

THE LEGACY OF THE DRUNKEN DUCHESS: GRACE HARRIET MACURDY, BARBARA MCMANUS AND CLASSICS AT VASSAR COLLEGE, 1893–1946

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ABSTRACT

This paper builds on a monumental biography published by the Ohio State University Press in 2017: The Drunken Duchess of Vassar: Grace Harriet Macurdy, Pioneering Feminist Scholar, by the late Barbara McManus. Macurdy (1866–1946), who came from a family without social, economic and educational advantages, joined the Classics faculty at the all-female Vassar College in 1893 after receiving BA and MA degrees from Harvard University’s Radcliffe Annex. Following a year studying in Berlin, she received her PhD from Columbia in 1903, and immediately established herself as an internationally renowned Greek scholar, ultimately publishing two groundbreaking books on ancient women’s history. I will contextualize Macurdy’s life and work by looking at evidence beyond the purview of McManus’ book about two of Macurdy’s equally illustrious Classics colleagues, who taught with her at Vassar prior to her retirement in 1937 — Elizabeth Hazelton Haight (1872–1964) and Lily Ross Taylor (1886–1969).

KEYWORDS

Grace Harriet Macurdy, Barbara McManus, Vassar College, Elizabeth Hazelton Haight, Lily Ross Taylor, women’s history

1. Grace H. Macurdy’s Legacy

My essay and the research it represents build on a monumental work of biographical scholarship published by the Ohio State University Press in 2017: *The Drunken Duchess of Vassar: Grace Harriet Macurdy, Pioneering Feminist Scholar*, by Barbara McManus.¹ Macurdy, who lived from 1866 through 1946, taught Classics at the then all-female Vassar College for 44 years, from 1893 through 1937. McManus, born four years before Macurdy’s death, in 1942, taught

¹ McManus (2017). See also Hallett (2016a) 213 and (2018a) and the review by Pounder (2017).

Classics at the all-female College of New Rochelle, her own undergraduate alma mater, from 1967 to 2001. She died on June 19, 2015, shortly after finishing her labors on this book.²

Three months before her death, immediately upon submitting the manuscript to the Press, aware that she would not be able to see it through publication, Barbara McManus had entrusted the British classicist Christopher Stray and me with the privilege of bringing the book to completion. Since then, I have also enthusiastically embraced the challenge of continuing McManus' research about Macurdy, and about the study of classical languages, literatures and cultures at Vassar and other U.S. women's colleges from the 1890s, when Macurdy joined the Vassar faculty, until the 1940s, when Macurdy died, a period extending over fifty years. One, but far from the only, reason for my embrace of this challenge is that the two distinguished scholars who refereed the manuscript suggested further lines of inquiry that McManus' manuscript did not pursue: perhaps because of its singular biographical focus on one, fascinating, individual.

Macurdy grew up outside of Boston in the working-class suburb of Watertown, in a family without social, economic and educational advantages. She suffered from deafness from the time she was in her early fifties; she assumed responsibility for raising the three motherless offspring of her sister soon after becoming deaf. Nevertheless, after earning her BA in 1888 and taking a series of graduate courses in Classics at Harvard's Radcliffe Annex, studying for a year in Berlin in 1899–1900, and receiving her PhD in 1903 at Columbia University in New York City (in a mere two years, while teaching full-time at Vassar), Macurdy established herself as an internationally renowned Greek scholar. Her publications included two groundbreaking books on ancient women's history, both published by the Johns Hopkins University Press: *Hellenistic Queens: A Study of Woman-Power in Macedonia, Seleucid Syria*

² See Taylor and Haight (1915) on Vassar College before and during Macurdy's time there. According to its *Wikipedia* entry (2019), the college was "the second degree-granting institution of higher education for women in the United States, one of the historic Seven Sisters, and one of the first elite female colleges in the US." Located in Poughkeepsie, New York, 84 miles north of New York City, it remained all female until going coeducational in 1969. For Macurdy's years at Vassar, see McManus (2016) 201–211 and (2017) 34–225 as well as Pomeroy (2019). For McManus's years studying as an undergraduate (1960–1964) and then teaching (1967–2001) at the all-female College of New Rochelle, 69 miles to the south of Vassar in Westchester County, see Hallett (2016a) and McManus (2017) x–xiii (by Hallett and Stray) as well as Brown–Hallett–Marsilio–Raia (2016) and (2019).

and *Ptolemaic Egypt* in 1932 and *Vassal Queens and Some Contemporary Women in the Roman Empire* in 1937.³

One of the two scholars who refereed *The Drunken Duchess* was Elizabeth Carney of Clemson University, who has published widely on Hellenistic queens. A graduate of another woman's college, Smith, she is also the mother of a Vassar alumna. The other was Donald Lateiner of Ohio Wesleyan University, father of a Vassar alumnus, whose scholarly specializations include ancient prose fiction: an area of literary research pioneered by Macurdy's Latinist colleague at Vassar, Elizabeth Hazelton Haight, herself an 1894 Vassar graduate. Both Carney and Lateiner were eager to see Macurdy's career and scholarship situated in a larger social and historical context, ideally through close comparisons between her career and those of other contemporary female classicists, both at Vassar and elsewhere. My paper will contextualize Macurdy's work in this very way, by looking at some evidence beyond the purview of McManus' book about two of Macurdy's Vassar Classics colleagues, Haight and Lily Ross Taylor, and indeed about Macurdy herself.⁴

³ See McManus (2017), as well as the book's back cover; see also Hallett (2016a) and (2018a).

⁴ Both Lateiner and Carney are quoted on the back cover of *The Drunken Duchess*, with the former stating: "McManus has delivered a pioneering study of an American Classicist and feminist academic," and the latter, "Macurdy's life is fascinating, and McManus has recovered an amazing collection of primary sources about it." For Lateiner, see his *Prabook* entry (2019); for Carney, see her Clemson faculty biography (2019). The back cover also contains the following summary of the book:

In this biography, Barbara McManus recovers the intriguing life story of Grace Harriet Macurdy (1866–1946), Professor of Greek at Vassar College and the first woman classicist to focus her scholarship on the lives of ancient Greco-Roman women. Fondly known as "The Drunken Duchess," although she never drank alcohol, Macurdy came from a poor family with no social, economic, or educational advantages. Moreover she struggled with disability for decades after becoming almost totally deaf in her early fifties. Yet [after receiving a BA from Harvard's Radcliffe Annex in 1888, winning a fellowship to study in Berlin, and, while teaching full-time at Vassar, earning a PhD from Columbia (where she also taught for several summers) in 1903] she became an internationally known Greek scholar with a long list of publications and close friends as renowned as [the British Greek scholar] Gilbert Murray and [the British poet laureate] John Masefield.

Through Macurdy's eyes and experiences, McManus' biography also examines significant issues and developments from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, such as the opening of higher education to women, the erosion of gender and class barriers in the profession, the delicate balancing

Macurdy's Vassar Classics colleague of greatest socio-historical interest is certainly Haight. Born in 1872, she received a PhD in Classics from Cornell, then taught at Vassar from 1902 through 1942, serving as Chair of the Latin Department after attaining the rank of Full Professor in 1923. Like Macurdy, she published prolifically, in the areas of Greek and Latin poetry as well as in ancient prose fiction.⁵ Lily Ross Taylor, perhaps the most esteemed American female classicist of the twentieth century, deserves a closer look in this context too. Upon receiving her PhD from Bryn Mawr College in 1912, she joined the Vassar faculty, where she taught until 1927 before returning to Bryn Mawr, initially as Professor and Chair of Latin, later becoming Dean of the Graduate School.

During the First World War, Taylor left Vassar to become the first woman appointed as Fellow at the newly consolidated American Academy in Rome, arriving in October 1917. But she spent most of her fellowship year (1917–1918) in Padua as an American Red Cross hospital inspector. During her second Fellowship year (1918–1919), Taylor spent nine months in war work, especially as part of the American Red Cross Commission to the Balkans, including five months in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and only three at the Academy. She concluded her war work in September 1919, and was in residence at the Academy in 1919–1920 until late August, and then again for three months in fall 1921. Over a decade later, during the 1934–1935 academic year, while on sabbatical

act between personal and professional life required of women, the marginalized role of women's colleges in academic politics, and changes in the discipline and profession of Classics in response to the emerging role of women and new social conditions.

Geffcken (2018), my undergraduate Classics teacher at Wellesley College, who was born in 1927 and has been associated with the American Academy in Rome for 65 years, called my attention to another Vassar Latinist on whom she has herself done research: Elizabeth Hatch Palmer. A Wellesley graduate, Palmer spent 1912 at the American School of Classical Studies in Rome, lived at the Pensione Girardet where most women classicists resided at that time, became a friend of the archaeologist Esther Van Deman, and collected ancient coins for teaching. Geffcken reported a recent conversation with the granddaughter of the Pensione Girardet's owner that afforded her the opportunity to examine an album of photos and a summary about guests. Haight figures prominently in both, along with Macurdy and Taylor (from her year as an ASCSR student in 1909–1910). These records offer valuable information for future researchers on these American women classicists.

Geffcken also mentioned Ethel Brewster as "another Latinist in that Vassar scene, who also had Rome ties, agreed with Taylor that the department needed to do more than translation, and moved on to Swarthmore."

