Introduction
Feeling and Philology

'Where a thing can be ascertained and proved, and the instances counted,
I go to the German; where it is a question of feeling, no.' Thus Gilbert
Murray's verdict on the relative merits of German and British classical
scholarship, in an account of German 'Kultur' for the general reader, to
which Murray contributed a section on the study of the ancient world, that
is to say to the field that was in 1915 arguably still tantamount to 'German
scholarship' *tout court*.[1] 'Germans do not write Greek verses,' he continues,
'they write books on Greek "Metrik". They aim more at knowing; we at
feeling and understanding.'[2] Murray readily acknowledges that German
scholarship was at one point based on a similar notion of a classical and
essentially gentlemanly education as a basis for all future literary, learned,
or professional practice, 'but it would seem', he continues, 'that in
England, the study of the classics has conserved to a greater extent this
general and foundational character; in Germany it was either dropped or
became professional'.[3] Murray's analysis exemplifies two standard narra-
tives that still animate the perception of German classical scholarship: that
it amounts to the advocacy and ultimate victory of rational method,
scienticity, and data collection over imagination, fluency, style, and good
taste; and that the concept of *Bildung*, of the education and formation of
the cultural self that marked German idealist humanism and classicism of
the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, fell away and gave way
to a sterile dominance of institutionalized historicist tedium – well-
meaning, compendious, hyper-specialized, authoritative to the point of
authoritarian, and essentially a victim of its own success.

The aim of this book is likewise twofold: to offer a historical and textual
analysis of the organizing imagery and metaphors of classical scholarship;
and to encourage sensitivity to the way those metaphors continue to have

[1] G. Murray, 'German Scholarship', *Quarterly Review* 223 (1915), pp. 330–9, here p. 333.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 333.   [3] *Ibid.*, p. 334.

an afterlife in the practices of Classics as a discipline. I seek to show 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. As a central, organizing trope of scholarship, the parameters, scenes, and metaphors of the individual and its *Bildung* or self-formation, and of the feeling or desire directed at antiquity exerted influence well beyond Murray. Accordingly, in addition to offering a broadly historical investigation, this book 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, in the way classical scholars conceived – and conceive – of what they were doing and what they were looking for. Classical scholarship is deeply preoccupied with parts and wholes. This it shares with other branches of knowledge during the rise of disciplines in the long nineteenth century. But for a field whose objects are so obviously and for the most part partial and fragmented, it is striking how much this field has built its world on an image of wholeness, and on the dream – or fantasy – of being able to put fragments together to see, once more, a complete outline. Wholeness requires imagination and representation, and the central claim of this book is that German scholarship articulated its relationship with the classical, and especially the classical Greek past, as a quasi-personal relationship with a personified entity, a relationship as if with another individual. This relationship was reflected in a language of a longed-for and yet sublimated proximity and a related language of empathy and experience, a language that, at the same time, acknowledged anxiety about the fact that complete comprehension was impossible and had to remain out of reach. If classical scholarship imagined the ancient past as a living being, invested with the characteristics and life story of a human figure, this made the figure of the modern scholar its counterpart. The object of study is the other through which a scholarly 'I' can be circumscribed. This 'I' may not be strongly expressed – German academic discourse famously avoids the first person, though I will show that this is also not always the case – but the notion of individuality at stake in the knowledge of antiquity underpinned a large part of disciplinary self-reflection.

