

Classical Studies in England, 1810–1825

Nicholas Horsfall

IN DECEMBER 1944, Lieut.-Col. Basil Elmsley Coke placed in the hands of Westminster School¹ the surviving academic and personal papers of the Revd Peter Elmsley, his kinsman² and an Old Westminster. Elmsley (1774–1825) was already in his mid-thirties “the best Greek scholar yet produced by Oxford,” and in some respects was to be compared with Porson himself.³ Rich, obese, gossipy and genial, he corresponded widely: John Franklin the explorer and Francis Jeffrey of the *Edinburgh Review* were alike on cordial terms with him, though Jeffrey’s free-thinking later became intolerable.⁴ Accidents of transmission and survival⁵ have dictated that the letters of classical interest in the Westminster collection should be largely from the hands of J. H. Monk, C. J. Blomfield and Thomas Gaisford. There are slightly under a hundred letters from these three correspondents; I select, excerpt and omit without hesitation: the letters contain much that is trivial and tedious.

We learn little about Gaisford (1779–1855) from his letters, containing as they do little gossip and less *odium philologicum*. They are concerned largely with the scholarly problems of the moment, problems which the thoroughness of German editors and the scope of modern libraries have rendered capable of immediate solution. One comment,

¹ To whose successive headmasters, John Carleton and John Rae, I am most grateful for access to these papers and for permission to publish from them.

² Col. Coke’s grandmother, Elizabeth Bond, was a granddaughter of John Elmsley, Peter’s elder brother; letter by Col. Coke to the *Times*, 30 January 1934.

³ H. Lloyd-Jones, *Greek Studies in Modern Oxford* (Oxford 1961) 4; D. L. Page, “Richard Porson,” *ProcBritAc* 45 (1959) 230f.

⁴ M. L. Clarke, *Greek Studies in England, 1700–1830* (Cambridge 1945) 88f, 97; cf. Blomfield to Elmsley, 31 August 1813: “. . . I told him [Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*] candidly that I could not lend my feeble aid to a Journal, the tone of which was become so offensive to men of religious feeling . . .”

⁵ No letters survive, for instance, from Dr Samuel Butler, headmaster of Shrewsbury, Bishop of Lichfield and editor of Aeschylus, though it is clear from his *Life and Letters* (London 1896) I 65 etc., that he corresponded with Elmsley. Nor are there any letters from Peter Paul Dobree; indeed he is hardly so much as mentioned, though he was on terms of friendship and cooperation at least with Monk and Blomfield (Clarke [*supra*, n.4] 88f), and I find the silence perplexing.

made two years before Gaisford defeated Elmsley in the election to the Regius Chair at Oxford in 1812,⁶ shows him aware of serious limitations in his work:

GAISFORD TO ELMSLEY, 17 June 1810

I am sensible that my work is very imperfect. Much more reading and much more leisure than I have been able to devote to it wd. be requisite to make it what I cd. exactly wish . . .

He will emerge as chalcenteric, serious-minded and keenly aware of the valuable work of scholars abroad.

James Henry Monk (1784–1856) was eleven years Elmsley's junior, and had obtained the Cambridge Chair of Greek at the age of 25, three years before his first letter to Elmsley:

MONK TO ELMSLEY, 10 December 1812

I take the liberty of addressing you in consequence of a letter which I received this morning from my friend Mr. Blomfield;

he would welcome Elmsley's criticisms of the first edition of his *Hippolytus* in order to make improvements in the second. The younger man is full of respect and admiration:

MONK TO ELMSLEY, 4 February 1813

Your kind present of the 7 sheets of the *Heraclidae*⁷ reached me yesterday afternoon: & they have afforded me one of the greatest treats of the sort that I ever enjoyed . . .

MONK TO ELMSLEY, 1 April 1815

My anxiety that the *Adversaria*⁸ should be reviewed, & *by you*, is now greater than ever. You are the only person in this country who is capable of doing justice to it, & the world will at all events obtain part of your commonplace book on Athenaeus.⁹ Where the range is so wide you really are under no obligation to sacrifice much time or much trouble on parts and passages where your mind is not thoroughly made up. Treat it as you will, your article must be infinitely valuable: & let me add will

⁶ Lloyd-Jones, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 4.

⁷ Eur. *Heracl.*, ed. P. Elmsley, 1813.

⁸ Porson, *Adversaria*, ed. by Monk and Blomfield (see pp.454f *infra*); in none of the bibliographies of Elmsley is there any reference to a review of the *Adversaria*; the review in *Museum Criticum* 1 (1814) 115ff is anonymous.

⁹ See pp.456ff *infra*.

excite far greater interest at home and abroad than Reviews of Blomfield & Gaisford can do . . .