⁵ For Haight, see Lateiner (1996–1997) and (2019) as well as her *Wikipedia* (2019a) and *Vassar College Encyclopedia* entries (2019b).

from Bryn Mawr, Taylor came back to the American Academy in Rome, as “Acting” Professor-in-charge of its School of Classical Studies; upon retiring in 1952, she was appointed “Official” Professor in charge at the same program, holding that post through 1955.⁶ Both Haight and Taylor also served as the second and third female presidents of the national professional organization of classicists, the American Philological Association, in 1934 and 1942 respectively.⁷

To be sure, McManus’ book devotes some attention to Haight, largely in connection with Macurdy’s attempts to support Haight’s promotion to Full Professor in 1922. Yet McManus does not give Haight’s academic achievements, among them thirteen books, much scrutiny or credit. Indeed, she quotes Macurdy’s recommendation of Haight for promotion, comparing Haight’s work unfavorably to that of Taylor and deeming the latter “distinguished.”⁸ As for Taylor herself, McManus quotes, very

⁶ For Taylor, see Brennan (2018) and Broughton (2019).

⁷ As McManus (2017) 61–98, notes, Abby Leach, who hired and then cruelly persecuted Macurdy at Vassar, was the first female president of the American Philological Association in 1900. Of special interest in this context are 95 (“[Leach] did not pursue a formal program of study leading to a doctorate but rather studied informally at the University of Leipzig and also attended some lectures of Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve at Johns Hopkins University”) and 97–98 (“Leach was strikingly different from the small number of men who controlled the APA offices — not so much because she was a woman, but rather because, unlike these eminent scholars, she had never published a single article nor delivered a paper at a classics conference until she gave her APA presidential address. She was the ‘prodigy’ of William Watson Goodwin, the Harvard Greek professor whom she had persuaded to give her private tuition. Goodwin had twice served as APA president ... To Goodwin and others, Abby Leach was a fine figurehead, an imposing and attractive woman who was a skilled classical linguist but posed no threat to male hegemony in the association.”). See also Hallett (2019) on the female presidents of the APA who succeeded Haight and Taylor. Two of them, Cornelia Catlin Coulter (1948) and Inez Scott Ryberg (1962), also taught at Vassar.

⁸ McManus (2017) 120–121. Macurdy to Vassar President Henry Noble MacCracken on the promotion of Haight to full professor, January 7, 1922:

I have known Miss Haight well, though not intimately, for many years: Her good points are so conspicuous that it is hardly necessary to set them down. She is a teacher whose enthusiasm and genuine love for her subject infect her classes, so that the “gospel” of the classics is spread through her. She is, in an entirely good sense of the word, a propagandist for her subject. That, in a sense, is her greatest gift and I know that no member of the two departments would deny her pre-eminence over all the rest of us in that line ... She is distinguished for “executive ability” and you know still better than I her

briefly, from Taylor's 1939 review of Macurdy's *Vassal Queens*.⁹ So, too, citing from her own 1997 book on *Classics and Feminism*, and its analysis of Taylor's professional "image," McManus also compares Taylor to Macurdy, judging Macurdy to have achieved international professional stature as "a woman and a scholar," whereas "the womanhood of ... Taylor ... was ignored in her achievement of scholarly status as an 'honorary male'."¹⁰

Yet McManus does not say anything else about Taylor or her research, other than to note that Taylor, along with Macurdy and a few other female classicists who taught at women's colleges, served on the Managing Committee of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens from 1925 through 1929. Indeed, three other female classicists with whom Macurdy enjoyed close relationships occupy more space in the book than does Taylor. Two were Macurdy's former Vassar students who later became Vassar colleagues (as well as a mutually devoted lesbian couple at the center of a fabled foursome): Ida Carleton Thallon Hill and

achievements in that way during the War. Her administration of the Department of Latin this year has been tactful and successful. In all our dealings I have found her fair and eager for the best good of both departments.

You know her indefatigable industry and the quality of her writing. I shall be untruthful if I said that I believe her to be distinguished in the line of pure research — as for example, Professor Lily Taylor is distinguished. She has been too busy with other things for that and probably too the quality of her mind is not that, fine as her mental equipment is. I speak perhaps with too great frankness here, but it is in no spirit of derogation. I do not hold that pure research is, with the brief time allowed for it, a *sine qua non* for the full professorship in most of our American colleges. Miss Haight would be a very great loss to the Department of Latin if she should resign because of a failure to receive promotion. I very sincerely second the request of my friends in the Latin Department that she be given the rank of full professor for the next year.

⁹ McManus (2017) 205 n. 45: "The reviews of *Vassal-Queens* were again positive, with most praise given to the collection of difficult-to-find information: 'No one has ever before brought together the available evidence for all the vassal queens of Rome'" (citing Taylor (1939)).

¹⁰ McManus (2017) 246 n. 59: "Most significantly, [Macurdy] earned this distinction as 'a woman and a scholar' in such a way that neither side of the equation diminished the other, as happened with two other outstanding female classicists of the era. In the case of her early role model, Jane Ellen Harrison, gender was accentuated at the expense of recognition as a 'sound scholar,' while the womanhood of Macurdy's younger colleague Lily Ross Taylor was ignored in her achievement of scholarly status as an honorary male." For more information about Lily Ross Taylor, see McManus (1997) 32–35. See also Appendix 1 below.

Elizabeth Denny Pierce Blegen.¹¹ The third was Macurdy's lifelong friend, the British-born Gertrude Mary Hirst, who taught at Barnard College from 1901 through 1943. Three years Macurdy's junior, Hirst obtained her PhD from Columbia in 1901, two years before Macurdy earned hers.¹² Still, McManus does not provide much information on Macurdy's female classicist contemporaries other than Hirst, even Macurdy's fellow Hellenist on the ASCSA Managing Committee Julia Caverno, who joined the Smith faculty in 1893, the same year that Macurdy arrived at Vassar.¹³ Or, for that matter, even Cornelia Catlin Coulter, who taught at Vassar from 1916 through 1925, before taking a post at Mount Holyoke College.¹⁴ In my epilogue to McManus' book I attempted to contextualize Macurdy's life and career by comparing her to another contemporary female classicist who did not teach at Vassar: Edith Hamilton. A year Macurdy's junior, Hamilton, like Macurdy, had studied Classics as an undergraduate at another women's college, Bryn Mawr; pursued graduate work, also at

¹¹ For McManus (2017) on Ida Carleton Thallon Hill, Vassar class of 1897 (1875–1954), wife of Bert Hodge Hill (1874–1958), and Elizabeth Denny Pierce Blegen (1888–1966), Vassar class of 1910, MA in Latin 1912, wife of Carl Blegen (1887–1971), see 61–63, 122 fig. 22, 134, 137–141, 143, 145–157, 159–162, 166, 171, 217, 223, 235, 242–243. See also Pounder (2015).

¹² On Hirst (1869–1962), see McManus (2017) 57, 70, 98 and 228 and Calder (2019).

¹³ On Caverno (1862–1949), see McManus (2017) 154–155, 160, 162, 174, 176, 182 and Dimock (2019).

¹⁴ On Coulter (1885–1960), see McManus (2017) 98 and 120 as well as Quinn (2019). McManus observes on 98 that Coulter gave two papers at the American Philological Association meetings from 1910–1918 (Macurdy presented eight, as well as having four papers “read by title”). On 120, McManus also observes:

Although Grace herself had been barred from teaching advanced courses for many years, she expressed regret in this report that she had been unable to give her new Greek instructor Cornelia Catlin Coulter any advanced courses because she did not want to put too much of a burden on her during her first year in the department. However, Coulter would have nine hours of advanced elective work and no elementary courses in the following year: “This will give her opportunity to immerse herself in Greek literature under favorable circumstances.” Grace repeatedly wrote to President MacCracken praising Coulter's work and recommending a higher salary and promotion to assistant professor. Later she did everything in her power to foster Coulter's career, even when it meant losing her to Mount Holyoke. In fact, Grace privately asked Mount Holyoke's president Mary Woolley, to make sure that Coulter did not “burden herself so heavily that she will have no time for research and publication.”

Bryn Mawr, that included a year's study abroad in Germany; and concentrated mostly on the ancient Greeks in her writings. Hamilton, however, did not complete her doctorate. For twenty-six years she made her living as the headmistress of the Bryn Mawr School, a private all-girls' secondary institution in Baltimore with an exclusively college preparatory curriculum; she never taught at the college level and only taught an Advanced Latin course (never any Greek) on the secondary level.