Such language is not self-evident; neither is it universal or placed outside history. Instead, it has modelled interpretive strategies within the field in particular ways in different historical moments. It is, therefore, appropriate to leverage a historical analysis to ask how the tropes identified in this study shed light on the context of a discipline (Classics) that has always had a strong self-historicizing imperative. Still, this is not a book that wants to

excavate and make visible again the 'feeling' at work in German classical philology so as to affirm its libidinal, experiential structures and potential. The aim here is not to conjure up the personal voice of that scholarship. My objective is, ultimately, not so much to recover as to disrupt a discourse of closeness, feeling, and longing that has underpinned philological inter-pretation and what we expect from it. Also, I want to suggest ways in which this language and its classical scenes are open to being rethought in ways that de-emphasize, or reconfigure the epistemological desires they continue to project; in short, to advocate a rethinking of what it means to maintain distance. This book attempts to excavate some of the history and structures of a language of desire and longing for a personified antiquity; at the same time, it tries to resist the expectation that this is the language we should choose as a matter of fact to validate and continue to use for building our self-understanding as classical scholars, now that we have unearthed it. As a historical study, this is an investigation of the language and epistemolo-gical mechanisms of attachment, and it relies both on the theories of a 'discourse of love' and on a form of *Begriffsgeschichte*, a history of concepts, to deliver this analysis. As an exploration of the 'metaphors we live by', to borrow Lakoff and Johnson's phrase, and of the metaphors we research by, it is a suggestion to keep worrying the templates of closeness and distance we have at our disposal and to keep considering their implications.[4]

The Meanings of One-Sidedness

What characterizes the nineteenth century as a whole, certainly in the German context but arguably well beyond it, is the strong interaction of several strands that combine in the production of knowledge, both in classical scholarship and in cognate fields. Those strands are, in very abbreviated form (and covered in much greater detail below): organicism as a guiding metaphor; the importance of individuality, that is to say the individual proposed as a privileged creator of meaning; *Bildung* (the

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[4] In its desire to uncover historical structures of the rhetoric of philology and suggest modifications of it going forward, this project finds some affinities with a recent study by Yii-Jan Lin, *The Erotic Life of Manuscripts: New Testament Textual Criticism and the Biological Sciences* (Oxford University Press, 2016), which came to my attention as this present book was almost finished. Lin, who understands the 'erotic' to indicate the aspects of gift-giving, circulation, and exchange in the study and constitution of manuscripts, sets out to examine the biological, genealogical, and racial language that marked Biblical textual scholarship and suggests, ultimately, that taking those metaphors seriously should also encourage us to give fresh and critical thought to integrating alternative concepts of the biological sciences now, such as hybridity, the cyborg, or the rhizome.

formation of the self), conceived both as cultural goal and as historical process; biography and autobiography as the narrative form thought best to capture the developmental aspect of *Bildung* and individuality; disciplinarization and institutionalization, that is, the formulation of an agreed set of scholarly expectations and methods and their inclusion within an institutional framework; and, finally, Romantic notions of sentiment and sensibility as sources of knowledge above and beyond rational understanding.

The emergence of classical scholarship as a discipline connects to the rise of the secular university as well as the research university in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The profile of the professional scholar, who is also a professional teacher, is hard to imagine without the top-down support of political administrations – especially the Prussian state – for a model of education that put the individual subject and its training or *Bildung* at centre stage. The 'seminar' had been a site of teacher training but increasingly was also one of research activity. Since the mid-eighteenth century, it had moved from pedagogy and theology to include philology as a free-standing unit. Across the many German states that made up the political and institutional landscape, knowledge of classical antiquity was channelled into an increasingly institutionalized discipline: this signalled a move from knowing ancient things through older forms of transmission, imitation, and erudition towards a newer *Altertumswissenschaft*, or scientific knowledge of antiquity, in the process shifting the monopoly of interpretation away from theology and jurisprudence. Philology, meaning classical philology, was not so much 'invented' at the time as it emerged from a relatively neglected life as an auxiliary branch of knowledge to achieve increased autonomy and to become the main, privileged provider of education for civil servants and other professionals.[5]

The programmatic awareness of historical distance, at the same time, rendered the object of interpretation both other and related to the self-reflexive individual who studied it. Around 1800, classical scholarship's model of itself was informed by the broader contemporary, Romantic

