CHAPTER I

Philology’s Shadow

Catherine Conybeare and Simon Goldhill

I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still have faith in
Grammar

Nietzsche

There are few topics in contemporary humanities which provoke as much attention as philology. This would have occasioned confusion, or at least surprise, in many scholars from the latter half of the twentieth century. The excitement of modern linguistics – either from the structuralist tradition back to Saussure, with its influence on French theory, or from the structural syntactic models of Chomsky, with their connections to cognitive science – seemed to have made philology, however long its history, an outmoded approach to language – a subject without a future. What is more, both cultural history, especially following the sophisticated analyses of Foucault, and the technological developments of archaeology offered access to the past in a way which threatened to make the claims of traditional philology to be the ‘queen of the sciences’ appear wholly misplaced. Yet in today’s academic scene, and unanticipated by the intensity of earlier theoretical disciplinary debates, philology has once again become a banner under which to march.

For those working specifically in classics, there are three main vectors for the current discussion. First of all, philology is explored as a central element in the history of the discipline of classics. This is not just the narcissism of a group of scholars interested in its own family history. On the one hand, the institutional organization of knowledge into disciplines is basic to the development of the university as a site of knowledge production, and, as the founders of the modern research university themselves knew and proclaimed, this institutional structuring of styles of learning and regulation of standards not only professionalized scholarship and created a new charisma of the scholar, but also made education the route for the
formation of citizenship in the new nation state. The history of the modern university, especially in its nineteenth-century development, demands an understanding of the special place of disciplinary formation and the role of philology within it. On the other hand, and in contrast to the institutional history of the university, the very question of anti-quity is to be comprehended in relation to modernity is basic to the historicism which distinguishes the nineteenth century’s sense of the self. The so-called turn to history as a mode of religious, cultural, political self-expression is very much a sign of the nineteenth-century times, and the discipline of classics is fundamental in the production of such knowledge. Studying the past was a privileged way in which the modern citizen was formed, and philology played a foundational role in this process. Philology’s place in the discipline of classics, that is, has a broad significance for understanding how the past mattered to nineteenth-century educators and their pupils.

Consequently, the importance of the turn to philology under the influence of scholars such as Wolf and Lachmann, and the gradual dominance of philology as the ‘queen of the sciences’ in the nineteenth-century university, has become a crucial area of self-understanding for classicists. This is in part a history of how a specific discipline took shape. Classics, indeed, is the privileged example of the significance of disciplinary formation for the tradition of the Humboldtian University as much as for the idea of Wissenschaft itself. This is also, however, a history of method – of how the discipline conceives of its own activity as a science. The role of stemmatics, for example, has been used to explore how philology and biology share ‘tree-structures’ of evolutionary explanation – and how such modelling organizes understanding into a particular genealogical order, and what the consequences of such narratives are. Or, from a different angle, a profusion of studies of figures such as August Boeckh in Berlin have become iconic for an appreciation of how a particular epistemological structure of classical study is formed (his claim that classics should strive to produce ‘knowledge of what is known’, Erkenntnis des Erkannten, founds a generation of self-proclaimed empiricism in the

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1 See Rothblatt 1968; Baldick 1983; Levine 1986; Rothblatt and Wittrock 1993; Rothblatt 1997; Abbott 2001; Clark 2006.
3 Grafton 1981; Graffon, Most and Zetzel 1985; Fiesoli 2000; Timpanaro 2005; Peirano Garrison in this volume, with further bibliography; and more generally: Zetzel 2005; Gurd 2010; Thouard, Vollhardt and Zini 2010; Trovato 2014.
So, from one perspective, the networks of the social world of classical scholars with their rivalries, affiliations and local politics have been analysed as formative of what can be known or said, and, from another related perspective, the contrasting models of comprehending antiquity evidenced, say, by Wilamowitz in Berlin or Burckhardt in Basel show how the past becomes a site of contest about knowing, and thus about an image of the world, its history and a modern citizen’s relation to it.\(^6\)

As we look back beyond the nineteenth century, too, the role of grammatici in teaching not just language but literary culture in late antiquity, and in the transition from late antiquity to medieval culture, is fundamental to what we understand by classical tradition and the continuity of Latin studies in the West.\(^7\) So, too, the Renaissance’s re-discovery of Hellenic antiquity especially is also nourished by a philological pursuit of truth in language, a return \textit{ad fontes}, to the source which is also the pure waters of knowledge. Against his own wishes, Erasmus’ philological study of how the familiar Latin translation of the bible misrepresented the Greek original fuelled the violence of the Reformation.\(^8\) Indeed, there are few places within the long history of the study of antiquity where philology has not come to be understood as basic to any such engagement with the past. For classicists, it is indeed impossible to understand the long history of their engagement with antiquity without a study of the role of philology.

