and means of persuasion that have shaped the interpretation of texts, the development of the study of ancient Greece and Rome, and its role in wider cultural and intellectual histories.

The histories of classical scholarship present a challenging mix of systemic assumptions, paradoxes and shifts in values, epistemology and practice, some of

¹ It is a pleasure and a privilege to be invited to contribute to this volume in honour of Chris Stray and I would like to thank him and the editors for making the publication possible. The main inspiration for this essay has been Stray's work, although he is in no way responsible for its contents. I would also like to thank audiences at the universities of Durham, Oxford, Queen's Belfast and the Institute of Classical Studies in London for their comments on earlier versions.

which are openly proclaimed, some of which are assumed, and some of which lurk beneath the surface. All scholarship has cultural parameters and norms. Historically, these have usually been based on aspirations to objectivity and emotional neutrality. Modern scholarship also includes but is not confined to the currently prominent categories of gender, sexuality, class and ethnicity. ‘Engaged’ scholarship is a slightly fuzzy concept that nods commitment to values that are thought to extend beyond the subject area itself. However, comparatively little attention has been given to investigating how and why research questions are formed, how questions shape research methods and how scholars persuade others that the questions are important and the judgements convincing. How are colleagues, students and readers to be persuaded, rather than drilled and dragooned? Looking at these processes in no way implies ‘bad faith’ on behalf of scholars, merely an acknowledgement that very few scholarly ‘truths’ are self-evident and that sometimes scholars do not explain how they have arrived at the questions that frame their investigations and hence shape the conclusions.

In this short essay I shall try to put a toe in the water of this ocean by focusing on issues around personal voice scholarship, identity scholarship and modes of persuasion. In the closing section I will move outward to suggest how it might be possible to build on those analyses and will make some suggestions about the future role of classical scholarship, both within the field of classics and in the wider public sphere. I hope this tentative exploration may lead to some future discussion.

Where better to start than with a quotation from Stray’s most recent book, his collection of essays *Classics in Britain: Scholarship, Education and Publishing 1800–2000* (Stray 2018a). Chapter 16 of this book is an essay on ‘Edward Adolf Sonnenschein and the Politics of Linguistic Authority in England, 1880–1930’. As with many of Stray’s essays, it was published in a cross-disciplinary collection that might have escaped the attention of classicists. It is structured round an argument that is richly informed by evidence from archives and publications dating from the time under consideration. It also exemplifies the importance of the critical evaluation of evidence in building a bridge between the ‘case-study’ and the bigger picture.

In a section of the essay headed *Grammatical Terminology and the Politics of Knowledge*, Stray addressed issues of academic ideology that were involved in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century construction of a university curriculum of separate specialist subjects. He argued that what was created was an ‘idea that any subject, studied in the search for truth, had a moral worth’ (Stray 2018a,

301). I am preaching to the converted when I say that in these days of instrumentalism and blurring of the distinctions between education and training, classicists are at the forefront of those who argue that intellectual acuity and integrity, underpinned by the weighing of evidence and of arguments and especially by the exposure of weak arguments and untruth, is the prime aim of education at all levels.

This is a noble aspiration, but the rhetoric is easier than the practice. I need to probe a little at the interfaces between the study of antiquity, conceptualisation, judgement and anachronism. As a graduate student, I had the good fortune to spend some time supervised by Moses Finley.² The initial six months were, to put it mildly, somewhat gruelling. I remember in particular one session in which I made the mistake of mouthing the then fashionable mantra about the difference between ancient and modern concepts (in particular between status groups and class categories; such distinctions underlay Finley's research on slavery). I then spent a challenging couple of hours being grilled about how concepts were generated and how they might be tested. I was made to reflect on the difference between sources and evidence and to give examples of the questions that sources must bear before they could be regarded as providing evidence. There followed an inquisition about the ways in which scholars alighted on questions (including the personal and social histories involved) and how they formulated questions and tested the results. It seems to me that not only historians of scholarship but also any practising classicist or ancient historian faces similar challenges today.

Scholars aspire (and I do not denigrate the role of aspiration in scholarship, as in life). They aspire to validate and vindicate in some way the importance of studying antiquity. They aspire to share in the *gravitas* of scholarship and also to wield its spotlights without fear or favour. They aspire to spread knowledge of the texts, ideas and material cultures of Greece and Rome in ways that both honour the ancient cultures and also inculcate critical thinking about antiquity and about subsequent times and places. Scholars face particular challenges because the worlds of antiquity and the present day are multi-faceted, culturally and politically, and are both distant and in various metaphorical and material ways still present. Attempts to engage with these problems without attention to the histories of scholarship and to the interaction between scholarship and the public imagination are surely doomed.

2 It was M.I. Finley who first advised me that I should meet and discuss with a (then) youthful researcher called Christopher Stray.

A look at some recent debates is salutary. There has been a certain amount of reflection on the perspectives that frame scholarly enquiry, the types of authority that they imply and the language of scholarship and its communications. A good example is the recognition of Personal Voice scholarship. This has surely exploded the assumption that the scholar has or could have a professional carapace insulated from his/her own life experiences, let alone that this would be a desirable state. Perspectives of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, physical and mental states are recognised as infusing critical thinking.

