

DIGITAL ROUNDTABLE: FEELING AND CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY

FOREWORD

Constanze Güthenke's latest book, *Feeling and Classical Philology: Knowing Antiquity in German Scholarship, 1770–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), makes a major and distinctive contribution to the study of German classical scholarship. We have decided to mark its publication by inviting three distinguished scholars in the field to respond to its key findings and interpretative insights. This digital roundtable is intended as an early contribution to the debate on a study that will warrant much further attention over the years to come.

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NECROPHILIA

— LORRAINE DASTON —

ABSTRACT

Constanze Güthenke's Feeling and Classical Philology (Cambridge, 2020) prompts wider reflections on the balance between empathy and distance, and between personality and context in classical scholarship. This paper explores some implications of that line of enquiry.

KEYWORDS

death, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, Bildung, individuality, seminar, eros

Classical philology is not the only scholarly discipline to commune longingly with the dead. Philosophers routinely conjure the shades of Aristotle, Descartes, and Kant, arguing with them as if they were the colleagues a few doors down, only much smarter. Literary scholars immerse themselves not only in the texts and biographies but also in the long-lost worlds of their chosen authors: Molière's Paris, Goethe's Weimar, Austen's Bath. Historians of course spend most of their waking hours rethinking past thoughts and recreating past experience, emerging reluctantly into the present only for meals and the occasional faculty meeting. Even the future-oriented scientists sometimes cast yearning glances backwards, avid for biographical anecdotes about the likes of Newton or Gauss or Darwin. To the exasperation of historians of scholarship and science, all of these disciplines envision their own histories as ersatz genealogies, in which the bonds of master and disciple replace those of kith and kin, and the filiation of ideas retraces the biographies of thinkers. Despite repeated efforts in both scholarship and science since the early nineteenth century to sunder life and works, all disciplines reconstruct their own histories as bloodlines and lifelines.

Why? Why superimpose the structure of the family tree on tangled collegial relationships that are at least as intra-generational (the horizontal cohort) as they are inter-generational (the vertical succession)? Why individualize what everyone acknowledges to be the collective achievement of science and scholarship, built by many hands over many generations? Above all, why turn an intricate history of ideas and practices, personalities and institutions into a stick-figure drama of heroes (those who anticipated what we think now) and villains (those who

didn't)? Decades of painstaking historical work documenting the empirical inadequacy of bloodline and lifeline models to explain how science and scholarship actually develop have yet to make the slightest dent in the way disciplines imagine their own histories. On the contrary: scientists regularly reproach historians of science for not writing enough biographies. Even philosophers, who are ordinarily the most allergic to any taint of the *ad personam* in argument and exegesis, would much prefer yet another biography of Kant to, say, a study of what eighteenth-century German philosophy might have looked like from a coeval perspective.

In her refreshing new study of German classical philology during its heyday in the long nineteenth century, Constanze Güthenke stops complaining and starts explaining this strange state of affairs. She takes as her explanandum what most historians of scholarship and science have dismissed as disciplinary mythology. With great tact, both in the sense of respect for her texts and their authors and also in the sense of an exquisite feel for the feelings of her title, she shows how German classical philologists struggled to unite a formidable array of objective techniques with an intense subjective *eros* for their subject matter, to wed their science and their art. She matches the biographical bias of the disciplinary history of classical philology with the biographical, individualizing bias of studies of Pindar and Plato, and shows that these studies were in turn the expression of an attempt to reanimate the beloved dead: the god antiquity incarnated in human form and resurrected, a very Protestant miracle wrought by *Wissenschaft* and empathy.

Because remains of Greco-Roman antiquity were fragmentary, an additional premise, at once epistemological, ontological, and emotional, was required to fill in the faint outlines of the lost beloved. Güthenke argues that the philologists conceived of their subject matters as coherent wholes — first and foremost, as coherent individuals, but also as coherent cultures that took on some of the traits of flesh-and-blood individuals, such as development through the phases of a human life. As Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff effused in the opening passage of his *Geschichte der Philologie* (1921):

Die Philologie [...] wird durch ihr Objekt bestimmt, die griechisch-römische Kultur in ihrem Wesen und allen Äußerungen ihres Lebens. Diese Kultur ist eine Einheit, mag sie sich auch an ihrem Anfang und ihrem Ende nicht scharf abgrenzen lassen. Die Aufgabe der Philologie ist, jenes vergangene Leben durch die Kraft der Wissenschaft wieder lebendig zu machen, das Lied des Dichters, die Gedanken des Philosophen und Gesetzgebers, die Heiligkeit des Gotteshauses und die

Gefühle der Gläubigen und Ungläubigen, das bunte Getriebe auf dem Markte und im Hafen, Land und Meer, und die Menschen in ihrer Arbeit und in ihrem Spiele.¹

Only by assuming the organic unity of its subject matter could the science of classical philology (and it was in many ways the *Ur-Wissenschaft*) warrant the inference from surviving fragment to lost whole — and thereby bring back to life Wilamowitz’s dazzling panorama of ancient thought and experience.

This premise was epistemological in that it justified inferences from part to whole; ontological in positing the existence of entities such as organic cultures or even individuals; and emotional in satisfying the you-are-there yearning to experience Greco-Roman antiquity, all of it, all at once. Wilamowitz’s pageant of temples and marketplaces, poets and sailors, calls to mind paintings like Leo von Klenze’s *Ansicht der Akropolis und des Areopag* (1846)² and other nineteenth-century artistic attempts to render the vision of the philologists vivid to the eye of the body as well as to that of the mind. (Not coincidentally, von Klenze’s brother Clemens August Carl Klenze co-founded the *Societas philologica Göttingensis* together with Karl Lachmann when both were students in Göttingen. As Güthenke notes in passing (p. 164), philhellenism tended to run in families, aspiring professors marrying professors’ daughters — Wilamowitz married Theodor Mommsen’s daughter Maria — thereby spawning academic dynasties of sons-in-law.) In contrast to our current view of cultures as pastiches and individuals as fractured composites, all-too-many souls duking it out within a single breast, the German classical philologists promoted a holistic and synoptic approach.

For the historian of science, there is an eerily familiar ring to all this. But the names that fly to mind are not August Böckh or Wilamowitz, but rather those of the French comparative anatomist Georges Cuvier, the Prussian naturalist Alexander von Humboldt (and his historical philologist brother Wilhelm), and their most celebrated intellectual heir, Charles Darwin. Cuvier’s famous (attributed) dictum, “Show me the bone, and I will describe the animal,” became the basis for spectacular reconstructions of extinct prehistoric beasts such as mammoths and dinosaurs from fossil shards excavated from the Paris basin.³ Arguing

¹ Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Geschichte der Philologie* [1921], ed. Albert Henrichs (Stuttgart/Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1998), p. 1.

² The painting is held by the Alte Pinakothek in Munich: <https://www.pinakothek.de/kunst/leo-von-klenze/ideale-ansicht-der-akropolis-und-des-areopag-athen>

³ Georges Cuvier, *Recherches sur le ossemens fossils de quadrupèdes*, 4 vols. (Paris: Deterville, 1812); see also Gowan Dawson, *Show Me the Bone: Reconstructing*

from anatomical symmetry and tight integration of an organism's *Bauplan*, Cuvier inferred the vanished whole animal from a tooth or a femur. These were holistic assumptions not unlike those of the German classical philologists. Equally famous was Alexander von Humboldt's cultivation of the *Totaleindruck* in natural history: how topography, flora, fauna, climate, and geology combined into a physiognomic impression of the local landscape.⁴ His brother Wilhelm sought the unifying "Persönlichkeit" of each of the world's languages and the insight it provided into the unique intellectual and emotional character of the people who spoke it. Languages were not arbitrary grab-bags of words bound by mere convention; they possessed an "organic life" of their own.⁵ Darwin, who had immersed himself in Cuvier's paleontology, Alexander von Humboldt's rhapsodic natural history, and the tree diagrams of the historical philologists, preached that the fossil record was the fragmentary collection of fragments: only the naturalist's imagination, guided by the organicist principles of Cuvier and the theory of gradualist evolution, could fill in the missing links in the great chain of life.⁶

These cross-cutting resemblances of assumptions and methods among diverse disciplines were noted by contemporaries as well as by latter-day historians. Indeed, they became one model of what it was to become a genuine science in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. When Oxford Sanskritist Max Mueller, trained in Leipzig and Berlin, called for a new science of religion in 1873, he defended the project as of a piece with the most successful sciences of the age, chief among them paleontology and historical philology. Quoting Schelling and Hegel on the "individual genius of a people," Mueller insisted on the unity of culture and religion. It was precisely this unity that constituted the truth of religion: "in one sense every religion was a true religion, being the only religion which was possible at the time, which was compatible with the language, the thoughts, and the sentiments of each generation, which was

Prehistoric Monsters in Nineteenth-Century Britain and America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016) for the popular and scientific sensation created by Cuvier's findings.

⁴ Alexander von Humboldt, "Ideen zu einer Physiognomik der Gewächse," *Ansichten der Natur* [1808, 1826, 1849], ed. Hanno Beck (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1987), pp. 175–297, on p. 181.

⁵ Wilhelm von Humboldt, "Über den Einfluss des verschiedenen Charakters der Sprachen auf Literatur und Geistesbildung," in Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Schriften zur Sprachphilosophie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963), *Werke*, ed. Andreas Flitner and Klaus Giel, vol. 3, pp. 26–30, on p. 26.