Secondly, through this study of the history of disciplinary formation, classicists have also started to reflect on philology as a contemporary discipline and on its role within classics today. Thus, from one angle, classicists have questioned the commitment of traditional philology to nineteenth-century linguistics.\(^9\) The great classical scholars of the nineteenth century were at the cutting edge of the sciences of language study, but those sciences, like the physical sciences, have moved on. To what degree can we continue to learn from their scholarship without repeating the assumptions integral to their styles of knowing? Does the shifting language of tragedy, for example, require as a genre a new philology, more open to word play, uncertainty, and an awareness of the precarity of semantics in the frame of public performance? Do new digital modes of publication and research allow for new forms of philology? From another angle, calls for a new philology include an awareness drawn from the medieval European tradition of manuscript culture, and insist that stemmatic method needs qualification when

\(^{1}\) Horstmann 1992; Hackel and Seifert 2013; Dunkelgrün in this volume. \(^{6}\) Gossman 2001.


\(^{4}\) Most 1998; Most 1999; Gurd 2006; Gurd 2010.
manuscripts may get written and circulated as specifically redrafted or redesigned contributions to a polemic.\footnote{Copeland 1991; Huot 1993; Busby 2002.} Can the manuscript tradition of the Alexander Romance, for example, with its multiple language versions, different recensions, and varying uses, be adequately comprehended by a stemmatics? The demand for self-awareness of scholarship inevitably produces a more contested and more experimental philology. To march under the banner of philology is not to commit to repeating inherited modes of knowing from the history of scholarship, but to rethink how the languages of antiquity, the texts of antiquity and their transmission, are to be comprehended.

Thirdly, philology has become a way of thinking about how different elements of classics as a subject fit together. In the nineteenth century, it was already possible to talk of the study of material culture as Sachphilologie, the philology of things – designedly bringing the study of physical objects into the heightened sphere of the ‘queen of the sciences’. How the study of antiquity through its textual remains, on the one hand, and its study through physical objects of all types (seeds, plants, and DNA as much as art and architecture) on the other, are to be related, opens the question of what it is to study a culture. Again, to pose such a question is to open a long and intricate history. Christianity from the beginning insists that ‘In the beginning was the Word’, despite its attempt also to grapple with the incarnation, and a disdain for the material has been one concomitant of the pursuit of the spiritual. The analysis of ancient culture has long used the categories of the said (legomena) and the done (dromena) to distinguish between myth and ritual, and to privilege the myth as an object of study. Plato at the start of philosophy distrusts the visual, the physical, the material in the name of dialectic and the noetic. The very history of archaeology is a history of the shifting value of the materialities of the past, how the Realien of antiquity guarantee a sense of the real – facts not so much on the ground but from the ground.\footnote{Levine 1986; Stiebing 1993; Marchand 1996; Schnapp 1996.} Philology thus for contemporary classics has become a portal into the debate of what is meant by the holistic understanding of a culture and how it can be approached through interdisciplinarity – how the different evidences of the past can be calibrated and integrated into an understanding of the past.