Most significant, Edith Hamilton wrote best-selling books, such as *The Greek Way* and *Mythology*, for commercial publishers, rather than the serious, responsibly researched scholarship to which Macurdy dedicated her life and self. My epilogue contrasted not only Macurdy, but also Barbara McManus herself, with Hamilton on these grounds. Both Macurdy and McManus helped redefine the category of professional classical scholar to include women, from modest as well as more privileged backgrounds, who taught at undergraduate liberal arts institutions, spoke authoritatively in their own voices and focused their research on the lives of ancient women. Their scholarly undertakings, although less heralded than the popularizing writings of Hamilton and aimed at a more specialized audience, have helped endow the study of the classical world with its staying power.¹⁵

2. Haight, Taylor, and Mussolini's Italy

But my topic in this essay is, again, what scholars have been uncovering about Macurdy's Vassar Classics colleagues Haight and Taylor as well as about other female classicists, most of whom did not teach at Vassar during Macurdy's lifetime. This research not only furthers understanding of Macurdy's distinctive academic career but also illuminates how the field of Classics, and the role accorded to women and other previously underrepresented groups therein, underwent major transformations

¹⁵ Hallett in McManus (2017) 248–250; on Hamilton (1867–1963), see also Hallett (2016b). By crediting both Macurdy and McManus with helping to redefine the category of professional classical scholar, I do not mean to diminish the scholarly accomplishments of other women classicists in the twentieth century, but to emphasize that these two female classicists differed from many of these colleagues in that they did not teach in departments that awarded the PhD, and that they published major research on the lives of ancient women. For Hamilton's shortcomings as a scholar, and virtues as a popular writer, see Lateiner (2018), who discusses Hamilton's missed reference and mis-understanding of Ps-Xen.'s *Political Regime of the Athenians*, a.k.a. the "Old Oligarch"; her (and esteemed British classical scholar Gilbert Murray's) failure to understand the rhetoric of a Delphic inscription and a passage in Dionysios of Halikarnassos; and the reasons for Edith Hamilton's awesome celebrity and why we ought not begrudge it.

over the course of the twentieth century. I am greatly in the debt of my colleague T. Corey Brennan of Rutgers University, and a paper he delivered at a conference in April 2018, for documenting connections between Haight and Taylor nearly a decade after Taylor had left Vassar.¹⁶ My paper seeks to link these connections to Macurdy's life, and to Classics at Vassar at the end of and beyond Macurdy's lifetime.

Of immense importance is the report Taylor submitted in her capacity as the Acting Professor in Charge of the School for Classical Studies, American Academy in Rome to the AAR Trustees, for the 1934 through 1935 academic year, in which she chronicles an intellectually ambitious and diverse program of lectures and excursions, research and publications.¹⁷ Addressed to "Gentlemen," it mentions by name seven women (including Taylor herself) as well as over a dozen men: this may have been the first time that Taylor had ever assumed academic and administrative responsibilities in a co-educational environment.¹⁸ Observing that "visits of American scholars have been less frequent than usual this year," Taylor spotlights those visitors, chief among them "Professor E.H. Haight, Chair of the Advisory Council, [who] spent May and June in Rome." Taylor relates that Haight delivered the sole lecture given at the Academy that year, on "Prose Fiction in the Augustan Age: Seneca's *Controversiae*." In chapter 11 of *The Drunken Duchess*, McManus furnishes further information on Haight's activities in Rome at this time, stating: "In 1935, when Haight was on sabbatical leave in Italy, she prevailed upon Vassar's president [MacCracken] to request for her an audience with [the Italian dictator Benito] Mussolini so she could present several volumes from

¹⁶ Brennan (2018); see also Broughton (2019).

¹⁷ See Appendix 2 for the full text of the letter, with necessary annotation.

¹⁸ As Geffcken (2018) has observed, the circumstances at the AAR in 1934–35 created special difficulties for Taylor:

Director [Gorham] Stevens (a great friend of Taylor's) had been terminated by the Trustees in 1932. [He was replaced by an incompetent] architect from New York, connected with the firm of McKim, Mead and White, whose directorship was such a disaster that by 1934–35 he seem[ed] pretty absent — the Trustees more or less made him disappear. Another Director (Chester Aldrich, a very good choice) arrived in 1935 ... 1934–35 was a sort of interregnum, over which [Taylor reportedly] presided magnificently. The second problem is that the Depression meant no money. The Classical School had always been dirt poor. One lecture was probably all that was possible. Stevens had had about 14 or 15 lectures a year, but now paying stipends to lecturers was not possible. Aldrich turned this situation around, probably using his own money to pay guest lecturers.

Vassar in honor of the bimillennaries of [the Roman poets] Horace and Augustus. All the books were related to Italy except *Hellenistic Queens*, which Grace reluctantly agreed to include in the donation.”¹⁹

McManus proceeds to quote from Haight’s “effusive account of her June 4 audience to MacCracken,” including Haight’s statement “I was deeply impressed with the honor of having the *Capo del Governo* in these troubled days lay aside all affairs of state and journey with me back to the ancient Italy which he knows well.” Macurdy’s discomfort about Haight’s admiration of Mussolini went well beyond mere reluctance, as McManus documents by quoting from Macurdy’s own correspondence, in the same month, June 1935, with the British classicist Gilbert Murray. Macurdy lamented: “The world is so full of horrors now — fascists and despots and other terrible things ... [Gertrude] Hirst often says to me that she and I will never visit Germany again, for Hitler will probably outlast our time and we cannot bring ourselves to go while he remains. And Mussolini is cleverer, but just as bad, worse perhaps for not being such an unmitigated fool as Hitler.”²⁰

Macurdy’s negative view of Mussolini, even before Italy instituted its anti-Semitic racial laws in 1938, would seem to accord with that of Lily Ross Taylor. Taylor, however, was at that time living and working in

¹⁹ McManus (2017) 228. Macurdy’s reluctance stemmed from her political opposition to Mussolini, but she felt obligated to be supportive of Haight. Correspondence from Haight to Vassar President MacCracken (1880–1970) in the Vassar College Archives from spring 1935 includes requests for a special letter of introduction to Mussolini with a gold seal, as well as detailed descriptions of her activities while in Rome, written from the Pension Girardet. As Geffcken (2018) observes, “although Haight gave [the 1935] lecture at the AAR, she always lived at the Girardet. In 1934–35 she was not a member of the AAR community.”

The *Vassar College Encyclopedia* entry on Haight (2019b) describes her 1935 visit to Rome as well: “In 1935, Haight once again ventured to Greece and Italy, and this time, received a grand reception from both the King and Queen as well as Il Duce Benito Mussolini. She met Mussolini at Renaissance Hall of the Palazzo Venezia and presented him with books about Italy written by the Vassar faculty. She talked to Il Duce extensively, focusing on recent archeological discoveries and the government’s plan for continued archaeological work. Haight was impressed by his dynamic personality and powers of concentration that she believed to be ‘part of the secret of his achievement.’ (AAVC) She also purchased many antiquities for the Classics Museum.”

²⁰ McManus (2017) 228. As Geffcken has commented, however, “In evaluating people’s reaction to Fascism, we tend not to remember that the vast majority of Americans, especially classicists, were pro-Mussolini for a long time. Miss Haight is fairly typical. Few went as far as Van Deman in enthusiasm. But many flocked to Piazza Venezia to applaud the Duce when he appeared. They loved his excavations and his emphasis on the Augustan period. It validated their own choice of field. The dissenters or skeptics did exist, but it was really only the Ethiopian War that began to change people.”

Mussolini's Rome and required to keep the American Academy in the good graces of the Italian government. Indeed, on February 22, 1933, the year before Taylor assumed her position as "acting" Professor-in-Charge, the Academy hosted a visit by Mussolini himself. She could not speak out or up, even in her correspondence: the fascist censorship checked the contents of private letters.²¹ Brennan's paper on Taylor poses a basic question: "how did this great Romanist process the sweeping changes that Italy endured under Mussolini, that extended to the interpretation and presentation of the ancient Roman past, and encompassed a massive intervention in the fabric of the city of Rome itself?"

Brennan immediately acknowledges that Taylor's published works on Roman studies, even those from after World War Two, offer little, as they only mention Mussolini twice and in passing. But he adduces several previously unknown sources about her reactions to Mussolini, among them lectures from 1941 and thereafter, and 21 detailed monthly reports on contemporary Italian politics that she wrote for the American magazine *Current History* from November 1923 through July 1925: the very years when the "Fascists, at first a minority government, established themselves as the dominant party in Italy, and when Mussolini firmly established himself as dictator." Brennan characterizes Taylor's reports as "describing vividly yet passionately a whole series of pivotal events," limiting her [disapproval] to "editorial gestures such as referring to the title 'Duce' in quotation marks ... though sharpening her tone after [the 1924 kidnaping and murder of [Mussolini's rival] Matteotti." He also, and plausibly, conjectures that Taylor handed over the task of writing these reports to her Vassar History department colleague Eloise Ellery because Taylor's Bryn Mawr mentor Tenney Frank, Professor-in-Charge at the AAR from 1922 through 1925, had been her informant, and he returned to the US to teach at Johns Hopkins in the summer of 1925.²² She had relied heavily on the information he conveyed, but once he departed from Italy he was no longer a first-hand source.

Brennan further observes that it was in the mid-1930s, when a single party totally dominated the Italian state, that Taylor turned her research focus from ruler-cult to the nature of party politics in ancient Rome. He

²¹ For Mussolini's visit to the Academy, see the following You Tube video, accompanied by T. Corey Brennan's notes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5V550mjSKHc&feature=youtu.be> (last accessed 19.09.19). Geffcken (2018) further remarks "The AAR had long had a 'keep a distance from local politics' policy — so instructed by the President in NY for years (the AAR archaeologists did work with the Fascist archaeologists). The Girardet family was Waldensian, Swiss Protestant — and the Fascist government seemed to leave them alone."