⁶ Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* [1859], ed. Ernst Mayr (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 287–302.

appropriate to the age of the world.”⁷ Mueller was admittedly in the thrall of the historical philology of Franz Bopp and Wilhelm von Humboldt, but his comparisons with other sciences employing kindred methods were elaborated at length by anglophone proponents of a science of religion who were more skeptical of such Germanic imports.⁸

In contrast to widespread assumptions about the distinctive individuality and organic unity of subject matter, the then new-fangled Kantian vocabulary of objectivity and subjectivity was something of a German specialty and was rarely to be found in French or English until the latter half of the nineteenth century. But it was very much the language in which the brothers Humboldt expressed the same tensions between scientific methods and artistic intuition that Güthenke documents so well for the classical philologists. Alexander hoped that his colorful descriptions of nature in the tropics would provide the pleasure “welchen ein empfänglicher Sinn in der unmittelbaren Anschauung findet,” simultaneously engaging the imagination and contributing to scientific knowledge.⁹ In *Kosmos*, he granted the subjective responses to nature a volume of their own, equal in length and dignity to the “reine Objektivität wissenschaftlicher Naturbeschreibung” of the first volume. The effects of the objective “Naturgemälde” on the emotions and the imagination and the “Erhöhung des reinen Naturgefühls” through literary description, landscape paintings, and even the then-fashionable panoramas would provide, so Alexander’s hope, the motivation to travel and study nature.¹⁰

Wilhelm was less explicit about the intrinsic aesthetic gratifications of research, but his warm appreciation of the beauties of Sanskrit grammar, which possessed “einer solchen Vortrefflichkeit und Vollständigkeit des Organismus,” or of how the “ganz wundervolles symbolische Gewebe verflochtene Harmonie” of a language approached the unity of a work of art, display the same pleasure in seeing wholes emerge from parts that delighted Alexander in landscape physiognomies.¹¹ For Wilhelm, the complementary play of objective and subjective took place in language

⁷ F. Max Mueller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1873), p. 261.

⁸ Louis Henry Jordan, *Comparative Religion: Its Genres and Growth* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1905), pp. 30–61.

⁹ A. von Humboldt, *Ansichten der Natur*, pp. ix, xi.

¹⁰ A. von Humboldt, *Kosmos. Entwurf einer physischen Weltbeschreibung* [1845–1862], ed. Ottmar Ette and Oliver Lubrich (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 189, 234.

¹¹ Wilhelm von Humboldt, “Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues und ihren Einfluss auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechtes” [1830–35] in *Schriften zur Sprachphilosophie*, pp. 368–756, on p. 396.

itself. Only language could display the shared, objective world of observation and concepts and simultaneously reinforce the subjective feelings of interlocutors. This interplay of objectivity and subjectivity was the “am schönsten aber und seelenvollsten” expression of the individuality of a language.¹²

Of course, the brothers Humboldt were steeped in exactly the kind of classical *Bildung* Güthenke describes so well as the seedbed of the longing for the lost beloved of Greco-Roman antiquity. But they were not alone in mapping the opposition of objectivity versus subjectivity onto that of science versus art. In an 1853 lecture on Goethe’s scientific work, the great physicist and physiologist Hermann von Helmholtz contrasted the abstract concepts of science with the “unmittelbaren geistigen Anschauung” of the artist. Goethe’s view of nature as *Kunstwerk* had served him well in his morphological studies in botany and anatomy but in Helmholtz’s opinion had betrayed him in his optical investigations.¹³ Helmholtz worried Goethe like a terrier with a bone in subsequent lectures: how to resolve the seeming paradox of a genial career that combined both art and science, which Helmholtz and his contemporaries now conceived as two diametrically opposed ways of knowing?¹⁴ Artistic and scientific proclivities once intertwined in the careers of Leonardo or Galileo or Linnaeus seemed increasingly immiscible by the mid nineteenth century.¹⁵ Those who openly rebelled against such polar oppositions, including Ernst Haeckel among the scientists and Friedrich Nietzsche among the philologists, became outcasts from their respective disciplines.

My point in drawing attention to these comparisons is not to mount an argument of influence in either direction but simply to point out a common context for the categories, vocabulary, and tensions Güthenke analyzes so perceptively in the work of the German classical philologists. There is undoubtedly something highly specific about the love of the classical philologists for their subject matter: Darwin may have loved his beetles and barnacles, but never with anything like the passion Winckelmann or even Wilamowitz felt for the Greeks. You can be devoted

¹² W. von Humboldt, “Über den Nationalcharakter der Sprachen,” in *Schriften zur Sprachphilosophie*, pp. 64–81, on p. 80.

¹³ Hermann von Helmholtz, “Über Goethe’s naturwissenschaftliche Arbeiten” [1853], in Helmholtz, *Vorträge und Reden*, 4th ed., 2 vols. (Braunschweig: Friedrich Vieweg und Sohn, 1896), vol. 1, pp. 25–47, on p. 34.

¹⁴ Hermann von Helmholtz, “Goethe’s Vorahnungen kommender naturwissenschaftlicher Ideen” [1892], in *Vorträge und Reden*, vol. 2, pp. 335–61, on pp. 339–40.

¹⁵ Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007), pp. 37, 246–7.

to earthworms or medusae or nebulae or even electromagnetic fields, but no one has ever fallen in love with them. Yet despite the obvious differences in degree of emotional intensity and, still more obviously, subject matter, there are striking commonalities in the way various nineteenth-century sciences, natural and human, reasoned, reflected, and felt about their objects of inquiry — and about inquiry itself. I have already alluded to shared assumptions about organic unity, shared ambivalence about artistic flashes of intuition, and shared oppositions between objectivity and subjectivity. There was also a shared cult of arduous research that bordered on obsession. Novels like Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818) or Honoré de Balzac's *La recherche de l'absolu* (1834) dramatized the dangerous monomania of the scientist, which competes with and ultimately destroys his loved ones. More prosaically, the biographies, autobiographies, and family memoirs of nineteenth-century scholars and scientists document a *libido sciendi* that overwhelmed all other emotional ties. A shared emotional economy — or rather excess — undergirded all of the *Wissenschaften*. In its broad outlines, Güthenke's account holds for a larger learned community beyond the classical philologists.

Why this should be the case, especially in a period that also witnessed a self-conscious sharpening of the distinction between the *Natur-* and *Geisteswissenschaften* in the work of Wilhelm Dilthey, Helmholtz, and others, is a puzzle. Güthenke is surely right to insist on the peculiarly though not exclusively German flavor of concepts like *Bildung* and individuality and indeed objectivity and subjectivity, at least in the first half of the nineteenth century. But the Germans had no monopoly on philhellenism or on a school curriculum for elite young men that granted classics pride of place: English public schools and French *lycées* in this respect marched shoulder to shoulder with German *Gymnasia*. Even the scientists, who from the 1870s onward campaigned in all three countries for the introduction of more natural science and mathematics into school curricula, clung to older ideals of humanistic education. Not to know Greek or at least Latin was to surrender one's credentials as an educated man, the ultimate *déclassement*, even for a physicist like Helmholtz.

But anxiety about status could hardly have by itself generated the *Berufsethos* that drove so many nineteenth-century scholars and scientists to the brink of nervous collapse through over-work and infused their

correspondence (and their notoriously savage polemics)¹⁶ with such warmth and such venom. Historians of science and scholarship have established the seminal role of the seminar in institutionalizing advanced training and research ideals in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century German universities.¹⁷ Pioneered by philologists and historians and soon imitated by physicists and chemists, the seminar was at once an apprenticeship in research techniques, whether *Quellenkritik* or precision measurement, and a socialization into the values of the discipline. Although we still know far too little about what actually happened in the seminar, it seems to have left a deep imprint upon the psyches as well as the subsequent publications of participants. Describing the initiation of the seminarians into research methods, classical philologist Hermann Diels also emphasized the strong personal bonds forged between teacher and students and among students: “Dabei soll ein gegenseitiges Nehmen und Geben zwischen Lehrer und Schülern stattfinden. Das belebt den Mut der Neophyten und schlingt unsichtbare Fäden des Vertrauens zwischen den Teilnehmern eines solchen Thiasos.”¹⁸ Here Diels rang the changes on the Greek word *Thiasos*, a religious confraternity but also a troop of warriors, a Bacchic rite, or a festive gathering — a symposium.

In Diels’ description glints at least the beginning of an answer to the puzzles of why disciplines persist in narrating their histories in terms of bloodlines and lifelines and also why key aspects of Güthenke’s account can be generalized to disciplines beyond classical philology, despite the indisputable peculiarities of the latter. Since the late Middle Ages universities had self-consciously adopted the language of ersatz family relationships to strengthen the ties connecting master and student, university and alumni;¹⁹ we still use the terms *Doktorvater* and *alma mater*. The seminar hijacked and sometimes even literalized (all those

¹⁶ Glenn W. Most, “One Hundred Years of Fractiousness: Disciplining Polemics in Nineteenth-Century German Scholarship,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 127 (1997), pp. 349–61.

¹⁷ R. Steven Turner, “Historicism, *Kritik*, and the Prussian Professoriate, 1790–1840,” in *Philologie et herméneutique au 19e siècle*, ed. M. Bollack and H. Wismann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), pp. 450–89; Kathryn Olesko, *Physics as a Calling: Discipline and Practice in the Königsberg Seminar for Physics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); William Clark, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 173–9, 219–27.