Judith Hallett, a pioneer in that field, has followed the lead of Nancy Miller and categorized the Personal Voice as entailing an 'explicitly autobiographical performance within the act of criticism' (Hallett 2001, 134). Hallett also aimed to situate this mode of self-expression within a larger intellectual framework. She has noted that individual biographies draw on lived experiences — for example as immigrants or children of refugee parents, Holocaust survivors, people of faith (Jews, Christians).³ Ground-breaking work by Hallett and Van Nortwick related the personal voice to style as well as to content and was instrumental in the recognition that powerfully felt emotions were important drivers of scholarship (Hallett and Van Nortwick 1997). The essays collected by Hallett and Van Nortwick also stressed the value of personal voice scholarship for the analysis and interpretation of Greek and Latin texts and their reception in various historical and cultural contexts and raised questions about the personal and professional implications of writing in a personal voice, which would be judged by sometimes hostile peers. To the issues they raised I would add the value of considering covert as well as overt aspects of the personal voice, which after all was not first invented in 1997. This repays some detective work, not only in respect of literary scholarship but also to search out ways in which personal voices can be embedded in historiography and commentaries. The kinds of questions asked by scholars — the underlying as well as the prominent — also shape the methods used and the tones and registers in which judgements are communicated. The personal voice analysis developed in the last quarter of the twentieth century by Hallett and van Nortwick and their collaborators provides an important benchmark for assessing how scholarly norms have shifted in subsequent years, and for identifying by comparison the focus and implications of more recent concerns. One of these concerns is the debate about the relationship between lived experience and the status and analysis of historical sources.

3 Hallett 2001, 133–4. Since the initial explorations of personal voice scholarship more attention has been paid to insights from Muslim traditions, from war veterans and other marginalized groups. The borders between personal and group experience are complex and mutually porous.

In 2013 the historian David Reynolds published a book, *The Long Shadow: the Great War and the Twentieth century*, a well-received contribution to the plethora of publications marking the run-up to the one hundredth anniversary of the outbreak in 1914 of the First World War. In his Introduction he commented:

In Britain we have lost touch with the Great War ... *1914–18 has become a literary war, detached from its moorings in historical events* [italics added] ... by reducing the conflict to personal tragedies, however moving, we have lost the big picture: the history has been distilled into poetry ... This process has been accentuated by the ‘cultural turn’ in academic history as a whole, which in the case of 1914–18, has resulted in a fascination with the public memory and memorialisation of the conflict (Reynolds 2013, xv).

In seeking to remove the ‘distilling’ effects of poetry from ‘scientific history’ Reynolds implicitly raised important questions about the relationship between poetry (and the arts more generally) and other ways of looking at the world. His enterprise involved not only questioning (justifiably) the umbrella term ‘war poets’ but also questioning whether some of the most influential writers could be regarded as truly representative, in their experiences and backgrounds, of the wider body of soldiers as well as of soldiers who wrote poetry:

we now reserve the term ‘war poets’ for a few celebrated soldiers such as Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen ... atypical soldiers as well as unrepresentative poets, being young, unmarried officers, sometimes uneasy about homosexual leanings and uncertain about their own courage — who often ended up with a martyr complex (Reynolds 2013, 187).⁴

By extension, Reynolds’ approach denies validity as historical evidence to the ‘personal voice’ of lived experience.

In contrast, the relationship between personal voice scholarship and lived experience, the questions prompted by both and the judgements to which they lead has been given a new turn by the work of Jonathan Shay. Shay (who has professional qualifications in both classical scholarship and psychiatry — PhD

⁴ Ivor Gurney and Isaac Rosenberg were actually private soldiers. They and the officers Owen, Sassoon, and Sorley had substantial experience of front-line fighting. Their letters as well as their poems and art work refer to the experience of soldiers in general. Reynolds’ thesis and the relationship between the lived experience of the war poets and artists and their aesthetics is discussed in more detail in Hardwick 2018. The forthcoming *Oxford Classical Reception Commentaries* (OCRC) digital project will include detailed analysis of the reception of classical texts in a range of WW1 poetry. See also Hardwick, Harrison and Vandiver forthcoming.

and MD), has authored two studies of Homeric epic. In the first, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* he discussed affinities between the psychological trauma of Achilles and that of military personnel who fought in Vietnam (Shay 1994). In the second, *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*, he discussed the problems of homecoming and reintegration into a society that had changed from the one that the veterans had left (Shay 2002). The books were motivated and constructed in a frame that involved interaction between three spheres of personal voice (Shay's; the veterans'; figures and focalisations in Homer) and three corresponding spheres of lived experience. The 2002 book was published with a Foreword by Senators John McCain (1936–2018) and Max Cleland (1942–). McCain, a Republican, was a Navy veteran and Cleland, a Democrat, served in the Army, so their experience and standpoints bridged generational and political differences. Their Foreword made a specific link between ancient and modern experience and also distinguished between different strands in those experiences: 'Those of us who have witnessed, taken part in, and suffered the tragedies of war know that the ancient Greek epics offer compelling insights into our own experiences' (McCain and Cleland in Shay 2002, xi).

In his Introduction, Shay took up those aspects in a nuanced reflection on the polyfocal structure of his book:

You already know that this book is written in a 'personal voice'. I don't, or won't, or can't hide behind an expressionless mask of professionalism. But this personal voice is somewhat different in each of the three parts of the book. The voice of the first part is the labor of love voice, telling readers about veterans, about the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In Part 2 I notice that my voice changes because I am trying to persuade my professional colleagues [sc.in psychiatry] to think differently. In Part 3 I address military professionals and the policy makers who are their bosses, and, most important, the American people, who are their boss's bosses. It is an effort in democratic persuasion — because I have authority over no one but myself (Shay 2002, 7).