²² Brennan (2018). On Tenney Frank (1876–1939), see Benario (2019).

asserts that she chose her words carefully while residing in Italy, but after returning to Bryn Mawr was less guarded, remarking in a 1941 lecture, “Having lived under Mussolini and read *Mein Kampf* and watched the rise of Hitler, I think I understand Caesar better ... I am planning to devote my summer to the making of a dictator.” The following year she reflected in a lecture, “The rise of a dictator to power has a peculiar fascination ... The career of Caesar has attracted less attention [than that of Napoleon] ... because the modern Caesar, strutting in the Palazzo Venezia before the bust of the great dictator, has made such a poor showing ...”²³ According to Brennan, around 1944, Taylor hinted that

²³ See also Taylor (1942), her presidential address on Caesar and the Roman nobility, prepared for the meeting of the American Philological Association in Cincinnati, which was cancelled on account of the demands of the war. The opening paragraph merits quotation in full:

For the generation which has read *Mein Kampf* and has seen Hitler’s ruthless execution of the designs for domination and world conquest of which he provided a blue print long in advance, the rise of a dictator to power has a peculiar fascination. Hence the great revival of interest in the career of Napoleon who as a foreigner in the land of his adoption shows in his swift course of conquest remarkable parallels with Hitler. The career of Caesar has attracted less attention first because the modern Caesar, strutting in the Palazzo Venezia before the bust of the great dictator, has made such a poor showing that the prestige of his prototype is in a sense lowered, and second because Caesar’s empire, most of it already conquered by his predecessors, did not, like Napoleon’s, fall apart after Caesar’s death but has endured for several hundred years. A study of Caesar does not give us the hope of liberation that we can secure from rereading, as many of us have since Hitler’s invasion of Russia, the story of Napoleon’s failure in the vivid pages of *War and Peace*.

Wiseman (2002) has observed that *The Roman Revolution*, written by the distinguished Roman historian Sir Ronald Syme, was “clearly influenced by the rise of Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler (the book was published the week after the invasion of Poland in September 1939). Syme kept his eye clearly fixed on *Machtpolitik*: ‘... One thing was clear. Monarchy was already there and would subsist, whatever principle was invoked in the struggle, whatever name the victor chose to give to his rule, because it was for monarchy that the rival Caesarians contended.’ When Syme used the word ‘party,’ it was with all the overtones of Europe in the 1930s. Power for its own sake was the subject.” Wiseman continues: “Less overwhelming, but also influential in its way, was Lily Ross Taylor’s *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar* (1949) ... her analogy for Roman politics was the American system of party conventions in a Presidential election year, when the Republican and Democratic hopefuls relied on their personalities for success and kept quiet about political issues.” Taylor, however, seems to have been more explicit than Syme about the similarities between Caesar and Mussolini, and about the relevance of Hitler and indeed Napoleon, to contemporaries interested in studying

Mussolini's racial laws of 1938 had signaled "an unforgiveable break for her"; after the war ended, Brennan asserts, Taylor spoke more harshly still. Her 1957 lecture titled "On Scholarship and Nationalism" "explicitly spells out her chief objections to what Mussolini and Fascism had inflicted on Rome and Italy of the past and present."²⁴

It must not, therefore, have been easy for Taylor to offer sympathy and support for her colleague Haight's homage to Mussolini: especially in view of the activities Taylor had organized, the scholars of whom she was "in charge" at the AAR, and how she chose to present both to those overseeing and concerned with the research profile and productivity of the AAR Classical School. For example, Taylor's report mentions an Academy visit to Hadrian's Villa led by Karl Lehmann-Hartleben. A German ancient art historian whose Jewish parents had converted to Christianity in the 1880s, he was nonetheless expelled by the Nazis from his professorship at Münster in 1933 and sought refuge in Italy. Fortunately, an appointment to a full professorship at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts in 1935 made it possible for him and his family to emigrate to the US. His equally if not more accomplished older sister Eva Lehmann Fiesel, an Etruscologist removed from her post at the University of Munich, had also fled to Italy in 1933, along with her teenage daughter Ruth. The two Fiesels, however, had already arrived in the US by the fall of 1934: Professor Edgar H. Sturtevant of the Yale Linguistics Department had temporarily rescued Eva by hiring her as his research assistant, unable to offer her more stable employment since Yale did not appoint women to its faculty. But upon Taylor's return to the US, Bryn Mawr College managed to obtain funds — from the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars, the Rockefeller Foundation, and a group of Eva's Yale colleagues — to underwrite a two-year visiting associate professorship for her, beginning in the fall of 1936.²⁵

Tragically, Eva Fiesel died of liver cancer before the end of the 1936–37 academic year. At the urging of Sturtevant, however, Bryn Mawr

Julius Caesar as a dictator — in writing in her APA presidential address, at the height of World War II. By way of contrast, the names of Mussolini and Hitler do not appear in Syme's *The Roman Revolution*. Nor do the words "fascism," "fascist" or "totalitarianism." Syme's pupil Erich Gruen, moreover, recalls (pers. comm.) that "Syme always insisted (whether disingenuously or not) that the writing of *The Roman Revolution* was not motivated at all by events or persons in contemporary Europe."

²⁴ Brennan (2018). Geffcken (2018) recalls that Taylor "said that her work on religion (cults of Ostia and Etruria etc.) led to Ruler cult, and ruler cult naturally led to politics"; Brennan (2018) offers a complex and nuanced interpretation of how her research interests evolved.

²⁵ For Lehmann and Fiesel, see Hallett (2018b).

managed to transfer the money pledged to underwrite Eva's faculty position to the education of her daughter, first at the Baldwin School and then at Bryn Mawr College, from which Ruth graduated in 1942. There Ruth majored in Classics and studied with Taylor, whom she always praised as her favorite professor in alumnae questionnaires. While she did not complete her doctoral work in Classics at Johns Hopkins, she made an indelible mark on the field of secondary school Latin teaching, first at the Bryn Mawr School in Baltimore (which she and her life partner Ann Merriam played a key role in integrating) and later in Philadelphia at Friends Central and Baldwin, serving the latter as head of its middle school.²⁶

More important, Taylor's report highlights in detail the accomplishments of the Fellows in Classical Studies and Archaeology. She relates that one of the first-year Fellows, Richmond Lattimore, had resigned at the end of his first year, having "practically completed his book on ... Greek and Roman Sepulchral Inscriptions," to accept an assistant professorship of Greek at Bryn Mawr College, thereby becoming Taylor's colleague.²⁷ The endeavors of two other fellows, Meyer Reinhold and Naphtali Lewis, command much more attention. Of Reinhold, noting that he had published two brief articles and a review in the *Classical Weekly*, completed a paper on the great fortunes of the Augustan Age, and had in progress a study of Augustus' relations with client princes, she states "The Academy has felt great pride in the many enthusiastic reviews which his [Columbia University] dissertation on Marcus Agrippa has received." Of Lewis, she announces that he has written two papers accepted by the *Études de Papyrologie*, and has in preparation two other studies, one on Roman coins and the other on Greek papyri in Cairo. Taylor goes on to relate that both Lewis and Reinhold represented the Academy at the International Papyrological Conference (Florence, 28 April–2 May 1935), and accords Lewis' other travels particularly close attention, including his

²⁶ Hallett (2018b). See also Gray (2018); a younger protégée of Taylor's at Bryn Mawr College, Gray is the daughter of Annemarie Bettmann Holborn, a Berlin-trained classical philologist who tutored Ruth Fiesel in Latin after she and her mother arrived in New Haven.

²⁷ See Lang (2019) for Lattimore (1906–1984). Geffcken (2018) speculates: "I suspect that [Taylor] was furious with Lattimore for resigning the second year of his Fellowship ... That was also the year that [he and his wife Alice] got to know one another and then married. Alice had graduated from Wellesley in 1934 and went to the AAR as a student."

four months' absence, with the consent of the Academy authorities, working with the French Archaeological Institute in Egypt.²⁸

Two decades later Lewis and Reinhold, by then teaching at Brooklyn College, would collaborate on a major project of incalculable value to undergraduate courses on Ancient History and Classics in translation, a two-volume sourcebook on Roman civilization.²⁹ But what I find significant is the pride imbuing Taylor's detailed descriptions, in 1935, of these two young, male, Jewish scholars, whom she presumably chose to represent the AAR at a prestigious European scholarly conference elsewhere in Italy, soon after Hitler's rise to power. It merits emphasis, too, that prior to 1934, the School of Classical Studies of the AAR, which merged with the AAR in 1913, had previously awarded fellowships to only two Jews, nearly two decades apart, in the field of Classics and Archaeology: Elias Avery Lowe in 1911; and Taylor's own Bryn Mawr PhD student Irene A. Rosenzweig in 1930.