¹⁸ Hermann Diels, *Die Organisation der Wissenschaft* [1906] (Heidelberg: Spektrum, 1993), p. 654.

¹⁹ Chiara Crisciani, “Teachers and Learners in Scholastic Medicine: Some Images and Metaphors,” *History of Universities* 15 (1997–99), pp. 75–101.

sons-in-law) family feeling, albeit in a weirdly all-male fashion. Sentiments of brotherly camaraderie (and fierce sibling rivalry), filial devotion (and Oedipal resentment), tribal loyalty (and pugnacity toward other tribes) were re-channeled into the collective project of research in the *thiasos*. Güthenke notes love and friendship among communities of scholars as recurring themes (pp. 69, 135 et *passim*). Often the intensity of commitment to the ersatz family of the seminar collided with commitment to real families, a conflict still all too familiar to scholars and scientists everywhere. Historian Leopold Ranke was incensed when the participants in his advanced research seminar, which met daily in his Berlin apartment, wanted to take Christmas Eve off to be with their families.²⁰ Writing approximately 150 years later, the British biologist Peter Medawar warned the spouses of scientists that “men or women who go to the extreme length of marrying a scientist should be clearly aware beforehand, before learning the hard way after, that their spouses are in the grip of a powerful obsession that is likely to take the first place in their lives outside the home, and probably inside too.”²¹ We are heirs to the profoundly effective and affective socialization of the research seminar — and to the implicit bloodline model of family ties and descent that is the emotional key to its success.

The seminar recast values as well as loyalties in a disciplinary mold. Then as now those values were personalized: not only in the person of the teacher but also in the biographies of the discipline’s pantheon. Or rather in the biographical anecdotes, though these often pass for mere gossip. Historians of science and scholarship disdain the anecdotal lore, most of it apocryphal or at least unverified, that enlivens disciplinary history, without ever pausing to ask why there’s so much of it. Yes, it’s mythology, not history, but it’s powerful mythology, each anecdote attached to the name of a luminary in the discipline’s history and each a parable of how/how not to behave as a paid-up practitioner. Physicists tell stories about brilliant solutions scribbled on the back of a napkin during a beery night out; philosophers recount the Socratic one-liners that flummoxed the distinguished visiting colloquium speaker; historians revel in the elaborate note-taking techniques of the doyens of their field. There are also cautionary tales. Every graduate student in history hears about promising careers blighted by a faked footnote; their counterparts in the lab sciences are admonished with grim accounts of very senior figures

²⁰ Kaspar Eskildssen, “Leopold Ranke, la passion de la critique et le séminaire d’histoire,” in Christian Jacob, ed., *Lieux de savoir: Espaces et communautés* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2007), pp. 462–82.

²¹ P.B. Medawar, *Advice to a Young Scientist* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 22.

drummed out of the field in disgrace because of a fudged experiment. These anecdotes are not biographies, but every single one of them is attached to a real, often famous name in the field. In many ways, they make their point about disciplinary values more memorably than any full-dress biography could: like fables and jokes, they are short, punchy, and shorn of extraneous detail. No wonder individual lifelines, despite (or rather because of) the fact that they are mythologized, dominate disciplinary historiography, once again echoing the lore imbibed in the seminar.

At the conclusion to her thoughtful and thought-provoking book, Güthenke muses over an alternative model for doing classical philology: less empathy, more distance; less personality, more context; less *eros*, more *Freude*. Perhaps, she suggests, a cool admiration for the intricate mechanism of the life-like automaton, one of Hephaestus's marvels of the forge, might replace necrophilia for the beautiful lost beloved in a post-human age. "The reflections that finish this study are intended to ask whether there are ways instead to maintain distance without balancing it by a language of longing for reunification, revitalization, or closeness" (p. 196). Certainly, approaches emphasizing the pastness of the past and the explanatory power of context have borne fruit throughout the humanities, including classics, in the past twenty years, and we could all do with a *fröhliche Wissenschaft*. But I am not sanguine about getting rid of the *eros*, any more than I am about some other form of pedagogy replacing the seminar, that extraordinary engine of training and socialization. To lavish attention on arcana, whether the poems of Pindar or the flight paths of bees, for hours and months and years on end, is to saturate these objects with value and with affective meaning. Other images and metaphors may well replace those of resuscitating the dead beloved, but emotionally detached attention to our lifelong objects of inquiry will remain an oxymoron.

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STUDIO E SCIENZA

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ABSTRACT

Questo lavoro si misura con alcune proposte del recente libro di Constanze Güthenke Feeling and Classical Philology (Cambridge, 2020) e ne discute, in particolare, il contributo alla storiografia delle emozioni: un campo di indagine che acquisisce particolare rilevanza nell'esplorazione dello sviluppo storico degli studi classici.

This paper engages with some key arguments of Constanze Güthenke's recent book Feeling and Classical Philology (Cambridge, 2020) and discusses in particular its contribution to the history of emotions: a field of investigation that proves especially relevant to the exploration of the historical development of classical scholarship.

KEYWORDS

*emotions, seminar, pandemic, scholarship, study,
Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm von Humboldt*

1.

In conseguenza della crisi pandemica chiediamo alla scienza, con maggiore insistenza rispetto al passato, certezze assolute, dati obiettivi, capacità previsionali, soluzioni definitive. Dallo scienziato ci si aspetta l'enunciazione di verità inconfutabili, l'abilità di intervenire in una situazione di crisi sulla base di fattori sicuri e razionali, lucidità decisionale. La pratica del *triage*, che consiste nel dover scegliere a chi dare la precedenza nelle cure salva-vita, paradossalmente non tiene conto delle componenti emotive, ad esempio l'affetto o la pietà, ma si basa su elementi quantificabili (come l'aspettativa di vita), che dipendono in fin dei conti da calcoli e algoritmi, i quali — del resto — dominano sempre più aspetti della nostra vita sociale. Il *triage* è una pratica medica 'umanitaria', che però tradisce il concetto tradizionale di 'umanitario', basandosi su un freddo calcolo di probabilità, al punto che può diventare poco rispettosa dell'uomo, ad esempio se non vengono date le cure ai vecchi e ai fragili perché hanno troppe probabilità di morire. Tutto ciò dovrebbe portare ad una riflessione sul termine 'umanitario', e sulle parole che hanno a che fare con 'uomo', ivi compresa *Humanities*, la parola usata per le discipline accademiche che si occupano, nella ricerca

e nell'insegnamento, di prodotti e attività dell'uomo, dalla filologia alla storia, dalla psicologia alla linguistica, dall'archeologia alla sociologia: sino a che punto le 'scienze umane' si basano, in quanto scienze, su aspetti emotivi propri dell'essere umano? In che misura le scienze umane si servono delle emozioni come mezzo di conoscenza? E in che misura le emozioni entrano nel linguaggio delle scienze umane, nelle loro asserzioni teoriche, nelle loro pratiche?

Un'altra conseguenza della pandemia è stata la necessità, per evitare la vicinanza fisica delle aule scolastiche e universitarie, di sostituire gli uomini con le macchine anche nel campo della formazione, ossia della scuola e dell'università, istituzioni dove il contatto tra i corpi e l'interazione emotiva costituisce, tra l'altro, ineludibile strumento di trasmissione di saperi e competenze. La cosiddetta didattica 'a distanza' spersonalizza infatti l'insegnamento, riducendolo a pura esposizione di un sapere, privandolo delle componenti emotive che hanno a che fare con il corpo in presenza. Epurando delle passioni il rapporto docente-allievo, tale rapporto viene reso obiettivo, asettico, ma anche regolamentato e soprattutto regolamentabile: la durata e il contenuto della lezione si deve stabilire con esattezza e quindi è pre-determinato a priori e controllato a posteriori. Anche in un laboratorio le istruzioni possono essere impartite dalla voce fuori campo di qualcuno che sta osservando da lontano le attività di chi sperimenta. La distanza fisica significa però distanza intellettuale, perché preclude al dialogo, alla comunicazione di un'intuizione subitanea, all'esultanza che segue immediatamente a una nuova scoperta o ad un esperimento riuscito. Una lezione universitaria registrata, e trasmessa sullo schermo in maniera tale da poter essere fermata e riascoltata anche parzialmente, non difetta dei contenuti rispetto ad una lezione in presenza, ma della possibilità dell'interruzione spontanea e del dibattito.

Se il processo della didattica 'a distanza' si rivelerà irreversibile, sia per la crisi che stiamo vivendo che per la necessità di prevenire future analoghe crisi epidemiche, sia perché si vorrà indicare come più democratica la via telematica, perché fruibile a più persone, vorrà dire che sarà messa definitivamente in discussione la tradizione universitaria europea, basata sulla condivisione di esperienze, di emozioni, di amore verso i propri oggetti di studio, come pure di rivalità e odio fra 'scuole' di pensiero. Non sta a me e non è questa la sede per discutere sui pericoli o sulle prospettive insiti in una tale aspirazione ad una scienza impassibile ed 'erogata' a distanza, in cui venga a mancare il contatto tra i corpi e non sia richiesto alcun carisma allo studioso, in cui siano distillate o annullate da uno schermo le emozioni, che tra l'altro offrono efficaci strategie per ricomporre gli equilibri e trovare soluzioni alle situazioni di crisi.

2.