While classicists have developed this methodological, historical and cultural set of questions about philology, in fields outside classics, especially in English literature departments, philology has once more become...
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a trendy critical term. Again, this has both a historical and a methodological vector. For scholars such as James Turner, philology is seen as the very heart of the humanities, and its study offers a route both into understanding the tradition of rhetorical and grammatical study, and into appreciating this tradition as a history into which modern work should be integrated. Now, Turner’s history is very broad-brush – it does not know Lachmann or Boeckh, and may not appreciate the role of classics adequately – but his call to re-instate philology has been widely discussed. For Jan Ziolkowski, from his perspective as a medieval Latinist and comparativist, a return to philology requires a more sensitive historicism. Philology, for large periods of Western history, provides the glue between school learning, study at higher levels, and the production and consumption of literature, and for that very reason needs careful case studies. Philology here is a key force in the construction and transmission of cultural normativity – with all the politics inevitably involved in such a process. The power of philology takes a more insidious and dangerous form in the hands of a cultural historian such as Tuska Benes, who has incisively analysed the role of philology in the political development of notions of race and nation in the nineteenth and twentieth century. For scholars such as Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht, however, the turn to philology is not so much a historical as a theoretical imperative, enjoining a self-reflexive and intellectually grounded approach to language itself. The scholars who productively link the importance of classical philology in such a history and the modern theoretical concerns are few, but there are some fine examples of where – we would argue – the field is necessarily travelling: Jim Porter’s analysis of Nietzsche’s philology of the future is one case; Constanze Güthenke’s forthcoming book on the emotions of philology another.

It is our contention that in this burgeoning field one crucial area has been systematically undervalued, namely, the interface of theology and philology. This book aims not just to uncover a sample of the extensive imbricated interactions between the two subjects, but also to trace how the development of modern classics as a discipline has found it necessary to disavow its connections to theology, so that the deep connections of
philology and theology are regularly misrecognized or denied altogether. Like so many modern disciplines, classics, in the name of objectivity, science and scholarship, has repeatedly defined itself in opposition to faith-based or confessional apology.\textsuperscript{18} Yet from the very earliest days, classics has been intimately intertwined with theological argument. Today the theological presence in classics remains largely repressed; but this very repression, we suggest, distorts our approach to the texts and the history of scholarship at the heart of our philological enterprise. Our wager is that to bring the intimacy of classics and theology out of the shadows will reveal a crucial strand not only of the history of the discipline but also of its continuing practices and ideology.

Three current turns in historical scholarship inform our central question, each of which bears brief mention. First, the standard story of the religious battles of the Reformation being replaced by the science of the Enlightenment has recently been systematically questioned, amid a debate over the impact and inheritance of the Enlightenment. Both in terms of the separation of theology from other disciplines within the Reformation\textsuperscript{19} and with regard to the successful development of the new sciences into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,\textsuperscript{20} the linearity of the narrative of the triumph of objective empirical scientific method over the faith-based beliefs of religion is historically inadequate – and a performed complicity by the scholars who tell it. Second, the standard account of the nineteenth century as a period of increasing secularization has also been systematically revealed to be a self-serving story of twentieth-century science by a series of revisionist historical enquiries.\textsuperscript{21} Throughout the nineteenth century, religion and theology remain a basic frame of self-understanding and social process. Third, the growth of studies of late antiquity (in which Peter Brown and his students are instrumental\textsuperscript{22}) has shown how imbricated Christianity and Greco-Roman culture continue to be – and make the recent claim that classics has attempted to ‘quarantine’ Roman history from Christianity only partially true at best.\textsuperscript{23} Christianity takes shape within Greco-Roman antiquity and is formed in relation to it, as it gradually changes the society in which it is formed – and how this dynamic of formation is to be understood has become an increasingly sophisticated area of study. Despite the claims and hopes and aggressions of extreme ideologues, then and now, the boundaries between Christians and their

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} See Daston and Galison 2007.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Levitin 2016.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Sheehan and Wahrman 2015.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Hilton 1986; Parry 1986; Larsen 2004; Marchand 2009; Koditschek 2011.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Vessey 1998.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Boin 2016.
\end{itemize}
others remain porous, contested and culturally flexible for many centuries after the gospels are written.