Lowe, who emigrated to New York from Moscow as a thirteen-year old in 1892, and graduated from Cornell ten years later, had received his PhD from Munich in 1908. He evidently remained in Europe doing research until taking up his AAR Fellowship, and was hired at Oxford in 1915, only returning to the US in 1936 as one of the first professors at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study.³⁰ By way of contrast, Rosenzweig, who came from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, returned to the US and received her PhD following her year at the AAR, but never obtained a college teaching position. For many years she taught Latin at Madeira, a private secondary school for girls outside Washington, DC, where she also tutored family members of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.³¹ But such were the barriers to Jews, even those with promising research records, in the field of college-level Classics teaching prior to the arrival of Jewish scholars fleeing Nazi Germany in the 1930s. And, as McManus' book and Eva Fiesel's story both illustrate, college-level positions for women were

²⁸ See Bagnall (2019) for Lewis (1911–2005); see Toher (2019) for Reinhold (1909–2002).

²⁹ Lewis and Reinhold (1990); initially published in 1951 and 1955, it is characterized by Bagnall (2019) as “sweeping and voluminous.”

³⁰ For Lowe (1879–1969), the great-grandfather of the Conservative, classically-educated British politician Boris Johnson, see John (2019).

³¹ For Rosenzweig, see “Irene Rosenzweig (1903–1977)” (2016); Geffcken (2018) writes “I knew her. She was a great friend of [Howard University Classics professor] Virginia Callahan. Do you know that she wanted a college job? She always seemed to me greatly wrapped up in her Madeira teaching. She was independently wealthy (left a wonderful legacy to the AAR), very chic — she dressed very well. Enjoyed Washington, concerts, lectures etc. Lively talker in a kind of wacky way.”

few and almost exclusively at a handful of women's colleges. Significantly, one of the archaeological sites which Taylor reports having visited (although apparently not with either Lewis or Reinhold) was the Tuscan city of Pitigliano, an ancient Etruscan town later known as Italy's little Jerusalem for its synagogue and historical Jewish community.³²

How did Haight reconcile her ardent support of Mussolini with Taylor's efforts to make Jewish scholars feel included and valued? Especially after both returned to the US, where Bryn Mawr, which appointed Taylor its Graduate Dean in 1942, made generous efforts to welcome, acculturate and fund several Jewish scholars and students: not only Eva and Ruth Fiesel, but also Fiesel's pupil in both Germany and Italy, Gabriele Schoepflich Hoenigswald, and Vera Lachmann, a Berlin Jewish classicist, who had fled the Nazis in fall 1939, and taught German at Vassar through 1941.³³ The Vassar Memorial Minute written by Haight's Classics colleagues Theodore Erck, Myrtle Soles Erck and Inez Scott Ryberg soon after her death in 1964 highlights Haight's efforts at Vassar to help German refugee scholars, many but not all of them Jewish, find positions in the US, remarking: "In the mid-thirties, when scholars were fleeing Hitler's Germany, Miss Haight was chiefly instrumental in organizing a program of visiting scholars, which brought to Vassar a series of distinguished professors as guests, free to give open lectures and to meet with advanced classes and student organizations. Many of these were enabled through their visit to Vassar to secure appointments in American colleges and universities."³⁴ From all appearances, Haight was following Taylor's example.

3. Renata von Scheliha's Failed Move to Vassar

As I have related, the classicist Vera Lachmann, who fled Hitler's Germany in 1939, benefited from one such appointment at Vassar through 1941, in the Department of German (although later, at Bryn Mawr, Lachmann taught Classics courses, as she did at Brooklyn College, where

³² For Pitigliano, see Celata (1995), Poggioli (2014) and Paoletti (2014).

³³ For Lachmann (1904–1985) and Hoenigswald (1912–2001), see Hallett (2018b); see also Miller (2014) on Lachmann.

³⁴ Erck–Erck–Ryberg (1964); Theodore Erck (1907–1980) and his wife Myrtle Soles Erck (1922–1993) taught at Vassar through 1971. For Ryberg (1901–1980), see Bacon (2019). The Vassar College Archives contain much valuable material on Haight's efforts to help such German refugee scholars as the philosopher Richard Kroner (1884–1972), father of the University of Michigan classicist Gerda Seligson (1909–2002), and the art historian Otto Brendel (1901–1973), which makes her opposition to the hiring of Renata von Scheliha, discussed below, all the more surprising.

she found a permanent post after the end of the war). A possibility for at least a temporary appointment in the Vassar Greek Department itself occurred in those years, owing to the sudden death of Greek professor Philip Davis in February 1940. As McManus relates, quoting Department Chair Theodore Erck, Macurdy, three years post-retirement, “came to the rescue at once with her great knowledge and experience for the remainder of the semester.”³⁵ A year later, in the spring of 1941, Haight was informed about the possibility of hiring a non-Jewish German female classicist, Renata von Scheliha. Like Vera Lachmann — whose escape from Germany von Scheliha had facilitated — von Scheliha was a lesbian, desperate to escape the Nazis. Though von Scheliha came recommended by several eminent scholars in the US and UK, Haight decided to consult Werner Jaeger, formerly professor of Greek at Berlin, who had left Germany, first for the University of Chicago and then Harvard, after the Nazis rose to power. Jaeger was not Jewish, but his second wife, decades his junior, came from a Jewish family.³⁶

Jaeger’s response to Haight, among his papers at Harvard’s Houghton Library, dated June 18, 1941, opens with a reference to Macurdy herself, although he misspells her name as “McCurdy”:³⁷ “I was delighted to hear from you since I have a very pleasant memory of our associations at Vassar College and the afternoon which I spent with you and Miss McCurdy. I hope you are both well and enjoy your work.” He continues,

I am glad to give you the little bit of information about Dr. Renata von Scheliha which I have. I do not know her personally and as long as I taught at the University of Berlin (end of summer 1936) she certainly did not have any relationship to the Classical Department of that University. If she had any such relations to that Department later I have no way of knowing. However I am a little doubtful about that because she is not a classical scholar of the type which we used to select for the position of assistant in the pro-seminar or as Privatdozent of Classical Philology. This does not mean that I want to belittle her work but her essay on Dion of Syracuse as well as her translations of the Author on the Sublime show more literary than erudite ambitions. She seems to be a person of cultivated aesthetic taste but I do know now [*sic*] whether she likes to do the hard work of the scholar. She certainly has a good

³⁵ McManus (2017) 234. For Davis (1901–1940), husband of the illustrious theatrical producer, director, playwright and author Hallie Flanagan Davis (1889–1969), see Haight (1940).

³⁶ For Jaeger (1888–1961), see Hallett (1992); for von Scheliha (1901–1967) see her (German) *Wikipedia* entry (2019) and Hallett (2018b).

³⁷ Jaeger (1941); also discussed in Hallett (2018b).

philological education and even though I did not examine the two publications mentioned above very carefully I take it that they are done with the necessary philological accuracy. I had the impression which may be wrong that her ideas were somewhat influenced by the aesthetic and cultural ideology of the powerful intellectual circle of Stefan George, deceased German poet. There was a review of her little book on Dion by an American writer in the *Classical Weekly* if my memory is correct some years ago which might interest you.

Very truly yours,
Werner Jaeger

Inasmuch as von Scheliha had letters of reference from scholars familiar with her work and its quality, it is not clear why Haight consulted Jaeger for his assessment of von Scheliha's suitability for this position. Haight's June 1941 letter soliciting Jaeger's assessment survives in Jaeger's Harvard archive, and merits quoting in full:³⁸

My dear Professor Jaeger: I trust you will remember me as one of your hostesses when you came to lecture at Vassar on the invitation of Professor [Moritz] Geiger (1880–1937, Vassar Professor of Philosophy who fled Nazi Germany in 1933) under the auspices of the Departments of Greek and Latin. I write to beg from you some confidential information about a German woman, Dr. Renata von Scheliha. Friends of Dr. von Scheliha are making a great effort to bring her to this country from Switzerland where she is living at present and it was suggested by a foundation that we should take her as a research assistant at Vassar. I have therefore read her curriculum vitae with her letters of recommendation and have noticed that she taught at the university of Berlin. As you are the only one in this country from Berlin whom I know personally I am writing to ask if you would tell me your opinion of Dr. von Scheliha's scholarship, her teaching ability and her personality. I should like to know what rank she had in the University of Berlin. I trust this is not asking too great a favor of you.

There is no vacancy in the Department of Greek and Latin at present and it seems to us impossible to take a mature woman as a research assistant who is not working in any of the fields in which we are engaged. But since some pressure has been brought to bear upon us I

³⁸ Haight (1941); also discussed in Hallett (2018b). In light of materials discovered in the Vassar College Library on September 13 and 14, 2018, Hallett's discussion needs major revision.

wish to get as full particulars as possible about Dr. von Scheliha. With sincere regards and many good wishes, I am very truly yours,

Elizabeth Hazelton Haight,
Professor of Latin and Chair of the Department.