Con queste premesse sembra molto positivo che appaia un libro come quello di C.G., che ripercorre la storia delle emozioni nella nascita e nel primo secolo di vita di una specifica scienza, l'*Alttertumswissenschaft*, la 'scienza dell'antichità': una storia che è però indicativa anche per altre scienze, comprese quelle naturali, data la necessità di una storia comparata di ogni scienza.¹ Inoltre, come è noto, lo studio dell'antichità 'classica' ha nella tradizione europea un valore formativo generale, che nelle istituzioni educative occidentali è ancora relevantissimo, nonostante le pressioni più antiche e quelle più attuali verso una specializzazione che miri unicamente ad una formazione settoriale e che abbia come scopo l'esercizio di una specifica professione. Benvenuto, dunque, il libro di C.G. se riesce a ricordare, anche al di là di una ristretta cerchia di storici e di cultori dell'antichità cosiddetta 'classica', che l'esercizio della scienza è innanzitutto amore, e che la vita, nel senso specifico di biografia, di uno studioso e di uno scienziato si configura come una *etopoia*, ossia un modello morale, che nasce ad imitazione di altri modelli.²

La vita degli studiosi si adatta spesso mimeticamente innanzitutto agli scrittori o agli uomini che essi studiano, con un atto di rispecchiamento intellettuale, ma anche fisico, nel senso che, con la propria biografia, lo studioso tende a ri-vivere i propri modelli. Le biografie degli studiosi potrebbero dunque spesso essere considerate una forma specifica di *re-enactment*, compresa la ri-messa in gioco di aspetti più propriamente performativi (gestualità, abbigliamento, tono di voce, ad esempio). Tale fenomeno, si dirà per inciso, non caratterizza solo le culture moderne, ma già quelle antiche, anche con risultati paradossali, come la falsificazione delle forme di vita filosofiche, e il loro conseguente svuotamento, che Luciano di Samosata (II sec. d.C.) satireggia nell'opuscolo intitolato *Vendita dei filosofi all'asta*. Lì dove c'è un modello è infatti sempre in agguato il pericolo di una 'copia' esteriore, priva di contenuti. D'altro canto, lo stesso meccanismo di *re-enactment* ha costituito e costituisce una possibile caratteristica atta a identificare e definire una 'scuola' accademica: del maestro si imitano consapevolmente le abitudini, l'abbigliamento, la prossemica, la maniera di fare lezione, l'uso di alcuni oggetti, sino a che l'imitazione, oltre a una forma di rispecchiamento e di amore, finisce con l'essere uno specifico atto di sostituzione dell'allievo al maestro. Al contrario interrompere quelle abitudini e

¹ L. Daston e G. W. Most, 'History of Science and History of Philologies', *Isis*, 106.2, 2015, 378–390.

² B. Carnevali, 'Literary Mimesis and Moral Knowledge: The Tradition of "Ethopoeia"', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 64, 2010, 291–322.

sovvertire quella *etopoia* significa rivendicare la propria originalità e distacco.

Il titolo del libro di C.G. suona *Feeling and Classical Philology*, il sottotitolo *Knowing Antiquity in German Scholarship, 1770–1920*; dunque in questo libro il ‘sentimento’ (sinonimo di ‘affetto’ e di ‘emozione’) va inteso con significato cognitivo (*knowing*) e per filologia ‘classica’ si intende un insieme di discipline che si riferiscono all’antichità, non necessariamente legate al testo. Sempre dal sottotitolo, apprendiamo come il campo d’indagine di C.G. sia propriamente l’attività degli studiosi tedeschi per un secolo e mezzo, ossia dalle origini della *Altertumswissenschaft* alla fine della prima guerra mondiale. Il concentrarsi sulla filologia tedesca è giustificato, sebbene in questo caso, poiché si propone una storia della filologia come storia delle emozioni, e poiché le emozioni variano, com’è noto, a seconda dei loro contesti culturali e delle loro atmosfere emotive, sarebbe stata utile — e meno tradizionale — una storia comparata dello studio dell’antichità anche in altre nazioni e situazioni storiche, per verificare se gli stessi ‘sentimenti’ di legame erotico e nostalgia per ciò che si è perduto segnino anche altrove gli stessi studi. L’identificazione, infatti, dello ‘spirito’ tedesco con quello greco ha permesso il nascere di una tensione verso il passato greco che non è riscontrabile altrove, e da cui deriva un approccio emotivo e sentimentale all’antichità fortemente contestualizzato.

Proiettando storicamente la sua ricerca agli albori di una scienza, il libro di C.G. mostra coerenza con una serie di ricerche intorno alle emozioni ‘incorporate’ (*embodied*) in ogni organizzazione sociale, compresa l’università. In particolare, tali ricerche riconoscono nel seminario filologico, istituzione a cui si sono poi esemplate le pratiche anche delle scienze naturali e fisiche, una ‘comunità emotiva’ (*emotional community*).³ Il libro di C.G. si deve anche inquadrare tra le ricerche che hanno seguito la ‘svolta emotiva’ (*emotional turn*) nella storia degli studi (cfr. p. 12). Da almeno un decennio, infatti, nell’ambito della scoperta del valore cognitivo delle emozioni, ci si chiede quale sia il loro ruolo nelle pratiche scientifiche dell’osservazione, dell’esperimento e nella formazione della persona dello scienziato e del suo *ethos*, termine inteso in senso antico come ‘forma di vita’.⁴ Anche nell’ambito della scienza dell’antichità, come di altre scienze, la dicotomia tra ragione e sentimento si rivela infatti illusoria. In una prospettiva storica, quale è quella adottata

³ T. Karlsohn, ‘The Academic Seminar as Emotional Community’, *NordSTEP* 2016, 2: 33724 [<http://dx.doi.org/10.3402/nstep.v2.33724>].

⁴ Sulle emozioni epistemiche vd. i vari lavori di L. Daston, e.g. *Objectivity* (con P. Galison), New York 2007.

in questo libro, le emozioni sono prodotti culturali, e nonostante vi siano elementi fissi, nella loro natura e nella loro fenomenologia, che le rendono sempre riconoscibili, il significato di ogni emozione varia nella storia, nelle culture, nelle società, nelle collettività, piccole e grandi. Perciò sebbene l'amore per la scienza, l'affezione ai suoi oggetti, il vincolo reciproco che lega i membri di una comunità accademica tra loro e ai loro maestri siano ancora nelle istituzioni e nelle pratiche scientifiche e accademiche contemporanee, in particolare nell'ambito dello studio dell'antichità, una ricerca di storia delle emozioni, guardando al passato, è utile a mostrare continuità e discontinuità, somiglianze, analogie, diversità nella fenomenologia stessa di quei sentimenti nelle istituzioni e nelle pratiche scientifiche, e quindi a penetrare meglio nel loro significato.

3.

Il libro di C.G. traccia, dunque, una storia della scienza dell'antichità per un secolo e mezzo, dal 1770 al 1920, investigando il linguaggio usato dagli studiosi nelle sue valenze emotive. Proprio quest'analisi minuziosa del linguaggio e dei meccanismi epistemologici dell'amore e dell'attaccamento, analisi condotta in scritti di tipo programmatico oppure scientifico, costituisce il contributo nuovo di questo libro. Un contributo che invita a andare avanti sulla stessa strada: sarebbe stato utile, accanto a una minuziosa indagine sul linguaggio erotico, interrogarsi anche sul linguaggio di altre emozioni e sentimenti che trapelano dagli stessi scritti: il disprezzo, ad esempio, l'avversione, la malinconia, o altre condizioni emotive, come l'isolamento e l'incomprensione.

Dall'analisi di dettaglio di C.G. scaturisce una complessiva storia di un'epoca della scienza dell'antichità come storia di un desiderio: il desiderio di abbracciare un corpo lontano, quello dell'antichità classica, lontano nello spazio, ma anche nel tempo. Un corpo, dunque, che possiamo solo ricostruire nella memoria, come un corpo amato che ci ha per sempre abbandonato, e alla cui ricostruzione concorre l'attenzione per ogni singolo particolare superstite. Senza il desiderio di quel corpo, quindi senza l'amore di quel corpo, non sarebbe stato possibile istituire una nuova scienza. Il linguaggio usato per descrivere gli scopi, gli intenti e l'importanza della scienza dell'antichità, dunque, a partire da Winckelmann, che ne è, naturalmente, uno dei fondatori, è quello dell'eros, e il suo primo modello, secondo l'analisi di C.G., è Platone, in particolare il *Simposio*. L'oggetto dell'amore, l'antichità, viene sin da Winckelmann personificato, e l'unione con la personificazione desiderata e amata dell'antichità è d'altro canto destinata a restare solo un sogno, così come l'amore è destinato a restare unilaterale e non ricambiato. Sarebbe

interessante, poiché gli autori che qui vengono tirati in causa sono tutti maschi, verificare se lo stesso desiderio per il mondo antico personificato si possa riscontrare in studiose donne, e in generale, se parliamo di scienziate, chiedersi se l'oggetto dello studio subisca una personificazione erotica al maschile.