The advance of the acquaintance is marked by a progression from “Dear Sir” to “My dear Sir” (4 Jan. 1813) to “Dear Elmsley” (29 Oct. 1813) to “My dear Elmsley” (10 Jan. 1814)! A clear impression emerges that Elmsley did not himself spurn the respectful advances of clever young men from Cambridge:

MONK TO ELMSLEY, 19 July 1813

I just learn by a letter from Blomfield that he arrives in town to day— & that it is your wish that we three *Graeculi* should meet and dine together . . .¹⁰

MONK TO ELMSLEY, 22 November 1813

I shall now be anxious for your Obs. on the *Alcestis*¹¹—upon one point I hope it is not necessary for me to speak—Your authority shall be most scrupulously referred to, even in the cases where I have anticipated your corrections as will happen in a few instances, where every one of our school *must* make the same corrections . . .

It is perhaps surprising that Monk was prepared to risk associating Elmsley to his face so explicitly with the school of Porson.¹²

Blomfield (1786–1857) was two years Monk’s junior, and at least in the earlier letters reveals himself as an *enfant terrible*. The verdict was generally held at the time:

SAMUEL BUTLER (1774–1839, *headmaster of Shrewsbury School*) TO ELMSLEY, 4–5 February 1811

I found afterward that he was become so overbearing to all but the narrow circle of young men who had agreed to look upon him as the successor to Porson.¹³

¹⁰ Blomfield to Elmsley, 15 July 1813: “If during my stay [*sc.* in London] I should have the good fortune to see you, it would afford me great satisfaction—i.e. if you are an agreeable companion, which I shall take for granted, till I have had an opportunity of judging for myself—I like the thoughts of a critical *terzetto* such as you suggest . . .” Also, Blomfield to Monk, 8 July 1813 (*Memoir of C. J. Blomfield* I [London 1864] 31): “I am glad that you are pleased with Elmsley, and that he is pleased with me, and I think I may add with you . . .”

¹¹ Of which Monk brought out an edition in 1816.

¹² “Elmsley, . . . though his scholarship was of Porsonian type and quality, was outside the Porsonian circle”; Clarke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 85, *cf.* 97; also J. E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship* III (Cambridge 1908) 394, and pp.454f *infra*.

¹³ Butler, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5) I 65f; *cf.* Clarke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 87.

Though Elmsley had been “informed that Blomfield is dissatisfied with my treatment of him,”¹⁴ Blomfield’s surviving letters are full of expressions of respect:

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 19 February 1812

I think that no man is better qualified to promote the cause of Greek literature than yourself . . .

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 7 July 1812

On points of *this nature*¹⁵ there is no living scholar to whose opinion I attach much weight, except yourself; and I shall always attend to your suggestions.

The following extract shows him unexpectedly more cautious than Monk in claiming academic kinship with Elmsley:

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 30 April 1813

By the way, for me to talk thus of *our* commonplace books & *our* disquisitions may subject me to the genteel repartee of “how we apples swim!” Believe me I do not mean by this collective mode of expression to isopharise myself with you—By *we*, I mean the very few who know or care any thing about the peculiar idioms of the Greek language—As to yourself, I can hardly tell you what magnificent notions I entertain of your commonplace book, which I think must be as large as the church prayer-book, & written as small as the Act of Uniformity at the beginning of it.

Blomfield’s first surviving letter to Elmsley is dated 29 Jan. 1812, and is clearly not his very first. Yet Elmsley could write to Butler:¹⁶

I wish you would persuade some of these *Porsonulettes* of Cambridge to review my *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Having no acquaintance with *ces gens-là* I cannot ask them to do it.

Within a year, however, Blomfield is corresponding with him frequently, and Monk has begun writing; on 1 Dec. 1812, Blomfield in fact tells Elmsley that he will notice the *Oedipus Tyrannus*.¹⁷

Towards Gaisford, Blomfield’s feelings are somewhat mixed:

¹⁴ Letter to Butler, Butler, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5) I 65; the reference is to Elmsley’s review of Blomfield’s *Prometheus*, *Edinburgh Review* 17 (Nov. 1810) 211ff.

¹⁵ *Sc.* Aeschylean usage; Blomfield edited the *Septem* in this year.

¹⁶ 14 November 1811; cited by Clarke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 85.

¹⁷ The review *may* be that in *Quarterly Review* 5 (1813) 441; there is none in the appropriate numbers of *Museum Criticum*.

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 7 July 1812

I shall be not far from Oxford (at Dunton nr. Aylesbury), & hope to become acquainted with Gaisford, for whom I entertain the highest possible respect as a scholar . . .