Yet Haight's letter raises more questions than it answers. For one thing, even though she seeks Jaeger's opinion of von Scheliha's scholarship, teaching ability and personality, Haight does not mention the possibility of her teaching there, merely working as a research assistant. So, too, she claims to be under pressure to consider appointing her, and asserts outright that "it seems to us impossible to take a mature woman as a research assistant who is not working in any of the fields in which we are engaged." What is more, Haight tells Jaeger that she has read von Scheliha's *curriculum vitae* and letters of recommendation, and has noticed that she taught at the University of Berlin. The CV, which is found in the correspondence files of Vassar President Henry Noble MacCracken, therefore repays close scrutiny. It states:

Name: Scheliha, Renata von

Date of Birth: 1901

Nationality: German

Family: Single

Field: Classical archaeology and philology

Academic Posts Held:

1933–1938, Privatdozent, University of Berlin

1934–1936 Lecturer, Lessing Hochschule, Berlin

Publications and Other Achievements:

Die Wassergrenze im Altertum Breslau 1930

Die Platonische Staatsgruendung in Sicilien [*sic*]

Patroklos

Diss-Leipzig 1934

Ueber das Erhabene

Critical Edition of Longinus; also a translation, Berlin 1938

Languages: English, German, French, Greek, Latin

References: Professors Macurdy, Kantorowicz, Lachmann,

Bergstraesser, Schultz, Morwitz, Kempner

Present Address: Basel, Switzerland

Additional Remarks: Strongly anti-Nazi; gave up posts 1937, when asked to make a pro-Nazi declaration.

The document seems to have been written by von Scheliha's close friend Lachmann, who was then teaching in the Vassar German Department. At

least it closely resembles the text of a letter Lachmann sent the previous year, on August 29, 1940, to Alvin Johnson, the Director of the New School for Social Research in New York City, which was apparently also shared with President MacCracken, since it, too, was found in his correspondence files.³⁹

³⁹ Lachmann (1940), sent from the Westville, Connecticut home of Professor H. Wiegand of Yale University, whose daughter Erika was a close friend of Lachmann's. The text reads:

Miss von Scheliha, of German nationality, born in 1901 in Silesia from an officer's family, studied Sanskrit and Greek in Breslau and Berlin. I know of her publications: "Die Wassergrenze im Altertum," ed. in *Historische untersuchungen* 1931, M.S.H Marcus, Breslau, and Lion [sic] "Die platonische [sic] Staatsgruendung in Sizilien," ed. in "Das Erbe der Alten," 1934, Dieterich Leipzig, and I know that she just now finished a very important book, called "Patroklos." She gave courses in Greek language at the University of Berlin, and lectured during several years at "Lessing-Hochschule," Berlin, f.i. about Greek tragedy. When the Nazi regime began she retired entirely from public work, being strongly opposed to the government and, besides her research work, devoted herself entirely to the assistance of her Jewish friends. So, I got acquainted with her and saw how she risked her life and safety again and again to get people free from concentration camps, to facilitate the emigration of her friends. It seemed a miracle to me that nothing happened to her. Finally she could not stand a life in Germany any longer, as she felt herself guilty of what happened sharing the privileges of an Aryan. From a trip to Switzerland last year she did not come back, though she never emigrated regularly and is since living in Basel without means or labor permission. Recently her friends wrote to me that, as Switzerland is almost becoming an axis power, she is in real danger and has to flee as soon as possible. Professor Albert Bergstraesser, Claremont University — California; Professor Ernst Morwitz, Duke University; Professor Cecil Bowra, Oxford would gladly testify to her first class scholarly work, Renata von Scheliha has never belonged to any political party. Her family tradition was conservative, she never sympathized with communism. Her only decided political point of view is the opposition against the Nationalsocialism. She is single and has no parents. Her English is good. I remember that one of her ancestors came from Britain. May I add that there was nobody during these hard years who made us keep up courage like her, that she is the most wonderful pure and strong character I ever saw in my life, that her creative intuition of the ancient world seems to me of the utmost importance? I would be very grateful if you would allow me to come to New York and see you. Any day and time would suit me.

Very sincerely yours,
[SIGNED] Vera Lachmann,
German Department, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Several details demand our attention. First, that von Scheliha's stated field, Classical Archaeology and Philology, were in fact the branches of the discipline in which the Vassar Department was engaged, represented prominently by the work of Davis and Macurdy. Second, that von Scheliha's anti-Nazi stance, and her loss of her teaching positions in 1937 rather than swear allegiance to the Nazi regime, are mentioned: such information should have made it clear to Haight that — as Lachmann remarks in her letter to Johnson — von Scheliha had put her own life at risk.⁴⁰ And third, that the first of von Scheliha's references listed is Professor Macurdy. Macurdy's letter, sent to Alvin Johnson of the New School as well, dated to October 17, 1940, bears quoting in full:⁴¹

I write you now at the request of Miss Vera Lachmann of this college to state my very high opinion of two books by Miss Renata von Scheliha which I have examined. I have read Dion, Die Platonische Staatsgründung in Sizilien, with great pleasure and profit. It is a fine and scholarly study of a fascinating character, and Miss von Scheliha's interpretation of the aim and spirit of Dion is of great interest and importance.

Because the books have to be returned to Yale very soon I have not been able to read Die Wassergrenze in Alterthum as thoroughly as I could wish. I have found it a valuable and significant study of an important religious, geographical and political subject.

Miss von Scheliha is evidently both a scholar and a thinker. You will doubtless have appreciations of her work more valuable than mine, but I am very glad to add my testimony to what you already have of her.

Sincerely yours,
[SIGNED] Grace H. Macurdy

⁴⁰ Neither the cv nor the letter, however, says anything about von Scheliha's brother Rudolf (1897–1942), a German diplomat based in Poland. A Soviet spy who used his connections to help Poles and Jews flee abroad, he was sentenced to death by hanging on December 14, 1942, and executed in Ploetzensee Prison. For Rudolf von Scheliha, see his *Wikipedia* entry (2009). As Donald Lateiner has called to my attention, Renata von Scheliha's correspondence from 1930–1967 has been published by Frommel (2002) and merits study.

⁴¹ Macurdy (1940); the letters from von Scheliha's other references are worth quoting, too, since they offer high praise for her scholarship and spotlight her principled activities on behalf of Jewish friends. Bergstraesser, for example, states "Miss von Scheliha is of rare quality in both character and condition. She combines accuracy and intimate knowledge of her subject with a vital interest in the philosophical and generally human implications of classical writings ... Seldom in recent years I met [*sic*] a person who like she [*sic*] even in moments of danger kept up without fear her relations to Jewish friends and watched over her own integrity of opinion."

Whatever Haight's reasons for writing Jaeger, and disregarding the testimony of her devoted and learned colleague Macurdy in favor of his remarks, I view Jaeger's letter, which torpedoed von Scheliha's chance for this position, and for emigration to the US at this time, with chill and alarm.⁴² Escaping from Germany was a matter of life or death for von Scheliha. Had not a wealthy Jewish female friend and fellow member of the Stefan George Circle arranged for her to flee to Switzerland, the Nazis might well have executed her, as they did her own brother, although he served in the highest ranks of Hitler's government, for aiding the escape of Jews such as Lachmann. Why Jaeger even felt it appropriate to assert that von Scheliha had no relationship to the Berlin Classics Department when he left for the US in 1936, and to distinguish her from suitable appointees there, is mystifying: she was merely a *Privatdozent*, of low academic rank.⁴³ As for her work on Dion of Syracuse, a 166-page book (not little, much less an essay) published in 1934, Jaeger's vague allusion to "a review by an American writer in *Classical Weekly*" fails to mention its assessment in 1935 by Reginald Hackforth in the British journal *The Classical Review*. Hackforth, who became Laurence Professor of Ancient Philosophy at Cambridge in 1939, disagrees with its interpretation of "Plato's experiment in practical politics." Yet he praises its "clear and vigorous style, orderly arrangement and complete mastery of the facts," saying that "the narrative parts of the book ... are excellent," and "the final chapter interesting."⁴⁴

What is more, the reference to the circle of Stefan George, whose own homoerotic leanings were well known, but not openly discussed in polite German intellectual circles, can be interpreted as a homophobic aspersion.⁴⁵ Von Scheliha's academic credentials, confirmed less than a decade

⁴² Donald Lateiner and others have suggested to me that Jaeger was the most important German classicist Haight knew, and Haight was seeking to elicit a negative assessment of von Scheliha's work from him.

⁴³ Either Lachmann or Jaeger is misrepresenting von Scheliha's academic position at the University of Berlin; whether or not the non-Jewish von Scheliha worked as a *Privatdozent* there, in the years immediately after the university fired its Jewish faculty members after Hitler came to power, is of far less consequence than her solid academic background and the high assessment of her scholarly attainments by esteemed scholars in her area of research.

⁴⁴ Hackforth (1935).

⁴⁵ For George (1868–1933), see Norton (2002). Complicating Jaeger's possible antipathy to George's homoerotic leanings, and to von Scheliha as a lesbian herself, is his apparent failure to realize that Haight had homoerotic leanings herself. See Hallett (2019) on Haight's (unrequited) attraction to her student, the bisexual poet Edna St. Vincent Millay. Donald Lateiner has suggested (pers. comm.) that Haight did not want another lesbian in the department, perhaps fearing competition or scandal or both.

later with the award of a Guggenheim Fellowship, certainly qualified her for a temporary post as a research assistant at Vassar. Not only did she, in Jaeger's words, have a "good philological education" and produce publications that even on his cursory examination evinced "the necessary philological accuracy." Like her fellow German refugee female classicists, she had much to offer the Vassar Classics department in return for, literally, her life.