L'autrice abbraccia la prospettiva storica nello studio delle emozioni, per cui queste ultime sono costruzioni culturali; si osserverebbe dunque una particolare perduranza dell'approccio sentimentale all'antichità a partire dalla fine del '700, sebbene ci si possa e debba porre il problema se questo in realtà non inizi almeno sin dal Rinascimento. La spiegazione del fenomeno non è naturalmente interna solo alla storia della scienza: la cultura europea della seconda metà del XVIII secolo è permeata, com'è notissimo, dal linguaggio del sentimento e delle emozioni. La novità sta nel rintracciare questo linguaggio in scritti programmatici come, ad esempio, i *Gelegentliche Gedanken über Universitäten im deutschen Sinn* di Friedrich Schleiermacher (1808) e in altri scritti dello stesso genere, che discutono dell'organizzazione, dello scopo, della funzione della filologia e dell'insegnamento e della pratica di questa scienza nell'Università e nelle sue istituzioni. Un testo programmatico di cui forse si può sentire la mancanza in questo libro è *Das Studium der Alten als Vorbereitung zur Philosophie* (1806) di Friedrich Creuzer (1771–1858), uno saggio che intendeva essere un coraggioso atto d'istituzione dello studio dell'antichità basato sull'entusiasmo e sul sentimento e non sulla raccolta sistematica di testimonianze e documenti, o sulla collazione dei manoscritti.

Quel che accomuna questa serie di asserzioni teoriche è il coinvolgimento emotivo dei loro autori rispetto all'oggetto che vogliono definire e spiegare: senza tale coinvolgimento non sembra possibile fare scienza. e perciò: gli studiosi, nel descrivere la loro attività e il modo in cui portano avanti le loro pratiche, scrivono di loro stessi. L'antichità appare in questi scritti quasi sempre come personificata, il che è naturale nella retorica dell'amore, perché solo dando una forma umana a ciò che si ama è possibile immaginare un rapporto amoroso. La personificazione assume valore ermeneutico anche in questo stesso libro, ad esempio con le figure di Pigmalione e Alcibiade (p. 7):

One such figure who is frequently invoked in discussions of late eighteenth-century cultural classicism is Pygmalion. Pygmalion encapsulates the vivid appreciation of art, sensuality, and materiality, but also offers the chance to address the risks of solipsism, self-centeredness, and 'errors of reading'. There are some insights to be taken from Pygmalion, but it is rather a second figure who turns out to

play a more decisive role in this study: that of Plato's Alcibiades and his relationship to the pedagogical and erotic model of knowledge that emerges in the Platonic dialogues.

Siamo, evidentemente, ad un uso accorto della metafora con valore cognitivo.

4.

A me sembra che il lavoro di C.G. confermi quanto essenziale sia il ruolo svolto dall'immaginazione nella pratica scientifica, nella congettura testuale come nella ricostruzione di un'opera d'arte. Sarebbe interessante capire se è possibile un rapporto di influenza reciproca, nell'epoca, tra l'amore per l'antichità stilizzato negli scritti teorici e lo stesso sentimento rappresentato in letteratura, anche ad un livello metaforico (come in racconti o romanzi o poesie che abbiano al centro l'amore per qualcosa di antico che diventi metafora per il sentimento d'amore in generale, ad esempio). Questo libro, infatti, è una storia di un sentimento, l'amore (per l'antico), del desiderio correlato al suo oggetto (l'antichità), e dell'impossibilità di vedere ricambiato quell'amore, perché l'oggetto è per sempre assente, segnato da una mancanza. La stessa parola filologia, in una glossa di August Boeckh, viene spiegata come *Lust zu und an wissenschaftlicher Mittheilung*, con una implicita citazione di *Fedro* 336 (p. 118). Il termine filologia, perciò, sin dal titolo viene usato come sinonimo di 'studio dell'antico', e, sebbene si tratti di una notazione banale, bisogna osservare che la parola 'filologia' serve bene allo scopo, contenendo l'amore' (*philo-*) nella prima parte (come, del resto, il termine filo-sofia).

I limiti del libro ricchissimo ed erudito di C.G. sono in parte condivisi da quasi tutta la tradizione di storia degli studi classici: una sopravvalutazione dei metodi e delle pratiche della filologia 'classica', anche rispetto ad altre discipline; metodi e pratiche che diventano fondanti per altre scienze, realizzando un'ambizione universale della disciplina che la contraddistingue sin dalle prime fasi della sua professionalizzazione e istituzionalizzazione, pur essendo una disciplina dall'oggetto definito e particolare. Inoltre è difficile affermare che C.G., sia immune dall'eroizzare' i grandi protagonisti di quella stagione iniziale della storia della filologia classica, il che tra l'altro è coerente con l'uso della biografia come strategia ermeneutica degli studi sull'antichità. Sin dal titolo, però, l'enfasi posta sul termine 'filologia' induce a riflettere. Nell'ambito della 'scienza dell'antichità' e dunque dello studio dell'antichità, le diverse discipline che la compongono hanno un diverso approccio emotivo ai loro

oggetti: se è vero che sin dagli scritti teorici a cavallo tra '700 e '800 una dose di entusiasmo, immaginazione, fantasia e sentimento è richiesta a qualsiasi studioso dell'antico, nonché l'immedesimazione in ciò che si studia, e che l'amore per l'antichità determina a sua volta un'unione sentimentale tra coloro che studiano l'antico, è anche vero che questo amore, segnato da ineluttabile nostalgia per ciò che si è perso, connota soprattutto lo studioso d'arte, specie dopo Winckelmann, che diventa a sua volta un modello biografico eroizzato. Mentre lo studioso dei testi resta (o si impone di restare) 'freddo', esplicando il suo amore e la sua affezione piuttosto verso l'oggetto che gli trasmette ciò che studia, il libro e le biblioteche, lo studioso di arte antica comprende i suoi oggetti in primo luogo attraverso l'emozione, attraverso l'avvicinarsi fisicamente all'opera d'arte, attraverso un meccanismo di imitazione corporea che induce a parlare anche di 'postura accademica'. Negli studiosi d'arte agisce, infatti, come sappiamo, una *embodied simulation* dell'opera stessa, dimostrata di recente dalle neuroscienze, e che interessa tutti coloro che studiano linguaggi non verbali.

5.

Se pensiamo ad un altro campo di studio, la mitologia, il carteggio (1808) tra il già citato Friedrich Creuzer e Gottfried Hermann (1772–1848) dimostra come sin dall'inizio, nell'ambito degli studi dell'antichità, diverse siano le emozioni epistemiche richieste agli studiosi di diversi oggetti, e che ad esempio sin da subito allo studioso di mitologia si chieda fantasia e immaginazione, non potendosi basare su 'fatti', a meno che non si ritengano 'fatti' linguistici le etimologie.⁵ Ma anche l'*Encomio di Winckelmann* (1778) scritto da Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729–1812), che personalmente ritengo un documento importante ma negletto di storia degli studi classici, mostra come diverse siano le sollecitazioni emotive che provengono da diversi oggetti di studio, e come dunque ogni studioso si adatti emotivamente a ciò che studia, e quanto questo adattamento sia necessario per produrre conoscenza.

Il libro di C.G., vanta una non comune erudizione nella conoscenza di un certo tipo di letteratura e di figure non sempre rilevanti di studiosi; sollecita, d'altro canto, la necessità di altre ricerche dello stesso tipo, che esaminino la pluralità delle emozioni esperite dagli studiosi, e la loro

⁵ S. Fornaro, 'Die Mythologie übersetzen. Der Briefwechsel zwischen Friedrich Creuzer und Gottfried Hermann', in S. Rebenich, B. von Reibnitz, T. Späth (eds.), *Translating Antiquity: Antikenbilder im europäischen Kulturtransfer*, Basel 2010, 71–97.

fenomenologia, rispetto ai diversi oggetti di studio. Mi chiedo ad esempio, nella storia letteraria, verso quali autori antichi si manifesti repulsione, disprezzo, verso quali oggetti disgusto, verso quali testi o opere d'arte vergogna, verso quali documenti rabbia o ripulsa. Non di tutta l'antichità si sente la mancanza, non tutto ciò che è antico diventa ombra di un amore perduto, non sempre verso l'antichità (classica) si prova amore, ma vi possono essere interessanti casi di rifiuto e persino di odio, specie quando, ad esempio, l'antichità e il suo studio venga a coincidere con un sistema educativo estremamente severo e repressivo. In fin dei conti, sembra che C.G. abbia scelto la storia dell'emozione che più le appartiene in quanto studiosa di antichità, dando una lettura a sua volta emotiva ed empatica delle sue fonti. Inoltre, poiché gli scritti presi in considerazione da C.G. concorrono tutti a delineare un modello di formazione (*Bildung*) dell'uomo in generale, e contemporaneamente a formare e costruire il sé dello studioso, viene anche da chiedersi se esistono fonti in cui tale modello, invece che proposto come costruttivo di un'identità, viene de-costruito, e quindi l'analisi dell'antichità come oggetto di studio sia servita a de-costruire e mettere in crisi il sé dello studioso.

6.