[5] R. S. Leventhal, 'The Emergence of Philological Discourse in the German States, 1770–1810', *Isis* 77 (1986), pp. 243–60 is still an excellent overview; as is A. Grafton, 'Polyhistor into Philolog', *History of Universities* 3 (1983), pp. 159–92; also D. Kopp and Nikolaus Wegmann, '"Die deutsche Philologie, die Schule und die Klassische Philologie". Zur Karriere einer Wissenschaft um 1800', in J. Fohrmann and W. Voßkamp (eds.), *Sonderheft der deutschen Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, 61 (1987), pp. 123*–51*. For an excellent critical narrative of the 'invention' of philology, especially in the figure of F. A. Wolf, see K. Harloe, *Winckelmann and the Invention of Antiquity. History and Aesthetics in the Age of Altertumswissenschaft* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

language of sentimental *Bildung*, of communication between individuals, and of the cultivation of particular emotional attachments. It is at this juncture that figurations of antiquity, specifically the tendency to imagine the ancient past as a quasi-human figure vis-à-vis its observer, influence conceptions of modernity. Scholarship is both informed by and helps to shape this process. The neohumanism of Humboldt's generation focused on the individual and their *Bildung*, a preoccupation that is echoed in the self-understanding of the developing discipline of classical scholarship: both the broader neohumanism and its institutional articulation elaborate a vision of antiquity as a coherent, organic self, a quasi-person and singular personality in its own right. Koselleck, in his work on the modern understanding of history as 'temporalized', has argued that the eighteenth century saw, in its semantic usage, a shift from 'histories' to 'History' with a capital H, part of a general phenomenon of such 'singularizations': histories and History, freedoms or liberties and Freedom, and so on. One could also include here a shift (though he does not do so himself) from 'the ancients' in the plural towards a newly prevalent use of a single 'Antiquity' as the favoured term.[6] It was this Antiquity as an organic body, though, that ideally reflected the modern individual, linking both through the notion of *Bildung*. And so, the metaphor of development was projected onto antiquity and hence 'legible'; the very act of identifying it, and thus of 'understanding' antiquity, itself then helped to constitute and define the modern individual in their own act of formation as well as, by extension, the pursuit of modern scholarship.

Throughout the nineteenth century, classical scholarship achieved and held on to its dominant position as a discipline that modelled interpretive behaviour, historical-philological method, and scientific standards of expertise and practice in view of comprehending cultures past and present.[7] This simultaneous investment in expert specialization and in comprehensive, complete understanding of a whole out of its numerous,

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[6] R. Koselleck, '*Historia Magistra Vitae*: Über die Auflösung des Topos im Horizont neuzeitlich bewegter Geschichte', in H. Braun and M. Riedel (eds.), *Natur und Geschichte: Karl Löwith zum 70. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 196–219; on the move from antiquities to Antiquity, see also Harloe, *Winckelmann and the Invention of Antiquity*.

[7] For the rise and professionalization of classical philology, see the still instructive F. Paulsen, *Geschichte des Gelehrten Unterrichts auf den Deutschen Schulen und Universitäten vom Ausgang des Mittelalters bis zur Gegenwart. Mit besonderer Rücksichtnahme auf den klassischen Unterricht* (Leipzig: Veit, 1885); L. O'Boyle, 'Klassische Bildung und soziale Struktur in Deutschland zwischen 1800 und 1848', *Historische Zeitschrift* 207 (1967), 584–608; R. S. Turner, 'Historicism, Kritik, and the Prussian Professorate, 1790–1840', in M. Bollack, T. Lindken, and H. Wisman (eds.), *Philologie und Hermeneutik im 19. Jahrhundert II* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), pp. 450–77; Grafton, 'Philolog'; A. J. La Vopa, 'Specialists against Specialization: Hellenism as a Professional