To conclude. After the death of Grace Harriet Macurdy in 1946, the field of Classics underwent important changes, demographic and intellectual. Owing to the increased presence of Jews who had fled Nazi-occupied Europe on the faculties of US Classics departments, more Classicists of Jewish background came to occupy college-level teaching positions in the field: in departments which offered the PhD degree; and in liberal arts colleges, including women's colleges.⁴⁶ McManus' chapter about Macurdy's experiences on the Managing Committee of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens during the 1920s does not mention any Jewish members. But since then several Jews have served in that capacity, as well as on the Board of Trustees (among them my Wellesley College undergraduate mentor Mary Lefkowitz), and as directors of academic programs. Some come from humble backgrounds like Macurdy's, and were the first in their families to attend college.⁴⁷

Barbara McManus herself, it warrants emphasis, was born a Roman Catholic and taught, as she had studied while an undergraduate, at a Catholic women's college. Another of my own undergraduate mentors, Barbara McCarthy, was the first American-born Roman Catholic hired at Wellesley, in 1929, and subject to special, arguably bigoted, scrutiny in her first years there.⁴⁸ To the best of my knowledge, only one of the scholars Taylor mentions in her report on the AAR in the mid-thirties, Fellow George Siefert, later to teach at The Catholic University of America, was a Roman Catholic, even at a program in Italy within sight of the Vatican itself. Roman Catholics, like Jews, have increased their representation and visibility in the college teaching ranks of classicists outside Catholic institutions. Macurdy's family, Scots-Irish Protestants, had changed the spelling of their name from McCurdy to Macurdy when

⁴⁶ See, for example, Hallett (2019).

⁴⁷ McManus (2017) 142–186. For Lefkowitz (1935–), see her *Wikipedia* entry (2019).

⁴⁸ For McCarthy (1904–1988) see Hallett (2016c).

emigrating from Canada to the US, because of the prejudices against Irish Catholics in the Boston area where they settled; Macurdy would have been amused to have been mistaken for a Catholic nun when I presented a paper about her at the 2017 meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South, held that particular year in Canada.⁴⁹

Macurdy's influence on the Classics profession of course looms largest on the intellectual front, in the inclusion of women and gender, as important subjects of research and teaching. Taylor did not seem to have been remotely interested in studying women and gender. Haight's interest was limited to the representation of women in literary texts; she did not explore historical realities to the extent that Macurdy did in her final two books.⁵⁰ Right before her death, Barbara McManus was delighted to learn that the Society for Classical Studies had finally adopted "women and gender" in both Greece and Rome as official categories of scholarly specialization, after years of impassioned lobbying on her part. What we now call the intersectionalities between Jewish and Catholic classicists on the one hand, and research on women and gender in classical antiquity on the other, is, like that of Macurdy's female classicist contemporaries, a topic demanding further investigation as well, and a challenge I hope others will take up along with me.⁵¹

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⁴⁹ McManus (2017) 15: "the new spelling would proclaim them as Scotch Protestants rather than Irish Catholics."

⁵⁰ Haight (1922), however, includes an entire chapter on women in ancient and present-day Italy.

⁵¹ My thanks to Dean Ross of the Vassar College Library, for providing me with access to Archives Files 3.53–3.55 (Annual reports of the Vassar College Greek Department 1889–1914); other assorted folders of annual reports of the Greek Department; and the Henry Noble McCracken Papers as well as the colleagues who kindly hosted me — Barbara Olsen, Robert L. Pounder, Eve D'Ambra, Curtis Dozier and Mary Lyndon Shanley — during my visit to Vassar on September 12–13, 2018. My gratitude, too, to Susan Halpert and Dale Stinchcomb of the Harvard University Houghton Library archives for their assistance with the papers of Werner Jaeger in June 2015. I would also like to thank T. Corey Brennan, Stanley Burstein, Elizabeth Carney, Sheila K. Dickson, Katherine A. Geffcken, Erich S. Gruen, Donald Lateiner, Maria Marsilio, Hans-Peter Obermayer, Eugene O'Connor, Ann Raia and Christopher Stray for their unwavering and generous support on this project.

APPENDIX ONE:

ON LILY ROSS TAYLOR AS AN “HONORARY MALE”

Barbara McManus’ characterization of Lily Ross Taylor — first made two decades ago in her book about Classics and feminism (1997) 32–35, then repeated in her biography of Grace Harriet Macurdy (2017) 246 when contrasting the two women — has occasioned considerable discussion and indeed criticism. The context is important. After describing Macurdy’s formidable scholarly achievements leading to international recognition, McManus remarks “Most significantly, [Macurdy] earned this distinction as ‘a woman and a scholar’ in such a way that neither side of the equation diminished the other, as happened with two other outstanding female classicists of the era. In the case of her early role model, Jane Ellen Harrison, gender was accentuated at the expense of recognition as a ‘sound scholar,’ while the womanhood of Macurdy’s younger colleague Lily Ross Taylor was ignored in her achievement of scholarly status as an honorary male.”

Several scholars, such as Geffcken (2018), have taken strong issue with McManus’ characterization of Taylor as an “honorary male.” They observe that Taylor was a tireless champion of other women, most notably in her energetic efforts, joined by Haight, and extending from 1921 to 1938, to provide more and better residential accommodations for women scholars at the AAR. Geffcken claims that Taylor

did not think much about gender, as she was endlessly generous to both males and females who had good minds and used them ... she did not pay any attention to what you were, as long as you were bright and hardworking. One of her more important Bryn Mawr students was [the Jewish] Phyllis Goodhart Gordan ... Goodhart Hall at Bryn Mawr was built by Phyllis’ father in memory of her mother Marjory Walter. Phyllis ran the AAR Friends of the Library, endowed an AAR Fellowship, endowed the Bryn Mawr Rare Book Room, was the first female AAR Trustee, and also endowed the Brearley School. And [Taylor] was endlessly generous to my Classical Fulbright colleagues of 1954–55, [who included individuals] representing Jewish and Catholic backgrounds.

Geffcken also argues “if one follows [McManus’] line of thinking, a female archaeologist ought to concentrate on depictions of women only or on objects connected with women only.”

But Taylor could easily have included women as well as men in her investigative purview, whether in her research on emperor cults or on Roman politics. As Geffcken herself pointed out, “McManus implies that Macurdy was the first classicist to publish on ancient women. That is not true. Mary Gilmore Williams of Mount Holyoke worked on Severan women in her Michigan dissertation, and also when a student at ASCSR in the late 1890s; and published two

articles (Julia Domna et al). Several women worked on the Vestal Virgins (including Van Deman), and Adeline Hawes of Wellesley wrote about families, children etc. Macurdy's work may have been far superior to that done by these women, but I think they nevertheless deserve acknowledgment."

At issue here, however, is not the quality of Macurdy's work on Hellenistic and vassal queens compared to that of these other women on Roman topics, but its innovative nature and wide, interdisciplinary scope as well as its publication in two major volumes from the Johns Hopkins University Press. Furthermore, the work of these earlier female scholars on women's roles in Roman religion and governance furnished Taylor with research that she could have employed, as both model and evidence, to expand her own definition of what emperor cults and Roman politics embraced. Macurdy emphasized that her identity as a woman influenced what she studied and how she chose to approach the ancient testimony about it: under these circumstances, male scholars could not overlook her differences from as well as similarities to them.

Brennan (2018) also noted that Taylor was the only woman listed and depicted in a group of leading historians entitled "Galaxy of Eminent Men," published by the journal *Current History* in 1923. As he comments: "Already as an associate professor, she found herself included in a high-profile venture launched by *Current History* magazine, that had nothing to do with the ancient world. The notion was that a dozen or so "area experts" from leading American universities would post monthly updates on contemporary world affairs. Taylor was the only woman and certainly one of the youngest members of this group of proto-bloggers. The *New York Times*, which at the time published *Current History*, heavily promoted this feature in large-format ads with rhetoric to match."

APPENDIX TWO:

LILY ROSS TAYLOR'S REPORT AS ACTING PROFESSOR IN CHARGE OF THE SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES, AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME, 1934–35

Quoted in full from Taylor (1935):

To Trustees of the American Academy in Rome.

GENTLEMEN: I have the honor of submitting to you through the Director my report as Acting Professor in Charge of the School of Classical Studies for the year 1934–5.

Before the formal work of the year began on October 2, all the staff and the fellows had gathered in Rome. Miss [Aline] Abaecherli [Boyce] [1905–1994, Bryn Mawr PhD 1933; Taylor's own student], Mr. [George Kenneth] Boyce [1906–1992] and Mr. [Meyer] Reinhold [1909–2002, Columbia PhD 1933], after travelling independently for two months in Italy and Northern Europe, returned to Rome as soon as or before the Academy Building was opened on September 15. Professor [Albert William] Van Buren [1878–1978, AAR Professor of Archaeology] and I were here on September first. The three first-year fellows, Mr. [Richmond] Lattimore [1906–1984, Illinois PhD 1934], Mr. [Naphtali] Lewis [1911–2005, Strasbourg PhD 1934] and Mr. [George] Siefert [1910–1984, University of Pennsylvania PhD, 1948], arrived the last week in September. Three visiting students registered for the work of the entire year, and in addition Professor Herbert Hoffleit [1905–1981] of the University of California at Los Angeles and Mrs. Annie Hare Graham, Ph.D. of Johns Hopkins, joined us for the first half of the year.