Vorrei infine proporre una diversa definizione dell'oggetto di questo libro, non solo per meglio delimitarlo, ma anche per metterne in luce le ulteriori potenzialità ermeneutiche. Il libro offre infatti, a mio parere, un contributo alla storia dello 'studio' dell'antichità classica. Ma cosa è lo 'studio'? 'Studio' è un termine di origine latina che indica un desiderio: applicato ad un oggetto del sapere indica il desiderio di conoscenza. Poiché gli oggetti di questa sono infiniti, lo studioso non smette in principio mai di essere tale. Studiare, dunque, corrisponde ad una forma di vita. Il ricercatore, invece, che 'circostrive' (latino *circare*) il suo oggetto di studio, procede per obiettivi, che raggiunge e supera per porsene poi di nuovi. Lo studioso non ha come scopo produrre qualcosa che si può misurare; l'utilità del suo desiderio di conoscenza sta nelle idee, ossia nel progresso stesso della conoscenza. Il ricercatore, invece, produce dei risultati che si possono descrivere in termini numerici o quantificare. Lo studio è guidato dal 'perché', la ricerca dal 'come'. Studio e ricerca, dunque, possono intrecciarsi e compenetrarsi, ma sono due differenti forme di esercitare la conoscenza umana. Lo studio è prettamente individuale e mette necessariamente in gioco le emozioni dello studioso come singola persona, la ricerca può e in alcuni ambiti deve essere collettiva e perciò finisce con l'essere astratta dalle personalità dei singoli ricercatori. Lo studio si serve principalmente di libri e documenti,

la ricerca ha bisogno per i suoi esperimenti di strumenti specifici e di laboratori. Da qui la figura dello ‘studioso’ perso nei suoi ragionamenti, che specialmente dall’Illuminismo in poi diviene personaggio letterario e spesso oggetto di satira.⁶ Oppure dello studioso a capo di una ‘scuola’, che implica un rapporto sentimentale, come mostra C.G., da leggersi talora in termini freudiani, con gli allievi, come è accaduto nel ‘seminario’ filologico.⁷ Lo studio caratterizza il desiderio di conoscenza di tutte le discipline umanistiche, non solo della filologia, e non solo delle discipline che si occupano di antichità. Credo che l’opposizione tra studio e scienza resti ancora da indagare nei dettagli. In una riscrittura della storia degli studi classici nell’età della loro istituzionalizzazione, anche e soprattutto dal punto di vista della storia delle emozioni, la distinzione tra ‘studio’ e ‘ricerca (scientifica)’ sembra fondante, proprio perché assai differenti sono le emozioni che vengono messe in gioco in queste due diverse pratiche della conoscenza umana, e non da ultimo perché proprio interrogandoci storicamente su cosa sia lo ‘studio’ e cosa la ‘ricerca’ possiamo infine chiederci cosa *oggi* perseguiamo o dovremmo perseguire nella nostra attività di studiosi (o scienziati?) dell’antichità.

Lo studio degli antichi, infatti, è stato praticato, e continua ad esserlo, anche da chi non è un’antichista di professione e come strumento di generale formazione (*Bildung*): negli antichi, infatti, si trova una tradizione essenziale e una delle radici della cultura occidentale; nelle culture antiche si sono trovati i modelli da imitare, oppure riferimenti estetici o morali, ma si è anche trovata una sostanziale alterità col mondo dei moderni. I resti delle culture antiche, di per sé frammentari, sono stati anche oggetto di sovvertimento, correzione, rifiuto, consapevole oblio. Lo studio degli antichi è in fin dei conti il laboratorio della modernità e post-modernità. Credo perciò che si debba mettere in debita luce come i primi tentativi teorici di definire l’oggetto e la natura di quella che sarà chiamata *Altertumswissenschaft* abbiano proprio la parola ‘studio’ nel titolo: ad esempio l’importante saggio di Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Über das Studium der Antike* (1794), rimasto inedito ma a cui si rifece F.A. Wolf nella sua più famosa *Darstellung der Altertumswissenschaft nach Begriff, Umfang, Zweck und Wert* (1807). In una nota lettera di Humboldt a Brinkmann a proposito di questo suo saggio vi è la sintetica esplicitazione di quel che significa per lui lo studio dell’antichità: significa studiare ‘non libri, ma uomini’, e questa espressione non mostra solo la

⁶ A. Košenina, *Der gelehrte Narr. Gelehrten satire seit der Aufklärung*, Göttingen 2003.

⁷ S. Fornaro, ‘Karl Lachmann: il metodo e la scienza’, in G. Ugolini e D. Lanza (a cura di), *Storia della filologia classica*, Roma 2016, 139–155.

necessità di studiare l'antichità dal punto di vista antropologico, ma anche la consapevolezza del valore formativo per l'“uomo” di quello stesso ‘studio’ (su questo concetto richiama l'attenzione anche C.G. alle pp. 36–37).

Quando viene usata consapevolmente all'inizio del '700, l'espressione ‘studio degli antichi’ implica una conoscenza totale dell'antichità in tutti i suoi aspetti: partendo da dati singoli di analisi, un testo oppure un oggetto della cultura materiale, lo studioso di antichità doveva essere in grado di ricostruire tutta un'epoca, di mettere insieme tutti gli elementi storici a sua disposizione. Perciò la divisione tra discipline che studiano diversi aspetti dell'antichità non comportava diversità di metodi e soprattutto di conoscenze: poiché abbiamo dell'antichità una conoscenza frammentaria, lo studioso di antichità doveva essere sia studioso dei testi che della cultura materiale, compresa l'arte, doveva saper dedurre da tutte le testimonianze di un'epoca antica (anche singoli oggetti come gemme e monete o epigrafi) le idee religiose e le idee sull'uomo della stessa epoca, doveva saper leggere, attraverso l'interpretazione dei miti antichi, nei simboli e nell'immaginario delle culture antiche. Pertanto lo ‘studio dell'antichità’ non poteva che essere un'attività infinita, il cui obiettivo era la conoscenza dell'antichità nella sua interezza: e poiché questo non è possibile, si tratta appunto, come ha mostrato anche il libro di C.G., di un'attività segnata dalla mancanza, dalla distanza, dal desiderio inesauribile ma non corrisposto. Quest'idea di ‘studio degli antichi’ segnò una sostanziale differenza nel rapporto col passato greco e romano rispetto a quello che aveva avuto la *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, che era stato invece nel segno dell'imitazione. Lo studio dell'antichità, però, prelude immediatamente alla ‘scienza’ dell'antichità, che nasce invece nel segno dell'obiettività, dunque dell'epurazione di ogni elemento emotivo rispetto all'oggetto di studio, e dell'utilità e della produttività. Parrebbe un compito specifico della storia delle emozioni, tracciare questa diversità emotiva di approccio all'oggetto scientifico, che non è diacronica, perché non sempre si procede dallo ‘studio’ verso la ‘scienza’, ma le due maniere diverse di intendere l'attività scientifica e di ricerca sono sempre compresenti.

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RIGOUR AND CREATIVITY

— STEFAN REBENICH —

ABSTRACT

*This paper explores some of the phases of intellectual history discussed in Constanze Güthenke's book *Feeling and Classical Philology* (Cambridge, 2020): the links between early nineteenth century liberalism and the scoping of ancient history as a field of scholarly investigation; the formative moment in which the classical world began to lose its paradigmatic role; the connections between this new approach and the establishment of a developing bourgeois culture; the crisis of historicism; and the interdisciplinary paradigm that Wilamowitz sought to assert.*

KEYWORDS

Altertumswissenschaft, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Johann Gustav Droysen, August Böckh, historicism, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Stefan George

In her important book Constanze Güthenke convincingly shows “that the energies and structures of ‘feeling’ were an instrumental part of the self-perception of German classical scholarship and its programmatic thinking in the long nineteenth century” (p. 2). She rightly insists “that the use of a language and rhetoric of feeling and of desire had strong continuities in the hermeneutic and disciplinary profile of Classics” and “that German scholarship articulated its relationship with the classical, and especially the classical Greek past, as a quasi-personal relationship with a personified entity” (*ibid.*). It goes without saying that we should all be deeply grateful to Constanze for having written this illuminating book, which is an important contribution to the history of *Altertumswissenschaft* in Germany. At the same time, she offers “some suggestions for reframing the classical scenes of instruction and of understanding” (p. 20), which are most welcome. Following her acute observations, I would like to emphasize six points which may corroborate and differentiate her argument. It should be said in advance that I am primarily concerned with the historical setting of “German scholarship” in the 19th century.

(i) A bourgeois antiquity

In her first chapter, Constanze concentrates on the period around 1800. She demonstrates that intellectuals like Friedrich August Wolf, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Johann Georg Herder were of paramount importance for the genesis of *Altertumswissenschaft*.

Already in the middle of the 18th century Greek antiquity had been rediscovered. Greece became the foremost object of productive intellectual reception. At the same time, the elitist vision of classical culture associated with nobility began to end. The ancients were no longer timeless models but historicized paradigms for *Wissenschaft*, literature and the arts. The new German image of antiquity Constanze describes was characterised by a latent tension between classical aesthetics and enlightening historicism and shifted between the canonization of an idealized image of Greek antiquity, on the one hand, and recognition of its interconnection with other cultures, on the other. These categories can be found in the work of Wilhelm von Humboldt. The aristocratic pupil of Christian Gottlob Heyne made it possible for the hitherto aristocratic veneration of the classics to become a field of research with a sound epistemological basis, and enabled the academic study of antiquity to ascend to a common leading discipline, which shaped lastingly the values and the curriculum of the class we call the bourgeoisie (*Bürgertum*). One could argue that in early 19th-century Germany antiquity as a historiographical construct and an idealized timeless projection contributed considerably to the cultural homogenization of the bourgeoisie and the constitution of a middle-class mentality.