It seems to me that Shay's reflection illuminates comparable processes in the subject areas of Classics and Ancient History, notably in (i) the relationship between personal voice and lived experience; (ii) communication with academic peers; and (iii) reaching out to the public sphere. In published work these aspects are infrequently articulated in direct authorial comment and may need to be tracked down by historians of scholarship who have access to paramaterial.

There is a further major leap to be made from the initial step that recognizes these perspectives and the experiences underlying them as starting points for asking questions of the sources. The next step requires formulating and investigating key questions about 'how can this be done?' and 'what difference is then

made and to whom?'. Do different scholarly approaches involve the *same* criteria of evaluation both of good questions and of good answers, even though they may use a different lens (whether that of veterans or other individuals or groups)? In other words, is it the personnel and the agenda which change or the substance of the discipline? Similar questions might be posed about the effects of the admission of scholars of different genders, cultures, ethnicities and class backgrounds. Is classical scholarship changing continually or are the new voices assimilated into what is already an established, even rigidly defined, project?

Identity politics has become a shorthand term that masks a complex inter-relationship of different things. For example, an increasing perception of the gap between government and people has generated more and more pressure groups that concentrate on getting particular issues on to the political agenda. Their determination to make their voices heard can be powerful, but the downside is that starting from a position of perceived marginalisation can restrict the wider public's ability and willingness to integrate such issues into the common fabric, and hence preclude addressing underlying causes. For example, the impact of war and peace is not only a matter for veterans. These are issues for all — as citizens and as human beings. There is also a tension between the value of the voice of lived experience and a potentially restricting sense that it is *only* people who are in that situation who have the right or duty to speak about it. This can result in a denial that others can understand the situation and by extension fragments responsibility for ameliorating it, with the result that the underlying causes may go unchallenged and unresolved. I mention these tensions because it seems to me that they provide some analogies with problems affecting communities of classical scholars.

In the area of classics there has been forceful debate in various spheres around identity issues. Lianeri and Zajko's edited collection (2008) pioneered theoretical aspects, focusing on the relationship between identity and change in the history of culture, with special studies of translation of Greek and Latin texts. Some disturbing events at recent conferences and informal and less public email exchanges between practitioners working in the field have revealed deep fractures within and between subject communities. One email discussion was initiated by Nathaniel, who has kindly given me permission to quote from his comments. Nathaniel was a student in Oxford and was a director of the Oxford Greek Play. In brief, his emails reflected on the history of how antiquity had been appropriated by scholarship — and through scholarship diffused into the public imagination — to create, underpin and sustain the association between Greek and

Roman antiquity and the validation, even vindication, of colonialism and racism.⁵

Nathaniel also stated his view that, in spite of having been admitted to the exclusive society of Oxford, gaining a double first in 'Mods' and 'Greats' (the Oxford undergraduate classics course) followed by a PhD in the United States (Michigan) and taking a prominent part in classical activities, he was nevertheless racialized as a black man and felt powerless to change the prevailing ethos and practice in the field. This led him, *inter alia*, to challenge the rather tentative suggestions I had made in a book chapter to the effect that classics was gradually being decolonised, that is liberated from its appropriation in predominantly western and imperialist narratives (Hardwick 2004). As a result of his doubts, Nathaniel took a gloomy view of the future of ancient Greece and Rome as a subject of study (other than for a small antiquarian residue who might claim its lack of utility as a virtue).⁶

'I was not encouraged to see, let alone critique, the colonial power struggle [that was imbricated in] the Classical Tradition in which we were working... Even though I got a double first *I feel cheated of a rigorous education*' (personal emails, January — October 2018, quoted with permission; italics added).⁷

These are hard words. Although I tried to persuade Nathaniel that there is an alternative and positive future for classics, while not denying the validity of his own experiences and his concerns, his intervention compelled me to take a look at the reverse side of the coin: firstly, to consider the question of the norms associated with the sense of identity of the scholarly community in classics as a whole; and secondly to consider how to construct and communicate a scholarship that neither represses nor privileges strands that contend with one another

5 To that might be added the validation and vindication of misogyny, a trope exposed by Emily Wilson's analysis of how Victorian translators of Homer's *Odyssey* added moral condemnation to the narrative of the hanging of the serving maids in *Od.* 22 after their sexual exploitation by the suitors. The effect was not only to blame the victims but also to misrepresent the text by repressing readers' awareness of the objectification in Homer of women as the property of males (Wilson 2017, 91). Wilson thus exposed a double untruth.

6 He subsequently became a teaching assistant at a University Centre for Black Humanities and not a lecturer in a Classics department. At the time of writing my essay he holds honorary research fellowships in the UK at the University of Birmingham Centre for West Midlands History and at the University of Warwick and is currently researching Black Perspectives in Birmingham's Memorials.

7 Other observations on the future of Classics made from a similar perspective can be found on the *Eidolon* Blog (www.eidolon.pub). The mission statement of *Eidolon* is a significant statement in the history of classical scholarship.

(including those which some might wish were not there but which are nevertheless part of its history).