Professor Van Buren has reported elsewhere on his course on topography and monuments. I took charge of the lectures and excursions dealing with Etruria. As usual the Academy had the benefit of the generous aid given us by the Ingegnere Mengarelli who lectured in the Museo di Villa Giulia and at the necropolis of Cerveteri. I conducted excursions to Veii, Tarquinii, Nepes, Sutri, and Falerii, and later in the year with Miss [Alice] Bockstahler [1906–1984, who married Lattimore in 1935], Miss Van Buskirk and Mr. Lattimore took a motor trip of two weeks to Etruscan-sites further north — Pitigliano, Sovana, Grosseto, Vetulonia, Populonia, Volterra, Florence, Fiesole, Marzabotto, Bologna, Arezzo, Corona, and Perugia. From time to time throughout the year I organized excursions to other sites — to the necropolis of Isola Sacra, over Monte Gennaro to Horace's Farm, a two-day trip to Segni, Anagni, Ferentino, Alatri, Palestrina and Subiaco. I also made six visits with the students to Roman museums, where we devoted our attention chiefly to important inscriptions. Two other trips were conducted by foreign scholars, one to Ardea and Lavinium by Professor Axel Boethius [1889–1969], who, just before giving up his work as Director of the Swedish Archaeological Institute in Rome, found time to take us on this delightful visit to the country of the Aeneid, and one to Hadrian's Villa by Professor Karl Lehmann-

Hartleben [1894–1960, dismissed from his position as Professor of Classical Archaeology at Muenster owing to Hitler's race laws in 1933]. Director [James Monroe] Hewlett [1868–1941] and members of the School of Fine Arts shared with us in the pleasure of hearing a most interesting discussion of the Roman Villa. Early in June those of us who were still in Rome visited with Professor [Guido] Calza [1888–1946] the important tombs which have lately been laid bare along the Autostrada at Ostia Antica.

Aside from the lectures given by scholars at various sites there has been only one lecture at the Academy, that given by Professor Elizabeth Hazelton Haight of Vassar College on "Prose Fiction in the Augustan Age: Seneca's *Controversiae*" [published in Haight (1936)].

Because of the varying preparation and interests of the small group of students it seemed wise to attempt during the year no regular courses except the work on topography and monuments and the Italian class, given as usual by Professor De Masi. Instead I had regular interviews throughout the winter with those students who were beginning new problems here and spent a good deal of time on the completed manuscripts submitted by the more advanced students. Every regular member of the school submitted at least one paper before the year was over. Since our group was small and all second-year students had already reported on their investigations last year, it did not prove to be feasible to hold the customary meetings of the Seminar. I did, however, have the advantage of spending two hours with Mr. Boyce on the Lararia of Pompeii and of hearing Mr. Lattimore and Mr. Reinhold discuss in museums inscriptions of special interest for their work.

Miss Abaecherli spent the first weeks of the year recasting her thesis to be published in 1936 in *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni*. During the year she completed two papers, one on "Certain Imperial Symbols on Flavian Coins," which appeared in the April number of *Classical Philology*; and one on "Fercula, Tensae and Carpentia in the Roman Procession," which will be published in a forthcoming number of the "Bollettino dell'Associazione di Studi Mediterranei." She has further work in progress on the *pompa circensis*. Mr. Boyce has completed his catalogue of the Lararia in the houses of Pompeii which will be published in the *Memoirs* for 1937. His catalogue of the shrines at the Compitalia and his general discussion of household cults are well on the road to completion, and will probably be published elsewhere. Mr. Reinhold has published two brief articles and a review in the *Classical Weekly* and has completed a paper on the great fortunes of the Augustan Age. He has also in progress a study of Augustus' relations with client princes. The Academy has felt great pride in the many enthusiastic reviews which his dissertation on Marcus Agrippa has received. Mr. Lattimore, who with the consent of Academy authorities has resigned his fellowship to accept an Assistant professorship of Greek at Bryn Mawr College, has practically completed his book on "The Themes in Greek and Latin Sepulchral Inscriptions," which is to be published by the University of Illinois. Mr. Lewis has written two papers which have been accepted by the *Études de Papyrologie*, one on "Greek Literary Papyri in the Strasbourg Collection," the other on "Ostraca grecs du Musée du Caire." He has in preparation two other studies, one on a hoard of Roman Coins from Seltz (Alsace), the other, the publication of a number of

Greek papyri transcribed in Cairo which are to appear in the *Collection de la Société Royale de Papyrologie*. Mr. Seifert, after working for some time on the cults of the Volscian towns and writing up part of his material on Antium, has decided that another type of subject would be more in accord with his interests and has begun work on an edition and commentary of the fragments of Varro's *De Vita Populi Romani*. Miss [Berthe] Marti [1904–1995, Bryn Mawr PhD 1934] has been engaged here and in Switzerland in a study of Arnolfus of Lisieux. Miss Bockstahler wrote a paper on representations of the dance in Etruscan monuments and Miss Van Buskirk completed this summer a study of private property in Rome which was in the possession of Cicero, his family and his close friends. Mrs. Graham continued while in Rome her work on her dissertation on the devotees of the Oriental cults and Mr. Hoffleit worked here and in Vienna on the manuscripts of Plato. I published in the April number of *Classical Philology* a paper on “The *Selisternium* and the Theatrical *Pompa*” and have since then completed three papers on the restoration of various inscriptions. Another paper on “Recent American Work in Roman Religion,” the text of a lecture which I gave in May at the *Istituto di Studi Romani*, will appear this year in the *Studi Romani nel Mondo*. I have also made some progress on a paper on the cults of Ostia in the light of the excavations and research of the twenty-three years since I published my dissertation on the subject.

It will be apparent from this account that various members of the Academy are publishing their studies in other journals than the Academy publications. The next number of the *Memoirs* is to be made up of the work of two former fellows, Dr. [Marion] Blake [1892–1961, Cornell PhD 1921, then teaching at Mount Holyoke College] and Dr. [Bernard Mann] Peebles [1906–1976, Harvard PhD 1940] and there is actually no place in it for work of the present student and staff. The limitation of the publication programme incidental to the budgetary difficulties of the time is a disadvantage both for the young scholars who ought to have their work appear as soon as possible and for the Academy, which should have credit for research done here.

The fund contributed to aid the work of members of the Classical School has been of great value. Through it we were able to secure the necessary photographs for the work of Miss Abaecherli and Mr. Boyce, to pay for the plate which illustrated Miss Abaecherli's article in *Classical Philology*, and to have a series of plans drawn for the article of Mr. [Philip W.] Harsh [1905–1960, Chicago PhD 1933] which appeared this year in the *Memoirs*.

The Greek Island cruise, which in part compensated for the lack of an organized Greek trip, is described in Professor Van Buren's report. In addition to that journey in which five students took part, members of the Classical School undertook fairly extensive travel. Mr. Lewis was, with the consent of the Academy authorities, absent for four months during the winter. He spent the major part of his time in Egypt where, through the courtesy of Professor Pierre Jouget, he shared in the opportunities of the French Archeological Institute. On his return from Syria, Constantinople, and Greece in April, Mr. Reinhold joined him in Northern Italy and they both represented the Academy at the International Papyrological Congress [in Florence]. Mr. Reinhold also travelled in Sicily and Tunis. Miss Marti, Miss Abaecherli and

I all made brief trips to Sicily and Mr. Siefert spent a month journeying, mainly by bicycle, in Southern Italy and Sicily.

Visits of American scholars have been less frequent than usual this year, but we have had with us several people who have had close connection with the Classical School. Professor W.T. Semple [1881–1962, Professor at the University of Cincinnati], a member of the Classical Committee, was here for two weeks in March. Professor E.H. Haight, Chairman in 1934 of the Advisory Council, spent May and June in Rome, and Professor H.E. Burton, a former Annual Professor, was in Rome for some weeks in the spring. Professor J.W. Swain of the University of Illinois and Professor Helen Law [1890–1966, Vassar Class of 1911] of Wellesley College also spent some time in Rome.

The closing of the Academy from July 15 to September 15, decided upon as a measure of economy, seems to me to have its disadvantages for the work of the Classical School. Since our students regularly travel at other periods in southern lands, it seems questionable whether two months of continuous absence each summer are desirable for all the fellows who are attempting to complete their plan for research. This year, as in my own experience as Fellow of the Academy, I have found that the quiet of Rome and the Academy library has great advantages for concentrated work in the summer months. The facilities of the library and the generous aid of [Assistant Librarian] Colonel de Daehn are always at our disposal in the summer, but conditions of living are not altogether simple for students who remain, as two were forced to do, to complete work this summer. My feeling is that in the interests of research they should be encouraged rather than discouraged from staying here.

I should like to express my appreciation for the unfailing courtesy and cooperation which I have received from the administrative authorities of the Academy, Director Hewlett, Mr. Benton and Mr. Davico, for the constant counsel and aid which Professor Van Buren has so generously supplied from his long experience in Rome, and for the advantages of the Library, which under Mr. Schnacke's direction is a splendid instrument of research. My relations with the officers of the Academy and with the students, a serious and able group of young scholars, and my contacts with older Italian and foreign scholars have made this a very pleasant and profitable year for me.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lily Ross Taylor, August 31, 1935

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