Following Herder, Humboldt developed the term “individuality” in his studies on the ancient world. From the French Revolution he deduced that in certain historical situations everything depends on individual abilities. The politician who seeks to change the world for the better has to create conditions that allow these abilities to develop freely. The historian, however, has to recognize and portray the individual abilities in their particular specific manifestation in the past epoch. The historical search for individuality has to be directed towards generality, which manifests itself in the actions of individual people, as well as in the language, nation and state. This understanding of individuality emancipated the individual, who now was no longer subordinate to a collective, but was understood in his exceptionality as a constituting part of generality. But at the same time, it was essential (to quote Constanze) “for the discursive codification of emotions and of closeness” (p. 19).

Every single person required individual rights and personal freedom, if he wanted to develop his talents and strive successfully for the appropriation of the world. Humboldt’s demand to raise the individual to be

independent, proactive and responsible for himself presupposed individual rights and personal freedom and was directed at the state, which was the only institution able to guarantee these rights and this freedom. Humboldt's image of antiquity served to construct and legitimize his idea of a modern state that guaranteed and promoted education, freedom, and individuality. The study of antiquity had therefore a contemporary, eminently political and cultural dimension. The ancient examples explained the necessity to connect, in the present, bourgeois involvement and patriotism with the ideal of individual autonomy. Only such a state could be so strong to allow its citizens personal and institutional freedom and end the rule of one person over another. Freedom, in Humboldt's words, is "the necessary condition without which even the most soulful duty is not able to produce salutary effects".¹ The concept of a politically active citizen and the model of a bourgeois society that shaped the 19th century discourse on liberalism, oriented themselves towards the ideal projection of political activity in the Greek city-states and the Roman Republic.

(ii) Historiography and the creative imagination of the historian

Constanze illustrates an epistemic development that historicized Greek antiquity and relativized its normative function. Over the course of the 19th century, the ideals of *Altertumswissenschaft* and education drifted apart. In later years, Humboldt for instance not only concentrated on researching the ancient world, but also pursued universal historical objectives, at first intending to confirm the uniqueness of the Greek national character by drawing comparisons, and later without any explicit reference to the exceptionality of European antiquity. In his late linguistic studies, he distanced himself from any cultural hierarchy that privileged European antiquity.

August Böckh and Johann Gustav Droysen continued resolutely on the path set out by Heyne, Wolf and Humboldt, at the end of which came the realization that the ancient world was only one epoch among others. The significance of their contribution, which initially made the Greeks its primary focus, cannot be underestimated when considering the development of a modern conception of history and its epistemic methodology. In a speech to the Berlin Academy held in 1821 and entitled "On the Task of the Historian" (*Über die Aufgabe des Geschichtsschreibers*), Humboldt advocated a historiography which brought to an end the mere

¹ Wilhelm von Humboldt, "Ideen zu einem Versuch die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Staates zu bestimmen", in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. i, Berlin 1903, p. 118.

enumeration of facts and stressed the powers of the mind and the imagination. These powers, he argued, were vital to successfully discovering the internal coherence of history and the laws of historical development. Humboldt addressed the ideas that structure history and make a fabric out of the material of facts. Ideas are, by their nature, “outside the circle of finitude”; and they prevail in and dominate world history “in all their parts”.² So it is the task of the historian, with his ability to imagine (*Ahnungsvermögen*) and his gift of deduction (*Verknüpfungsgabe*),³ to uncover the transcendent ideas as the driving forces of history and to describe their effect in the immanence. “The duty of the historian, in his ultimate, but simplest resolution, is to portray the striving of an idea to win existence in reality.”⁴ In the transition from enlightened historiography to historicism, Humboldt did not construct the unity of the past by portraying past events, but by describing ideas that the historian extracts from these events. The creative imagination of the historian was no longer stigmatised, but rather became the true condition of the possibility of historical discoveries.

The exclusive competence — and task — of historiography was to “enlighten the present about its future and therefore, about the historical moment to which it belongs and which it has to do justice to”.⁵ The citizen could, and had to, learn from antiquity how to exercise political and social responsibility. Historical reflection, which had its origin in Greek antiquity, thus became a central aspect of bourgeois culture. And it was part of the individualized formation of the self (*Selbstbildung*), which historically shaped the modes of expressing emotions and feelings.

(iii) A retrospective utopia

The study of ancient, especially Greek, history in 19th-century Germany established new understandings of education and *Wissenschaft*, but also of nation, state and society. Interpretations of the present and the past were closely interlinked. The present was not appraised on the grounds of antiquity. On the contrary, a utopian vision of the ancient past, constituted in the present, was projected back onto the past. Authors like Wolf, Schleiermacher, Schlegel and Humboldt, cited by Constanze, did

² Wilhelm von Humboldt, “Über die Aufgabe des Geschichtsschreibers”, in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. iv, Berlin 1905, p. 51–52.

³ *Ibid.* 37.

⁴ *Ibid.* 56.

⁵ Cf. Ulrich Muhlack, “Johann Gustav Droysen: Das Recht der Geschichte”, in: Sabine Freitag (ed.), *Die 48er*, Munich 1998, p. 263–276, at 276.

not propagate a timeless model that was to be imitated, but imagined an ideal place, the examination of which was meant to help overcome the *status quo*. And sometimes this examination was a very personal and emotional process.

The bourgeois conception of history, the rise of *Altertumswissenschaft*, and the establishment of a theory of historical hermeneutics aiding the creation of bourgeois identity had their origin in the study of antiquity. Greece (and to a lesser extent also Rome) was a pivotal point of reference and comparison for the definition of education, which was seminal to bourgeois society as a permanent process of self-perfection, for the description of the relationship between freedom and education, for the link between individual, society, and state, and finally for the discussion of the principles of social organisation and structure. In the end, the German idea of the cultural nation was developed through the dialogue with Greek antiquity.

(iv) Neohumanist education in the 19th century

Constanze questions the standard narrative that an increasingly professionalized and institutionalized “scientific philology” and the idealized Neohumanist notion of *Bildung* were drifting apart (cf. p. 125f.). She wants to show that philology in its self-descriptions still tried to keep those poles together, *especially* through maintaining a rhetoric of philological feeling (p. 19). Her argument is compelling, but I would still emphasize the hiatus between rhetoric and reality.

The image of the Greeks supported the productive comparison between modernity and classical antiquity. Wolf, Schleiermacher, Schlegel, Humboldt, Böckh and others advocated no unified and affirmative position regarding antiquity. Normativity and historicity characterised their vision of the past. Their evocations of antiquity were critical of society and of contemporary issues. The absolutist world was to be overcome for good and bourgeois social forms were to be realised. Education was the basis for a comprehensive renewal of state and society; the identity of modern man was based on education.

I have argued elsewhere that Humboldt’s ideal of antiquity constituted the foundation for the study of the Classics in the context of educational reforms that sustained 19th-century bourgeois culture.⁶ But the

⁶ Cf. Stefan Rebenich, “The Making of a Bourgeois Antiquity — Wilhelm von Humboldt and Greek History”, in: Alexandra Lianeri (ed.), *The Western Time of Ancient History: Historiographical Encounters with the Greek and Roman Past*, Cambridge 2011, p. 119–137.

emancipatory potential of Humboldt's image of antiquity quickly dissipated: it was feared that young people, by showing enthusiasm for Greek antiquity, could infect themselves with republican ideas. In addition, there was competition from research into Germanic culture and the Middle Ages, inspired by romanticism.

Neohumanist education not only offered an idea of freedom that was juxtaposed to the constraints of state and society; it also advocated taking refuge in a form of inwardness, which counteracted the bourgeois faith in progress, and intensified the dichotomy between culture and economy. Throughout the shaping of the German empire, an increasingly superficial concept of education came to be the basis of authoritarian institutions, which applied drill and routine to grammar schools. In the class society of the 19th century, the content of education no longer mattered. What was important was the use of specific educational methods that could be used as effective instruments of exclusion. In universities, classical education was triumphant and transformed Graeco-Roman antiquity into an absolute power — with a diminishing interest in the Middle East and a neglect of the history of early Christianity.

At the same time, the historicization of antiquity marked the end of the idealized vision of the ancients. Humboldt and his contemporaries never left any doubt as to their conviction that Greek culture is the basis of a humanist education. Such a normative conception of antiquity was alien to the methodically professionalised study of antiquity, whose modern realism destroyed the special position of the Greeks upon which the German bourgeois intellectual had come to rely. After the mid-19th century, individual scholars, mostly academic outsiders such as Friedrich Nietzsche, opposed the established forms of classical education. They criticized a *Wissenschaft* of antiquity that only amassed highly specialised knowledge and tried, alluding to Humboldt, to preserve European antiquity as a normative model that was intended to have an educational function.

(v) The crisis of historicism

The age of historicism brought about internal differentiation and specialization. Ancient history split from both universal history and philology. Archaeology was founded as an independent discipline. However, this development was not without opposition. Initially, Gottfried Hermann, Karl Lachmann, Immanuel Bekker and Friedrich Ritschl voiced their general criticism of the rather broad scope of classical philology as defined by Böckh (cf. chapter 4, p. 113–128). The conflict between the “philology of words” (*Wortphilologie*) and the “philology of objects”

(*Sachphilologie*) was ignited by a fundamental difference in their understanding of language. While “Wortphilologen” propagated the concept of a formal science focussing on linguistic aspects, “Sachphilologen” felt responsible for the “totality of facts” (*Totalität der Tatsachen*). The dispute about the *cognitio totius antiquitatis* would continue throughout the history of classical studies under the sign of historicism.