I found it quite hard not to fall into the ‘identity trap’ myself. Robin DiAngelo’s studies have discussed the social environment that protects and insulates white people from race-based stress, exposure to which generates anxiety, triggering a range of defensive moves (DiAngelo 2011 and 2018). These include outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, guilt⁸ and behaviours such as argumentation, silence and leaving the stress-inducing situation. DiAngelo argued that these behaviours in turn function to retain and reinstate white racial equilibrium. She referred initially to interpersonal situations. She then shifted the responsibility for perpetuation of racial hierarchies from people of colour to white people and argued that whites do not need to be *active* supporters of racist social practices to be *complicit* in them. Silence is complicity. This is, according to DiAngelo, the result of a ‘failure of imagination’ rather than necessarily a moral flaw. For me, the notion of ‘failure of imagination’ immediately turns the lens back on to the effects and potential (both liberating and repressing) of an education that includes study of Greek and Roman texts, ideas and material culture.⁹ The other side of that coin is the cultural defensiveness of some classicists in the face of what they regard as a ‘blame project’ that imbricates them in the vindication and perpetuation of colonial attitudes, racism, misogyny, fascism and violence.¹⁰ This brings me to take a closer look at shifts in the parameters of how classicists self-define and how they seek to ensure the survival and future development of their discipline.

In talking about the identity of the community of classical scholars (senior, junior and students) I stress that I am not here talking about statistics or composition of

⁸ To which it seems that those who self-identify as liberal humanists may be particularly prone?

⁹ See for example, Richard Armstrong’s discussion of how translation can involve an imaginative approach to the future possibilities of epic (Armstrong 2008).

¹⁰ I am grateful to an anonymous external reader who posed the additional question of why classically educated scholars of colour have often been marginalised or ‘invisible’ outside their own peer group, despite their contributions to research and teaching. S/he cited the 2009 Greek language course published by James Ezzueduemhoi the Nigerian-born classicist, as an example. See also Rankine 2006 and Malamud 2013 for discussions of cultural and political exclusion/inclusion, and Goff/Simpson 2007 for creative practices and their receptions. Goff (2013b, 163 n. 14) refers under the sub-heading ‘Educational Slavery’ to public policy predispositions towards technical and agricultural education rather than to Black Colleges that had a classical curriculum, such as Howard and Fisk.

the community or its demographics, nor about the persisting problems in the UK of access to study of classical subjects at school and university and to professional appointments in the subject area.¹¹ There are two aspects to analysing identity definitions in particular subject areas. The first aspect requires recognition that identity in respect of individuals is likely to be multi-faceted. Most people simultaneously hold several identities, personal, social, cultural, professional. In some contexts one identity may be paramount (either as the result of self-definition or externally imposed). The second aspect concerns how an academic or subject community defines itself and how it is regarded externally (including how it projects itself). Group identity may constrain, enhance or shape the senses of identity of the individual members and sub-groups (and by extension their relationship with wider society). How individuals perceive their own identities and the extent to which they judge that they are pushed to proclaim or repress these is increasingly recognised as important. I have already made clear my view that having any particular class, cultural, ethnic or gender identity is by no means a *sine qua non* for speaking on problems of exclusion, oppression or limitation of academic aspiration.¹²

In a recent article Kenan Malik has explored how identity politics can become a means rather than an end in itself:

I discovered I could find more solidarity with those whose ethnicity and culture was different to mine [sic], but who shared my values, than with those with whom I shared an ethnicity or culture but not the same political vision. Politics was not shackled to my identity but *helped me reach beyond it*. (Malik 2020, italics added)

Politics and scholarship are not co-terminous but Malik's comments offer a heuristic spur. Once it is clear that identity can function as a springboard for formulating questions and methods of investigating them, identity scholarship can become a radical tool rather than an end in itself. The values and practices of the scholarly community and openness to extending its reach then enter the debate. To investigate the trends for classics, it is helpful not just to look at the work done on cultural and political identity by critics such as Stuart Hall and Kwame Anthony Appiah (Hall 1990; Appiah 1993), but also to consider analyses that have been

¹¹ These areas have been the focus of detailed studies published in the Bulletin of the UK Council of University Classical Departments (<https://cucd.blogs.sas.ac.uk>).

¹² For the record, I am female, white, no longer young, born a Bristolian, and probably assimilated to whatever kinds of 'middle-class' labels are now attached to professional academics, but those are externally imposed categories that I would not necessarily select if self-describing.

made of organisations as sites of identity. Here I draw on Andrew Brown's analysis, published in an international journal devoted to Management (Brown 2015). I want to emphasise that in referring to 'identity scholarship' I do not mean scholarly investigation of issues of identity, but rather scholarship that is informed and shaped, wittingly or unwittingly, by the identity of the teacher or researcher, and/or is regarded as such and evaluated accordingly. This can be a positive factor when it leads to the inclusion of marginalised issues or new research questions and data or it can be negative when used to limit the application of the hypotheses that have been tested by the researcher. There is a parallel with the potential and shortcomings of identity politics that I referred to earlier.

Brown uses a working definition of identities as: 'people's constructively construed understanding of who they were, are and desire to become'. In terms of desire to study antiquity and work towards become a professional scholar (teaching and/or research) that provides a general definition. Brown also identifies five interconnected debates in contemporary identity research, centred on notions of: Choice, Stability, Coherence, Positivity, Authenticity.