scattered fragments came with the acknowledgement that a certain one-sidedness (*Einseitigkeit*) was maybe the biggest asset and the biggest risk of the disciplined knowledge of antiquity: the one-sidedness that signals focus, expert knowledge, and quality, but also the one-sidedness that emphasized scientific method and technical practices to the exclusion of the non-rational, non-teachable, not easily grasped elements of feeling, insight, talent, tact, or intuitive experience. The anxiety over this kind of one-sidedness, as I argue, matched the worry over a different kind of one-sidedness or asymmetry: namely that implied in the fundamentally non-reciprocal relationship with the past when the past is imagined as a human individual. It is this 'one-sidedness' that comes to the fore in the insistent return to figures and constellations that address the issue of a lack of reciprocity. Some of these figures and scenes are ancient templates that are repeatedly read in the light of contemporary formulations of interpersonal relationships and the paradigm of love as key to understanding the other, an other that always possibly remains unavailable, elusive, and beyond comprehension. In this way, the search for complete, perfect knowledge becomes correlated to a process of epistemological longing and an erotics of knowledge. This nexus can, on the one hand, map onto the concerns of the role of feeling in the precarious knowledge of self and other in late eighteenth-century notions of *Bildung*; but it can, on the other hand, also model the scholarly striving for completeness and comprehensiveness as forms of comprehension, and at the same time buffer worries over one-sidedness as a lack of feeling and a lopsided prioritizing of science. It can, therefore, communicate with the challenges of idealism as much as those of historicism, connecting with a discourse of *Bildung* as much as of scientific specialization. Feeling, or *Gefühl*, was from the mid-eighteenth century onwards already a term that was associated with mental and intellectual activity as much as with

Ideology in German Classical Studies', in G. Cocks and K. Jarausch (eds.), *German Professions: 1800–1950* (Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 27–45; T. Ziolkowski, *German Romanticism and Its Institutions* (Princeton University Press, 1990), ch. 5, 'The University: Model of the Mind', pp. 218–308; S. Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970* (Princeton University Press, 1996); W. Clark, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University* (Chicago University Press, 2006); C. Güthenke, '"Enthusiasm Dwells Only in Specialization". Classical Philology and Disciplinarity in Nineteenth-Century Germany', in B. Elman and S. Pollock (eds.), *World Philology* (Harvard University Press, 2014), pp. 304–38; J. Turner, *Philology: The Forgotten Origins of the Modern Research University* (Princeton University Press, 2014); C. Wellmon, *Organizing Enlightenment: Information Overload and the Invention of the Modern Research University* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), esp. chapters 8 ('Berlin, Humboldt, and the Research University') and 9 ('The Disciplinary Self and the Virtues of the Philologist').

senses and perception.[8] Given this component of rationality, and its own closeness to intellectual processes, *Gefühl* was already marked as an instrument and, at the same time, an effect of *Bildung*. The rhetoric of attachment to a personified antiquity as the object of study, and of longing for it, helped to define but also to reaffirm and to offset the constitutive tensions of the *Wissenschaft* in *Altertumswissenschaft*.

Pygmalion and Alcibiades

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. If Pygmalion can signal an error of reading, then Alcibiades can help to reflect on the errors of philological reading and on the possibilities that arise from those errors.

The myth of Pygmalion making the crafted sculpture of a beloved woman come to life is itself a personification of the act of personification, a figure of *prosopopoeia*: the address of and the giving human voice to what is out of reach, absent, dead, or inanimate. Personification can have wide rhetorical and epistemological use, as a means of understanding and giving expression to the engagement with what defies or exceeds present, human encounter. In the context of discussing the modern novel, the literary critic J. Hillis Miller offered a powerful reading of Pygmalion as the figure who exposes precisely the vulnerability and the structural pitfalls of almost any act of personification, its simultaneously stabilizing and destabilizing effect, especially when personification relies on desire as a factor in making that which is absent come alive.[9] Miller treats Pygmalion's act of

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[8] U. Frevert, 'Gefühle definieren: Begriffe und Debatten aus drei Jahrhunderten', in U. Frevert (ed.), *Gefühlswissen: eine lexikalische Spurensuche der Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2011), pp. 9–39; republished as 'Defining Emotions: Concepts and Debates over Three Centuries', in U. Frevert (ed.), *Emotional Lexicons: Continuity and Change in the Vocabulary of Feeling* (Oxford University Press 2014), pp. 1–31.