Efforts to develop an epistemology and a universal methodology died down after the 1840s. Classical scholars increasingly confined themselves to the highly specialized operations of source criticism and hermeneutic understanding. Formidable results were in fact achieved in this area. Amazing cooperative enterprises — *corpora, monumenta* and *thesauri* — made the legacy of the ancient word accessible and set the standard for other fields. An analytical empiricism proudly raised its head. Belief in progress and scientific optimism were the characteristic features of professionalized classical studies at universities and academies. The exemplary work of Theodor Mommsen institutionalized the philological method for historical studies. It followed his programmatic call, “to organize the archives of the past” (*die Archive der Vergangenheit zu ordnen*). Activity within the field of classical studies rose to an almost industrial scale and impressively confirmed the effectiveness of the historical-critical method. Heuristics and interpretation, however, were drifting apart, and the scholar became a labourer and carter (*Kärrner*). This function of the researcher was established in academic practice by Theodor Mommsen before Max Weber legitimized it in theory. The author of the *Römische Geschichte* (3 vols., Leipzig–Berlin, 1854–1856), which reflected the political experience of the 1848 Revolution, would later declare that the historian was an artist rather than a scholar. The rapid historicization of classical studies necessarily resulted in a departure from the earlier normative and aestheticizing perspective.

As in other disciplines, a sense of crisis also spread through the various fields of classical studies at the end of the 19th and early in the 20th centuries. Critical voices denounced a science that in their eyes only produced epigones and was in danger of fragmentation. Jacob Burckhardt’s and Friedrich Nietzsche’s influence, in conjunction with older concepts, led to discussions about the problem of the relativism of values and the correlation between science and life. Critics were severely questioning the legitimacy of a classical discipline that saw its purpose in positivist productivity, and whose self-declared scientific approach undermined the normative function of antiquity. Calls for comprehensive reconstruction and contemporary synthesis grew louder. Within classical studies itself, Hermann Usener outlined the new model of a comparative type of cultural studies that was to advance from historical facts to

insights of universal validity (cf. Constanze's remarks on Usener, p. 122–125), while Eduard Meyer presented ancient history as an integral part of universal history. In numerous publications, classical scholars sought to entrench antiquity as a relevant medium of education and to give clear guidance to a society shaken by political, social and cultural changes. And yet, scholarship was in fact barely affected by the 'crisis of historicism'. An abundance of dissertations in classical studies remained dedicated exclusively to source criticism. The scientific community continued to applaud hyperspecialized work on texts and monuments.

(vi) Plato, Wilamowitz and Stefan George's circle

Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (cf. chapter 6, p. 162–193) tried to preserve antiquity as an interdisciplinary ideal and, through the conception of overarching, all-encompassing *classical* studies, to overcome its fracturing into discrete disciplines.

Constanze stresses "structural similarities and continuities" between Wilamowitz and Stefan George and his circle (p. 178–179). The George-circle had also announced its opposition to relativism and pluralism of values.⁷ There was agreement with Nietzsche's view that the role of history was to serve life. In the crisis of historicism there was a campaign against philological pedantry and philosophical hair-splitting. Plato was required to polemicize against established academia and to call for a comprehensive reform of education. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff was the first to get caught in the critical cross-fire. The aim of the George-circle was to grasp the foreignness of the past, in contrast to the historicist position of Wilamowitz. This despite the fact that Wilamowitz too had attempted to overcome the neo-classicizing vision of the Greeks, and had repeatedly demanded that philology must seek the cultural inheritance of Greco-Roman antiquity as a whole, heathen as well as Christian: *cognitio totius antiquitatis*. There were also similarities in their approach to Plato: Wilamowitz argued for the authenticity of the famous seventh letter and defended it as a genuine document for Plato's life and works. Moreover, in his two-volume biography of Plato, which appeared in 1919, Wilamowitz celebrated the unequal nature of humans as well as an elitist model of the state. Arnaldo Momigliano has already observed that "[Wilamowitz's] Plato anticipates that of Stefan George's

⁷ Cf. Stefan Rebenich, "May a Ray from Hellas Shine upon Us': Plato in the George-Circle", in: Helen Roche and Kyriakos Demetriou (eds), *Brill's Companion to the Classics, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany*, Leiden 2018, p. 178–204.

students [...] in being a *Führer*".⁸ But the George-circle's invective against Wilamowitz, which became a point of cultural dogma, obscures the influence which the Berlin Hellenist, whose writings received a great deal of attention, did in fact exert on the circle.

The fight between George and Wilamowitz about the "correct" vision of antiquity and Plato, fanned not least by the vanity of both parties, went back a long way. The young Wilamowitz had polemicized fiercely against Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, and later against George himself, in luscious satires which poked fun at his "banality of impotence" (*Mausegrau der Impotenz*).⁹ The poet's followers paid him back in the same coin. Wilamowitz's Plato monograph was called a "popular romance for old spinsters" (*Marlittbuch für alte Jungfern*) and "Plato for maids" (*Platon für Dienstmädchen*).¹⁰ "Wilamops" had failed to grasp the heroic element in Plato's thought, and had merely sought the modern world in the Athens of the 5th century BC.¹¹ In fact, the Protestant *Junker* considered every state to be based upon order; "the official of the Platonic state is an academically-trained soldier or a militarily-trained man of academia. Healthy is the state that is ruled by such officials."¹² In their attack on Wilamowitz, the George-acolytes distanced themselves not only from the historical methods of university philology, but also more generally from the Protestant establishment, which equated Athens and Prussia, and continued to dream of the splendour of the Attic Empire even during the crisis of the Weimar Republic.

The rebellion of the avant-garde in the 1920s shocked the self-appointed custodians of the old system to the core. An example is Hans Leisegang's shrill attack on the contemporary interpretation of Plato in the George-circle. He speaks of a throng of pretty sentences, of the gnostic violation of Plato, of inadequate knowledge of the language, and finally

⁸ "[I]l suo Platone anticipa quello degli allievi di Stefan George [...] nell'essere un Führer": A. Momigliano, "Premesse per una discussione su Wilamowitz" [1973], in: id., *Sesto contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, vol. i, Rome 1980, p. 337–349, at p. 348.

⁹ Cf. Ulrich K. Goldschmidt, "Wilamowitz and the 'George-Kreis'. New Documents", in: W.M. Calder III et al. (eds), *Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren*, Darmstadt 1985, p. 583–612, at p. 587–588 (cf. id., *Studies in Comparison*, New York 1989, p. 125–162).

¹⁰ Wolters, *Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst. Deutsche Geistesgeschichte ab 1890*, Berlin 1930, p. 487. E. Marlitt was the pseudonym of Eugenie John (1825–1887), author of popular novels for a largely female audience.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 487.

¹² Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Platon*, vol. i: *Leben und Werke*, vol. ii: *Beilagen und Textkritik*, Berlin 1919 (1920²; vol. i: 1948⁴; vol. ii: 1962³), vol. i, p. 38–39.

complains of the “rigid seriousness”, the “hollow pathos” and the “arduously acquired aristocratic nature of George’s neo-Romantic disciples, who take themselves so immensely seriously, as if the rehabilitation of Western culture depended on them alone”. All this is incompatible with the “amicable cheerfulness of the born aristocrat” Plato.¹³ Others spoke of “orgies of irrationalism”,¹⁴ and Wilamowitz — who had already prevented Friedrich Gundolf from being called to a chair in Berlin in 1920 — failed the *Habilitation* of Kurt Hildebrandt, an ardent admirer of Stefan George, at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität eight years later.

The established philologists’ view of themselves as distinct, however, was just as unconvincing as the outsider role so cherished by the George-circle. In fact, it would be an error to suppose that such anathemas could have prevented the reception of the avant-garde interpretation of Plato in the *Altertumswissenschaften*. In the 1920s, the old Wilamowitz looked on helplessly as his best students defected to the opposing camp, as Paul Friedländer, Werner Jaeger, and Karl Reinhardt (to name only three) returned to the central elements of the George-circle’s Plato interpretation for their conception of modern research into antiquity. A revealing piece of evidence comes from Paul Friedländer himself, dating from 1921, which its first editor, William M. Calder III, aptly described as “The Credo of a New Generation”. It is a document of emancipation: “Had I not surrendered myself to you so strongly before, the separation would not be so painful”. Friedländer owed his liberation from his once so overpowering, now forcibly retired professor to Nietzsche, Jacob Burckhardt, Heinrich Wölfflin, and finally to Stefan George: Nietzsche had influenced Friedländer’s view of life from an early stage and increasingly as the years went by, and had particularly helped him shape his opinion on history; Burckhardt and Wölfflin, who placed entirely new demands on the comprehension of a work, and George, who in recent years had brought about “the greatest disruption and the most forceful redistribution of all powers”.¹⁵ Thus, in Friedländer’s Los Angeles office, a photo of George hung next to one of Wilamowitz.

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¹³ Hans Leisegang, *Die Platondeutung der Gegenwart*, Karlsruhe 1929, p. 153–154.

¹⁴ Richard Harder, “Review of Franz Josef Brecht. *Plato und der George-Kreis*, Leipzig, 1929”, in: *DLZ* 5, 1930, p. 972–982, at p. 975.

¹⁵ Cf. William M. Calder III and Bernhard Huß (eds), “*The Wilamowitz in Me*”. *100 Letters between Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Paul Friedländer (1904–1931)*, Los Angeles 1999, p. 143.