You may well comment that the summary I have included contains some unargued assumptions about the content and value of all these terms and you would be right. In terms of becoming a professional scholar they are all problematic. They involve some sub-texts. Choice is conditioned by agency and structure; Stability is counter-balanced by fluidity and by openness to challenge and change; Coherence has to accommodate debate, even fragmentation; Positivity is counterbalanced by doubt (an essential for scholarship although, as I have pointed out, doubt can collapse into a more generalised anxiety and pessimism); and as for Authenticity ... In terms of scholarship I would characterize this as entailing a scrupulous transparency in identifying questions and methods, evaluating evidence and presenting the conclusions in a manner that is respectful to those who have laboured with equal integrity but have arrived at different judgements.¹³ The scholar's duty to 'follow the argument where it leads' will sometimes unearth troubling material and lead to unforeseen (and perhaps unwelcome) conclusions.

My point in querying Brown's categories is to make the point that although identity in classical scholarship is (sometimes) categorised by a strong sense of shared scholarly values and community, in order to achieve that it also has to

¹³ For example, Harloe 2013 and Hardwick 2013 endeavoured in different ways to address thorny questions in current debates about shifts in paradigms and practices in the subject area. The Editors' 'Introduction: Making Connections' to Hardwick and Stray 2008, 1–3, offered a preliminary sketch of some of these issues.

accommodate — and indeed encourage — debates, challenges, difference. It therefore differs in important respect from the kinds of potentially coercive and rigid norms and structures that make up much of the ‘business model’ deployed in management theory and practice, in which those initiated may be expected to embrace the totality of the ‘Brand’.¹⁴

However, even if admission to the community of classical scholars does not depend on coercion, it is worth glancing at the ways in which norms are established and communicated both within scholarship and beyond. One of the helpful tools in tracking such processes is Nudge Theory. The concept is found in behavioural science, political theory and behaviour economics and it is frequently theorized using models derived from psychology. At their simplest Nudge models describe systems of positive reinforcement and indirect suggestion, suggestions that are intended to influence the decision-making, behaviour and actions of groups and individuals (so linking back to the third of the categories identified by Shay). The term Nudge is commonly applied to a wide range of contexts and issues. The best known specific example of a Nudge situation is probably that of the fly etched in men’s urinals with the aim of encouraging accurate aim. However, Nudge practice has also migrated to politics. For example, in 2010 UK Prime Minister David Cameron set up a Nudge Unit to explore and test ways of communicating the advantages and disadvantages of compliant behaviour in payment of taxes and other social priorities.¹⁵ This influenced US President Barack Obama to experiment along the same lines.¹⁶ Obama consulted the Harvard law professor Cass Sunstein and in 2014 the White House launched a Social and Behavioural Science team (SBST) to lead a cross-agency initiative to bring behavioural science into policy making.¹⁷ Similar Units are based in the OECD, the World Bank and the United Nations. All these have in common a wish to promote compliance without enforcement, either because enforcement is not plausible (e.g. in terms of resources or democratic and civic values) or (more sinisterly) because the point of the exercise is that the subjects must not be aware that they are

¹⁴ There is, however, some relevance to scholarship here in that universities increasingly use business and marketing models in which research and teaching are characterised and regulated in ways derived from management theory. Furthermore, these sometimes involve promotion of the Brand of a particular institution.

¹⁵ The Editors have pointed out to me the ‘benevolent’ potential in employment of Nudge techniques to promote awareness and positive action in respect of the climate emergency.

¹⁶ Wright 2015 records that the President signed an executive order directing the federal government to make use of behavioural science to ‘improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government programmes’.

¹⁷ Vinik 2015 offers an account and critique of this experiment.

being nudged in a particular direction. The possible lack of transparency associated with Nudge can be partially contrasted with other means of bringing about desired behaviour, such as education and legislation.

The best-known theorization of Nudge is probably in Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein's book *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth and Happiness* (Thaler and Sunstein 2008). They coined two terms that have stuck with the concept. The first is *libertarian paternalism*, which implies both the liberty not to do what one is being nudged towards and the assumption that 'those who know best' are nudging one in a good direction. The second term they coined, and the one that is most important for my argument here, is *choice architecture*. In that scenario, Nudgers are the architects of choice. That is, they design and populate spaces that frame what people may choose to do (and think). In scholarship the concept of 'choice architecture' is readily applicable to curricula, to the structure and content of research projects, commentaries and much else besides. It subtly shapes what people experience, intellectually and materially, how they respond to it and relates that to their own future decisions, what they do — and by extension, the outcomes for them (including gaining high grades, appointments and promotions and the approbation of their colleagues, research funders and publishers).