[9] J. H. Miller, *Versions of Pygmalion* (Harvard University Press, 1990). For a more recent account of the question about inherent illusion that the figure of Pygmalion raises, see V. I. Stoichita, *The Pygmalion Effect: From Ovid to Hitchcock* (Chicago University Press, 2008), which expands the inquiry well beyond the literary medium.

prosopopoeia, as described by Ovid (*Met.* 10.243–97), as the starting point for all later Pygmalionesque figures, given that repeated metamorphosis is essentially about the concatenation of literalized metaphors. For Miller, Ovid's stories in general suggest the power of aberrant figurative language (insofar as tropes are turned into realities and wishes become fulfilled, revealing their more fearful elements in the process); they give narrative shape to the logic that any such materialization of desire and wish fulfillment is never completely paid off as the stories inevitably reach over into the textual body of always another tale.

Pygmalion, though, is particularly resonant when it comes to the strategies of personifying antiquity that are at work in classical scholarship. For one thing, in Ovid's version, he is not just bringing to life a statue, but a statue of Galatea specifically, not an anonymous figure, but a figuration of, and the realization of a figure from Greek mythology and Greek literature.[10] From Ovid's perspective, Pygmalion is already himself engaged with the reception of antiquity, and with the challenge of making earlier textualities come alive – and so, Ovid may already have bequeathed later readers, reading through Pygmalion, a model for thinking about the paradoxes and category errors of coming and being close to a Greek past. In addition, the Pygmalion story overturns a central supposition of metamorphosis. Galatea, the statue that comes to life through Pygmalion's desire, is not so much an other, caught in the in-between-life-and-death state of metamorphosis that marks her as irreducibly separate, as she is already intimately connected to the self: Pygmalion crafted her in the first place out of his imagination. Miller is keen to address the uneasy fact that Pygmalion, in his autoerotic undertaking, appears unexpectedly successful in his act of transforming a statue into a living human being, and that he ostensibly escapes the retribution inherent in metamorphoses, with no disaster befalling anyone. Within the Ovidian chain of tales, the punishment is merely delayed to the grandson and great-granddaughter of Pygmalion and Galatea, Cinyras and Myrrha, and their tale of incest which follows directly upon that of Pygmalion (*Met.* 10.298–355). Their child, born out of the trunk of a myrrh tree, is Adonis, for whom, in turn, the goddess Venus falls, exposing herself to the human pain of loss. This, for Miller, is an even stronger indicator that the category mistake implied in Pygmalion's act of personification does, after all, have consequences and

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[10] Ovid does not name her as Galatea, though the subsequent artistic tradition did. Galatea may well be a generic name, but the Galatea familiar from Theocritus's *Idyll* 11 was certainly a meaningful Hellenistic reference point within Ovid's literary and cultural environment.

points directly to what is at stake in all acts of personification: namely, the experience of human loss, amplified when, in the case of Aphrodite, it is visited upon a goddess whose defining feature is desire.

For Miller, Pygmalion's knowing illusion is symptomatic of a fundamental 'error in reading' that occurs in the act of personification, of 'treat[ing] something dead as if it were alive', an error that is essential to all those literalized allegories and 'that can be exposed by another act of reading. Whether this knowledge can be gained without repeating the error that the knowledge warns against remains to be seen.'[11] This suggests that acts of critical reading and rereading, in short, acts of philological practice, are tangled up in the deceptive stability inherent in the figure of *prosopopoeia*, of an ongoing substitution that keeps being repeated in an ambivalent cycle of comfort and disillusionment: a suggestion that is also a prompt to ask where the blind spots are in the figurative language with which classical scholarship has operated. *Prosopopoeia* operates by addressing the distant and unknown, a feature that makes it a fruitful concept in analysing representations of the distant, unavailable past and thus goes straight to a central challenge for scholarship and its self-conception. This is not to propose, along the lines of Miller, a poetological, deconstructive reading of scholarly writing; instead, it is to draw attention to the structural fallibility, or illusion, of personification and make such awareness part of a historical examination of the framework of nineteenth-century classical scholarship and its discourses.