Following these growing recognitions of the continuing and significant place of theology as a social and intellectual force in the organization of knowledge from antiquity onwards, not least in the study of antiquity, it is, we believe, high time to question why and how the currently most influential account of the development of classics as a discipline could have been written with barely a comment on its deep connections with theology.\textsuperscript{24} It is this strange silencing of classics’ closest cousin that we wish to uncover. Philology’s shadow . . . Is ‘philology’ here an objective or a subjective genitive? Is it philology that casts the shadow – or does it do its work in the shadow of theology? As Sheehan has written of Thomas Hobbes, it is necessary to ‘reconsider what theology might be, and how (or whether) we know it when we see it.’\textsuperscript{25}

The moment is absolutely ripe, then, for a reconsideration of how philology and theology grew together and now find themselves divided by institutional and conceptual boundaries – and what the cost of such divisions may be. A comprehensive history of such an issue would require a vast canvas and a rebarbative array of scholarly skills. This book has a different aim and scope. Rather, it hopes to open what is a barely mapped terrain to scholarly view through some carefully selected moments of deep significance and exemplary force. Although a comprehensive history is not the aim of the book, a coherent set of interconnected essays is. Our essays are arranged in complementary thematic pairs, concluding with a single piece that poses a challenge to the present moment. The pairs are intended to be suggestive, provocative even, but the pairings do not exhaust the possibilities for complementary interpretation: given the collaborative nature of the project, there are multiple strands of connection between the essays, some of which we outline here.

The first two essays effectively continue the introduction by illuminating aspects of the foundation of the current conversation. Both essays treat the long nineteenth century, at the moment of formation of the contemporary academic disciplines of philology and theology both within and on the edge of the university. Constanze Güthenke and Simon Goldhill look at the human and contingent aspects of discipline formation in Germany and England respectively – the situated and networked experience of practising scholars within institutions undergoing a process of radical change. Güthenke looks at the lived experience of the philologist in

\textsuperscript{24} Stray 1998.  \textsuperscript{25} Sheehan 2016.
a very particular context: she focuses on the moment that the theologian (and philologist) Schleiermacher and the philologist (and eventual Catholic convert) Schlegel were roommates, in Berlin at the very end of the eighteenth century, and on the ongoing friendship that inflected their work. Güthenke equips us to see the intimate relationship between the seminar and the seminary, and the deep homosocial bonds at the basis of each. How do the personal relationships that ground the religious experience of conversion, instruction, and communal living translate into the study of antiquity within the university? Emotional entanglements are as important as intellectual ideology in Goldhill’s essay, too. He casts his net wider to explore multiple overlaps and sites of collaboration in England in the nineteenth century. Here, as indicated in this introduction, the crucial institutional context is the foundation of the modern university, and its profound investment in both classical philology and theology. He explores how theologians and classicists shared a range of methodological innovations, even as theology came to recognize a threat in philology’s challenge to the status of scripture, and philology increasingly excluded confessional argument from its purview. He traces both the intellectual backgrounds to such a development and how it was played out in the lived experience of academics who often studied both theology and classics. Finally, he suggests some reasons for this increasing separation between theology and classics – and its consequences. Both essays argue that the development of method, the institutional history of the disciplines, and the lived experience of scholars significantly interact in the production of knowledge, and that such an interaction is seminal to understanding the imbrication of theology and the study of antiquity.

We then look at the practice of textual criticism in which the two disciplines of classics and theology were grounded. It is this shared method, as we have suggested, which makes the relationship between the two disciplines simultaneously anxious and productive. A pair of essays by Theodor Dunkelgrün and Irene Peirano Garrison helps us to see the fundamental interpenetration of critical ideas and practices in the editing of texts of both classical and scriptural writings, one of the defining practices of philology. Here, both for Jewish scholars struggling with assimilation and acceptance, and for Christian scholars striving for position, their shared intellectual agenda is preoccupied with the return to the source, ad fontes. Dunkelgrün looks at a specific institutional turn of the nineteenth century: the invention of Judentumswissenschaft, the scientific study of Judaism. His concern is the question of how nineteenth-century Jewish scholars, always in the margins of the established universities,
constructed sources of knowledge, and combined the (contested) search for privileged origins – Greek or Jewish? Christian or Jewish? – with the search for philologically invested ‘source texts’. Peirano Garrison focuses on one of the giants of philology, Karl Lachmann, and maps the ease with which the founding scholars of the modern discipline of classical philology moved between Greco-Roman texts and the bible. Both chapters emphasize the historical importance of that vast monument of Greek literature generally ignored in the modern discipline of classics, the Septuagint. Peirano Garrison goes on to address the issue of authenticity, a key component not just of philology’s pursuit of the faked or corrupt, but also of theology’s commitment to the true word of God. She outlines how the search for a source matches the idea of the godlike author – an idea to which we shall return. By juxtaposing the excluded Jewish scholars with those embraced by the Christian establishment, the pervasive methodological imperative of the ‘queen of the sciences’ is vividly demonstrated.