Nudging involves appealing to senses of identity, whether based on experience or aspiration. This may involve a simple use of triggers such as 'we' and 'our' to massage readers' and listeners' identification with the judgements being communicated. Even apparently dispassionate scholarly work is inevitably infused with persuasion to accept arguments and observations. For example, in his influential commentary on Sophocles' *Antigone*, Richard Jebb's persuader words include 'naturally' (to describe Creon's irritated response to a woman's defiance, line 679; Jebb 2004, 129). Other nudges given at this point in the commentary depend on words such as 'tact' and 'deference'. The values are those of Jebb's time and it is equally salutary to identify and reflect on the persuader words that are used in present-day commentaries to shape users' responses. As with reading translations, reading commentaries requires a critical distance (which students can and should be encouraged to develop). Even the best scholarly work cannot be detached from its language and context.¹⁸

Critique of Nudge theory and practice may suggest that Nudge is a euphemism for psychological manipulation. Critics make the points that Nudging can

¹⁸ See comments in the Preface to Harrison 2001. Kraus and Stray 2016 includes essays on the history and evaluation of commentaries.

be short-term in its effects and that it diminishes autonomy. In terms of scholarship that would be a serious criticism, since academic freedom is so highly valued. Therefore, I do want to probe a bit further and ask about the extent to which the famed intellectual rigour of the classical (or any other) scholarly community can actually be somewhat cosmetic. There is a certain *cursus honorum* (although it is not unknown for a *res publica* to mutate into empire). Identity can be ‘caught’; it can also be imposed. Put bluntly, does acceptance into the company of professional scholars involve a smoothing out of other potentially overlapping identities that are part of the individual *persona* and of lived and inherited experience? Can this involve a suppression of aspiration for the setting of alternative agendas (intellectual and cultural)? What difference is made when perceived and historically evident barriers of gender, race, or sexuality are dismantled or rendered negotiable? And how can any differences made to classical scholarship be identified and described?

There are many double-binds involved in trying to answer these questions. For instance, there has been distinguished work done in both teaching and research to retrieve female classicists from the historical limbo to which most of them had been consigned. Female scholars have been appointed to senior positions. Yet to ask whether the theory and practice of scholarship itself has been changed by this risks on the one hand falling into the trap of essentialism (i.e. assuming that women think and work in particular ways precisely because they are women) and so on *vel sim.* in terms of race and ethnicity. The trap on the other hand is equally awkward: if the norms and aspirations of scholarship remain unchanged, it can be said that the ‘outsiders’ have been normalised into the (predominantly white) patriarchy that set and developed those scholarly practices and criteria, including the topics for research and teaching and the questions asked of received wisdom about them. Indeed, access to the power systems at play may be part of the attraction of work in classics — and, as the 2015 essay collection edited by Stead and Hall as part of the *Classics and Class* project has shown, initiates may use classical resonances to embrace enthusiastically the values of the powerful rather than to challenge the *status quo* (Hardwick 2015). Do new topics and different kinds of evidence require not only new questions but also experiments in ways of interrogating and evaluating sources before they can be accepted as providing ‘evidence’ that supports judgements? In the long term investigating ‘what difference was made’ will require strong powers of Stray-like

detection to locate and work through archival material, including annotated texts, letters and other unpublished sources.¹⁹

I would now like to move on to the third area identified by Shay, the public realm. There is some encouragement to be found in current projects generated by neighbouring subject areas and I will mention just two of those before commenting on the extent to which classical studies in general has the potential to ‘come out of the closet’ and make a distinctive contribution.

Professor Mona Baker, a leading translation studies teacher and researcher, heads an international project on the Genealogies of Knowledge, which has implications not just for how scholarship itself is framed and transmitted but also for how scholars operate in the wider public domain. The Genealogies Project hosted a conference in Manchester in 2019 which, *inter alia*, aimed to challenge Edward Said’s ideal of the public intellectual as a beacon of fiercely independent incorruptibility and an expression of the norms of liberal democracy. It aimed to generate critical examination of his view as a product of place and time. There are bound to be implications for the corresponding myth of the classical scholar as embodying similar qualities.

Chris Stray has already raised questions about the extent to which admission into classical scholarship involves admission into shared codes. ‘Shared codes’ can imply something that could be described as ‘classical values’ as well as pointing to methods of categorising and interrogating sources and the criteria for making judgements in response to specific questions. However, these issues are not confined to one discipline, nor to academic life. Sometimes looking outside one’s own immediate intellectual environment aids clarity. As Arundhati Roy put it in her 2018 Sebald Lecture at the British Library on the topic ‘What is the Morally

¹⁹ Wyles and Hall, in the Introduction to their edited collection of essays on women and scholarship have started to engage with these questions (Wyles and Hall 2016), as have Cox and Theodorakopoulos 2019. To my knowledge at present, systematic investigation of the long-term effects on scholarship of senses of racial and ethnic identity has yet to be undertaken, although prosopographical studies are opening the way to this, notably Ronnick 2006 and 2011. The essays in Hardwick and Gillespie 2007 and Cox 2011 and 2018 primarily address the work of creative practitioners in the arts and literature rather than that of scholars, as does Hurst 2006. Stephens/Vasunia, 2010 focuses on national identities. Hall/Stead 2020 focuses on class, with some discussion of gender and ethnicity. The Postclassicisms Collective 2020 unfortunately appeared too late to be discussed here. Its chapters on ‘Knowing’ (2.5) and ‘Situations’ (2.7) are particularly relevant. The authors identify their driving question as ‘how does who you are affect how you engage with antiquity?’ (144). See also Goff (2013a).