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 24 July 1812

I am anticipating your promised article on the 3 plays. It is quite astonishing that Gaisford should have overlooked so many very palpable corrections.¹⁸

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 12 July 1813

I have . . . been to Oxford, where I became personally acquainted with Gaisford, who very kindly shewed me all that was to be shewn; but I had not time to search amongst the MSS of the Bodleian.

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 7 October 1814

Gaisford has published the first volume of his *Poetae Minores*, which by this time, I suppose, you have seen: it will be a very useful book—He must be a man of amazing diligence & perseverance with good eyes & brazen entrails . . .

Blomfield's letters also present an interesting picture of the young scholar, driven by matrimony from his college fellowship to the cure of souls, lacking the means of an Elmsley and finding eventually that his path to success lay not through the Universities, but through ecclesiastical preferment:

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 19 February 1812

—For my part, I have good health but scarcely any leisure—Three pupils and the care of a very large parish¹⁹ have prevented me for these two years from having more than two hours in a day which I could devote to these studies. But I have *ὅν θεῶν* a good deal of time before me, and in ten or twelve years I hope to have qualified myself to push out a little farther from shore . . .

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 25 May 1813

The *argumentum ad marsupium* is irresistible—at least with me who am obliged to work hard for a comfortable livelihood—my two livings together not amounting to more than £400 per annum, of which I am fain to lay out 200 on books . . .

¹⁸ Gaisford redited Markland's *IT*, *IA* and *Suppl.* (Oxford 1811); reviewed by Elmsley in the *Quarterly Review* (June and Sept. 1812) 7.441–64, 8.229–30.

¹⁹ Chesterford, Essex.

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 12 November 1821

My parochial engagements at & about Christmas are so numerous, that I cannot conveniently leave town, particularly as I shall only just have recommenced residence, after a five months' absence.

I was subirate, when I heard that you had been twice in Town in the early part of the Summer, & that I had not seen you. Bishopsgate & Greek are not very congenial; but I have found time during my summers' vacations to work up some of my leeway—but I believe my Greek days are over.

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 29 November 1823

It is only while I am in the country that I Graecize.²⁰

The 'Porsonulettes', we can now see, were heading down what was in effect an academic blind alley. Their work on Attic dramatic texts and usage prolonged the Golden Age of English classical scholarship for little more than a decade. When their impetus died away, no inheritors were to be found—Badham's unusual career proves the point. The limited interests of the Cambridge school and their unhealthy devotion to the name of Porson were surely likelier to repel than to inspire. Monk himself (10 Dec. 1812; *infra* p.460) admits to Elmsley "a certain youthful devotion to the name of Porson." Dr Samuel Parr, writing to his old pupil, Butler of Shrewsbury, speaks more plainly of the "scraps of Greek and cartloads of insolence" Porson bequeathed to his followers (Clarke [*supra* n.4] 85).

In 1812, however, Monk and Blomfield were engaged in a work of valuable piety, editing Porson's *Adversaria*:²¹

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 6 May 1812

... We have printed 250 pages of the Porsoniana, & expect to complete it by July—but the task of searching materials in a great many books & written *φύρδην* & in a minute hand, & then arranging them is exceedingly laborious ...

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 1 December 1812

... Perhaps it may be some satisfaction to you to know the authors of the preface to the Porsoniana—I wrote as far as "videremur" in p.12.—

²⁰ So Housman's famous epigram, about "the successive strokes of doom which consigned Dobree and Elmsley to the grave [1825] and Blomfield to the Bishopric of Chester [1824]"—*Manilius* I (London 1920) p.xlii, does rather misdate the decline of Blomfield's classical activity!

²¹ Cf. p.450 *supra*.

In p.15 from “Notulae” to “juris faceremus” & in p.16 from “Restant” to “auctori imputentur”—& Monk the remainder . . .

The blend of disillusion and chauvinism in the following is too naïve to dismay:

MONK TO ELMSLEY, 30 December 1814

. . . Your notes on the Medea²² have really astonished me—You have made out more oversights of Porson in 600 lines, than I had believed could be found in the whole volume. I enjoy the anticipation of the feelings of the Germans, when they see this article—they little suspected this other Golden bough which was to replace Porson . . .²³

Hermann himself claimed to want an end to feuds and denied having taken the aggressor’s part against the Porsonians:

HERMANN TO BLOMFIELD (cited in *A Memoir* (*supra* n.10) I 32f)

unde vero ista in Germanos ferocia et superbia . . . et quid est quo freti ita feroces estis? Porsonum uno ore omnes nominatis . . . non mehercule ita inique de vobis, ut vosmet ipsi, sentio, sed plures esse apud vos puto, qui Porsonum vel ingenio aequent, aut etiam superent, vel doctrina, si velint, possint aequare . . .²⁴

We are substantially agreed today that the Cambridge school actually did represent the élite of English classical scholars in their day; they were themselves already convinced of the truth of this verdict, however, and that conviction turned them into trigger-happy controversialists. There is no point in raking over the dead and dirty embers of their feuds, but here and there the record may be set straight: Elmsley was described as ἀρχικλεπίστατος by Dobree, friend and disciple of Porson, and it was a misconceived fear for their master’s preeminence that must have led the younger Porsonians to

²² Elmsley on *Medea*: *Museum Criticum* 2 (1826) 1ff.