Renaud Gagné and Susanna Elm look at the ways in which Hellenisms are constructed, specifically with reference to the language of religion and divinity. Gagné poses the question: how Greek is Christianity? His answer looks at key moments in the Catholic tradition from the work of Budé in the sixteenth century all the way to the recent Regensburg Address of Pope Benedict XVI – the address which became famous for its perceived slander of Islam, but which contained a passionate plea to recognize the Hellenic spirit of Christianity. Much as Dunkelgrün shows that Jewish scholarship on Judaism is constantly looking to Christian scholarly practice, Gagné reveals how the very centre of Catholic theology is self-consciously engaged with Protestant accounts of Christianity’s Hellenic past. Elm takes Gagné’s question the other way round: how Christian is the determinedly nostalgic late-ancient Hellenism of the emperor known as Julian the Apostate? If the emperor continued to be considered as a god, how did that inflect the understanding of Christ’s incarnation – and vice versa? The very language of the divine becomes fraught with ambiguity, and the distinctions imposed by interpreters between philology and theology seem increasingly tendentious. Both Gagné and Elm show how the dynamic interaction of theology and classical antiquity can produce almost unthinkable collocations of ideas: that Catholicism should demand a recognition of its own essential Hellenism; or that an ensouled statue of the emperor should provide some sort of model for comprehending the incarnation of Christ.

In the final pair of essays, by Mark Vessey and Catherine Conybeare, we leave behind the various construals of Hellenism that have haunted all the previous contributions, and explore instead the dynamics of construction
of the Latin tradition. Each essay is concerned with a specific Latin author as a touchstone of discipline formation—and disciplines rely on these narratives of tradition. Vessey looks at the way in which the ‘slippery figure’ of Boethius, whose religious and literary affiliations resist easy categorization, repeatedly transgresses the generic boundaries imposed upon him by twentieth-century grand narratives of Latinity, refusing to be corralled or co-opted in the service of either philology or theology: the effort required to construct and maintain a tradition can never fully conceal its own excesses or gaps. Conybeare, meanwhile, looks at a much earlier stage in the construction of the Latin tradition, reviewing the ways in which the early fifth-century Macrobius treats Virgil as a godlike author, constructing his influence along the lines of Christian monotheism while resolutely disavowing any knowledge of Christianity. Macrobius too is constructing his tradition of Latin literature, while positioning himself as a crucial contributor to that tradition—an even clearer example of the self-serving nature of such normative historiographies. Together, this pair of essays underlines how the narrative—the construction—of classical tradition, for all its attempts at containment and systematization, can never wholly exclude its theological shadow.

Conybeare proposes that Macrobius’ willed blindness to the Christian intellectual constructs around him, which nonetheless inevitably bleed into his work, serves as a model for the myopias and occlusions of classical philology as practised today. And so we come full circle, back to the present practice of the discipline, of which Erik Gunderson offers a trenchant criticism in the final essay. At the heart of the essay is a consideration of the Cambridge series, ‘Roman Literature and its Contexts’, and the shifting view of classical philology that the series promotes. Above all, Gunderson shows how the hold of the godlike author—be he (sic) ancient or modern—on the imagination of classical philologists is as strong as ever. The authority of a single source for meaning continues in many quarters to be upheld; its relation to the theology of monotheism remains unacknowledged. Gunderson illuminates his critique with a performance of an alternative mode of reading: a pliant, tentative, open-ended interpretation of one historically contingent text by one fallible, human, historically contingent reader. Uncovering the entanglement of classical philology and theology dethrones simultaneously both the godlike author and the godlike scholar.

It will be clear from this discussion that these essays make no pretence to comprehensive coverage of such a vast field. We have privileged the nineteenth century because it is in the nineteenth century that the modern