One of the fundamental challenges of understanding antiquity through an act of personification is the essential lack of reciprocity that is captured in this act of substitution. As this book will argue, classical scholarship, in response, would draw on Platonic scenes and a Platonic language of understanding and of desire, *eros*, as a means of producing knowledge, to offer a solution, or at least a way of containing and articulating those challenges. One figure develops a particular profile for the affirmative use of such aspirational scenes of knowledge and instruction: that of Alcibiades, especially as he is described in Plato's *Symposium*. The *Symposium*, discussed in detail below, is a dialogue about articulating the praise of *eros* and about harnessing the power of desire to reach knowledge and, in the process, transcend the human object of desire. In addition, it is also a dialogue that explicitly raises questions about the unreliability of communication and of its

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[11] Miller, *Versions of Pygmalion*, p. 11.

incomplete memory. Alcibiades is the Athenian 'golden boy', the object of desire who, in the dialogue, turns out to have his own story to tell about desire of and for the philosopher, the failures of desire, and the failures of teaching and pedagogy. Compared to Pygmalion, Alcibiades may be a less obvious reference point; and even compared to Socrates or Plato, within the sphere of classical scholarship, he may at first sight rather fly under the radar, disavowed as much as he is invoked. But he, too, has traction as a figure to consider the disturbances, or illusions, of reciprocal relationships in the context of longing for knowledge of an other. Unlike that of Pygmalion, the narrative of Alcibiades introduces a pedagogical frame, highlighting a scene of instruction that makes him eminently appealing for disciplinary concerns. Institutionally and ideologically, the study of antiquity was considered the manifestation of an educational as much as a hermeneutic task.[12]

Plato's *Symposium* is a text that dramatizes particularly well the incompleteness of understanding and of desire. Showing a group of Athenian worthies gathered to celebrate for a second time the poet Agathon's victory at the dramatic festivals, the scene of the 'after-party' sees them engaged in a game of offering praise speeches to the god Eros. The sequence of speeches culminates in Socrates's account of the teachings he received from the priestess Diotima, but the scene is interrupted by the arrival of Alcibiades, drunk, keen to join the company and the game, and offering what is essentially a speech in praise of Socrates as an embodiment of Eros. The dialogue as a whole is framed as a multiply nested, mediated account of the symposium years after the fact, a story passed on from one disciple to another, keen to recreate an image of the living Socrates and his previous company, thus exemplifying and underlining the incompleteness of full access. In turn, it offers a model of knowledge that is calqued from a language of *eros* and erotic desire, and that suggests a process of sublimation and abstraction that proceeds from the attraction to specific instances of beauty towards the true knowledge of Beauty itself and of other Forms.

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[12] Like Pygmalion, Alcibiades was of interest also to late eighteenth-century visual culture, which focuses on capturing Alcibiades's moral education and Socrates's attempts to dissuade him from a life of pleasure. For a discussion of some of the traditions in painting, from the seventeenth well into the nineteenth century, see G. Most's afterword 'Classicism, Modernism, Postclassicism', in A. Leonard and L. Norman (eds.), *Classicisms* (Chicago: Smart Museum of Art, 2017), pp. 129–35. Most uses the visual treatments to reflect on the potential of Alcibiades for a disturbance of classicism's affective aporias, as well as Alcibiades's own, an approach that resonates with the emphasis on Alcibiades suggested in my argument here.