Appropriate Language in which to Think and Write': 'people who speak the same language are not necessarily those who understand one another best'.²⁰ Roy self-identifies as the opponent of 'one nation, one religion, one language' and points to schisms within as well as between communities. She picks up Mona Baker's term 'a companionship of languages', which was coined to represent the mutual-ity of source and target languages in translation studies. Roy adapts this to image an 'infusion' of languages, not as a scattering of quotes or tags from different languages but as a mutually enhancing relationship. For example, she refers to her novel *The Ministry* as 'written in English but imagined in several languages'. Her approach might equally well prompt examination of the dialogue between languages, modes of discourse and underlying assumptions in subject communities of scholars.²¹ This is relevant to two key questions for practising classicists and ancient historians: (i) in what language(s) do classical scholars think and imagine, as well as write?²² (ii) given that Greek and Latin make even imperial languages, such as English, become subaltern, does this assist classicists to achieve polyphonic perspectives on debates inside and outside their field? In her lecture Roy commented that: 'my English has been widened and deepened by the rhythms and cadences of my alien mother's other tongues'.

Following on once more from Shay's encouragement to engage with public issues, the next area to mention is this: how can classical scholarship best engage with wider debates about the past — in terms of analysis, judgements (intellectual and ethical) and in terms of how the past is represented and communicated in the present? This is a huge and challenging question that permeates many current issues — for example, disputes about the naming of buildings and philanthropic projects (as in debates in the city of Bristol about the Colston Hall and in

20 The 2017 W.G. Sebald Lecture was given by Michael Longley, who deploys Greek and Roman texts in many of his poems. The 2019 Lecture was given by Emily Wilson (see n. 5 above).

21 'Words and the Company They Keep' was the subject of the Oxford seminar series in autumn 2019 co-hosted by the *Classics And Poetry Now* network and the *Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama*.

22 In a forthcoming essay I hope to reflect on the 'inner translations' that take place in the intellects and imaginations of authors of commentaries and other scholarly works (Hardwick forthcoming). These 'inner translations' involve movements across and between ancient and modern languages and, especially in the case of multi-lingual scholarship, *between* modern languages (including in translations of academic presentations and publications). This is an area of intersection between scholarship, hermeneutics and reception that has been under-researched.

Oxford's Corpus Christi College about the renaming of the Fraenkel Room to become the Refugee Scholars' Room);²³ the siting of statues; the award and retention of blue plaques and other marks of historical recognition.

Underlying these debates are deep questions about how a society and its institutions recognise and characterize their historical involvement in empire, slavery, misogyny, genocide and their effects in the present. These are sites for struggle. Usually the victors get to decide, although their dominance may not last. For example, the toppling of the statue of Sadaam Hussein in Iraq was widely presented in TV news films in the West in the context of defeat for Sadaam and victory for Western forces and Iraqi dissidents. More recently there has been extensive interest in the fate of statues of Confederate generals in the US and of colonialist icons such as Cecil Rhodes in South Africa and in the UK. You may have your own examples.

For the purposes of this essay two aspects of these struggles seem to me to be especially important. The first is that the history of the statues and of the debates surrounding them provide an index to political and cultural shifts. Within that frame the second important aspect is that who erected the statue and how it was designated can itself involve an element of appropriation of the past in the service of subsequent values. For example, in 2020 the toppling of the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol involved a complex set of issues. Colston (1636–1721) was a slave trader who had devoted a substantial proportion of his fortune to philanthropic educational and cultural work in Bristol and elsewhere. The Royal Africa Company with which he was associated had trafficked over 84,000 people (including 12,000 children) from West Africa to the Americas. The statue of him was a late nineteenth-century installation, commissioned and erected in 1895 long after the slave trade itself was abolished. The Bristol city authorities who authorized this were fully aware of the origins of Colston's wealth but chose to inscribe with the statue a eulogy assimilating him to Victorian values:²⁴ 'Erected by the citizens of Bristol as a memorial of one of the most virtuous and wise sons of that city'. The statue was unveiled by the then Mayor of Bristol and the Bishop of Bristol. In 1977 it was given the architectural and historical status of Grade 2 listing. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries there were petitions asking for the addition of a detailed explanatory plaque and suggesting resiting in the city's Museum. Alternative art installations were created as a form of challenge

²³ See Elsner's essay in this volume.

²⁴ A summary, with images of the statue and supporting Bibliography, can be found at [wikipedia.org/wiki/statue_of_Edward_Colston](https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/statue_of_Edward_Colston)

and protest. The requests for removal of Colston's statue were resisted.²⁵ In 2020 the Black Lives Matter movement provided a catalyst and on 7 June Colston's statue was toppled and thrown into Bristol Dock.²⁶ The example of Colston and the debates and events surrounding the statue provide a microcosm for study of the threads involved in assessing and commemorating the past and the successive appropriations that occur.²⁷ In that respect, the episode also provides a heuristic metaphor for some of the challenges revealed in the history of scholarship.

Illuminating this field, there is important work being done in Memory Studies.²⁸ As the *Trackers* epigraph to this essay suggests 'Memory runs a marathon'. In theoretical terms, three influential models of memory have been identified: antagonistic, cosmopolitan, agonistic (Bull *et al.*). The last of these has specific resonances with Greek literature and history. *Agonistic* memory serves as a contrast to concepts of *antagonistic* memory (i.e. 'them and us', 'goodies and baddies') and *cosmopolitan* memory (that seeks a consensual judgement that implies 'universal' collective belonging and can result in confrontation with those who are excluded). Agonistic memory involves listening to arguments and recognising that there are different experiences of past events. It underlies and informs practices of restorative justice, of truth and reconciliation commissions, for instance as developed in post-apartheid South Africa.²⁹ The deployment of an agonistic memory model is also found in recent approaches to curating in War Museums (for example, the Imperial War Museum's *Lest We Forget* project); in the collaboration between Nottingham Trent University and the Ulster Museum in

25 A city councillor described the aims as 'revisionist'.

26 This action was, in effect, a performative irony, as not only was the statue thrown into the waters near where slave ships had sailed but the action also recalled the fate of many of the enslaved Africans who were thrown overboard alive during the Atlantic crossing if sickness or shortage of food threatened the success of the traders. Olivette Otele, Professor of the History of Slavery at Bristol University has drawn attention to the fact that many other slave traders are still uncritically celebrated in Bristol and elsewhere, while the legacy of poverty, racism and modern slavery remain to be tackled (Otele 2019).

27 For an example which draws on complicated colonial histories and the use of classical sculpture, see Evans (2007) which discusses histories surrounding the Voortrekker monument in South Africa. At the time of publication, the inclusion of an essay on that topic in a volume on classical receptions was considered questionable by some critics.

28 On antiquity and its reception this includes a substantial project *Memoria Romana*, led by Karl Galinsky (Galinsky 2014; <https://www.press.umich.edu/6421151/memoria.romana>; www.laits.utexas.edu/memoria).

29 Yael Farber's play *Molara* (published text 1998) contributed to this through her re-imagining of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, in which the Areopagus of *Eumenides* was replaced by a framework based on the Truth and Reconciliation process (Van Zyl Smit 2010; Hardwick 2010).

the *Voices of 68: Contested Pasts* project; and in the UNREST project — *Unsettling, Remembering, Social Cohesion in Transnational Europe*.

Understanding why people thought and acted as they did can bring contexts and value judgements into dialogue and support aspirations for a better future without repressing or sanitizing the past. Classics and ancient history provide important threads that run through these. I could cite, for example, how the subject area and its scholars have been imbricated in the struggles through which Germany has had to come to terms with its past; how creative writers such as Derek Walcott and Seamus Heaney have deployed and sometimes repositioned material from Greece and Rome.³⁰ However, I also want to suggest that the potential contribution of classics and ancient history scholarship and teaching goes beyond case studies and beyond classical reception research. The subject matter of classics and ancient history is based on societies and cultures founded on slavery, xenophobia and misogyny, preserved through force and by various kinds of empire and class/status denigration, transmitted via privilege and subsequently frequently, although not exclusively, deployed in the service of values based on oligarchy and colonialism (internal and external). That it is the discipline's research that has revealed this, and that much significant work has been done to reconstruct lost and neglected evidence and to retrieve lost voices, does serve to redress imbalance but does not change the basic truths.

What is important is how such unpalatable facts are faced; how scholars can best assess how and to what extent these situations were identified, explored and challenged in antiquity; how judgements can best be made about the extent to which the ancient texts, ideas and values seeded subsequent ones; how the extent to which subsequent values were grafted back onto antiquity (that equally includes what might be described as 'progressive' values) can be assessed and communicated (and to whom). All these are the fabric of the study of Greek and Roman antiquity and its receptions. I suggest we can also put this work to greater use.

The histories of classics and ancient history scholarship and public engagement provide a prototype for the kind of 'facing up to the past' that present societies as a whole now have to do. Classical scholars and students have the advantage of critical distance because the past of Greece and Rome is both distant and different, and yet is also an agent in the development of subsequent cultural and political frames and attitudes. The histories of the discipline also offer the

³⁰ See further the essays in Harrison 2009; Parker and Mathews 2011, Harrison *et al.* 2019. The essays in Richardson 2019 examine the role of classical receptions in times of crisis.

opportunity to use comparative perspectives — different times, places, languages, cultures. For all of these sites Greek and Roman antiquity is important but is neither a totally defining characteristic nor confined to any one place, time or receiving culture. Of course there is a risk — this time of appearing to claim exceptionalism for the study of Greek and Roman antiquity.³¹ So I prefer to use the term ‘distinctive contribution’ to cover the role of classics research and public engagement in addressing these deep issues.³²

One final point. It is often said that the job of scholars in the public domain (and in the academic community with which they identify) is to discuss complex ideas in a straightforward way. Lucidity is an honourable aspiration but it is not the same as simplicity. There is another side to the coin. The job of scholars is also to undermine easy assumptions about simplicity (whether rhetorical or substantive). They should not be afraid of trying to analyse and communicate complexity and nuance (lucidly of course). In so doing scholars will also make a contribution to the current public debates about how best to recognise, explain and debate the awful strands in everyone’s histories, rather than to deny, repress and erase them.

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31 ‘Exceptionalism’ brings adverse connotations because of its use, laden with associations of value, power and entitlement, to vindicate imperial and racial hegemonies and, more parochially, its associations with the grand narratives associated with classics and classicism.

32 The poet, translator and critic Josephine Balmer has characterized scholarship as potentially ‘poetic’ in its imagination and ‘inspirational’ in its effects (in a paper that examined ‘Poetic Inspiration from non-literary Texts’, Oxford 28 October 2019). Holmes 2016 makes an inspirational case for *cosmopoiesis* which she interprets as: ‘the building of worlds that bring sometimes unusual constellations of ancient texts together with live elements in the present in creative symbiosis’. Holmes acknowledges that this process is ‘processual, partial and contingent’ and yet by virtue of those qualities is also ‘integral to the world of living together and living well’ (Holmes 2016, 285).

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