²³ Gaisford to Elmsley, 9 September 1819: “Hermann seems determined that no man shall make or discover a canon but himself. To this I attribute his wrath against Porson, who being now dead and gone & no longer in said Hermann’s way, is no longer thought worthy of censure: he now fears lest your critical observations shd attract too strongly the notice of students in the German Universities—jam esse quosdam videmus, qui quod non ita pridem in Porsono faciebant, ut, quicquid is dixisset, ipsa veritate verius haberent, id nunc idem in Elmsleio facere incipiant. I hope however he will continue his critique, by wh. we shall undoubtedly be benefitted.” (= Hermann, *Opuscula* III [Leipzig 1828] 146= *Classical Journal* 38 [1819] 269= Elmsley, *Medea* [1818, repr. Leipzig 1822] 327).

²⁴ Cf. *The British Critic* 1 (1827) 290f for the relations of Hermann and Elmsley.

concoct against Porson's nearest rival, Elmsley, stories of "conjectures stealthily purloined from Porson,"²⁵ stories related in their most circumstantial and improbable form in the *Church of England Quarterly Review* for 1839.²⁶ Porson's followers might derive some encouragement from his own attitude; his indignation at seeing—as he thought—conjectures on Athenaeus, which had been communicated privately to Elmsley and published unacknowledged in Elmsley's review of Schweighäuser's Athenaeus, is well-attested and was communicated elliptically to the world by Monk in 1811 (see below). Yet B. B. Rogers (ed. Ar. *Acharn.* pp.193f) has shown that there were, in all probability, only three emendations at issue (Athen. III 87F, 105B, 107F), and it appears from the following correspondence that Elmsley's own conscience was clear: he had thought of the conjectures before conversing with Porson. If Blomfield could believe Elmsley's statement on this point, then we may also, while sharing Blomfield's opinion of Elmsley's indiscretion. The seedy indignation and vulgar gossip of Anonymous in the *CEQR* and of the Revd J. Selby Watson in his life of Porson (London 1861, 310f) compares badly with the moderate and courteous tone of Elmsley's contemporaries.

ELMSLEY TO WILLIAM GIFFORD, 18 December 1811 (Copy)

... The ninth number of the Quarterly Review²⁷ contains an article on Mr. Blomfield's edition of the Prometheus.²⁸ To me and to several other persons, this article appears to be, in a great measure, a formal answer to an article in the Edinburgh Review on the same subject; of which article I am the author.²⁹ The article in the Quarterly Review contains a paragraph on plagiarism which concludes with the following words:

"The value of Porson's corrections has made them peculiarly the object of such depredations. Many persons will recollect the indignation felt and expressed by him, a few years ago, at seeing some restorations of different fragments in Athenaeus, which had been communicated by him to a friend, published in a review without the slightest acknowledgement, or allusion to the real author." P.207.

The preceding words, although they may perhaps stand in need of an interpreter for the benefit of the multitude, are sufficiently significant to the *κυριετοι*. I am thankful to the Quarterly Reviewer for not mentioning

²⁵ D. L. Page, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 230.

²⁶ *CEQR* 5 (1839) 413; cf. Clarke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 227f, for further bibliography.

²⁷ Edited by Gifford.

²⁸ February 1811, by Monk; see p.457 *infra*.

²⁹ 3 October 1803, 181ff.

me by name, or referring to the fifth number of the Edinburgh Review. I have nothing to say in my own defence, except that the emendations to which he alludes, occurred to me before I heard them from Mr. Porson. In explaining the matter to my friends, I should be glad to be able to point out on the best possible authority, the particular emendations to which the Reviewer alludes. As he has thought proper, after descanting on the thievish propensities of Toup, Brunck, Schütz, and Fiorillo, to "point his moral" with an attack on the literary honesty of a person so obscure as myself, I hope that he will not refuse to give me all the information in his power, respecting the plagiarisms of which I am accused.

I shall therefore be much obliged to you, if you will transmit this letter to the author of the article in question, requesting him to consider it as addressed to himself. If he will have the goodness to answer it, and to allow me to shew his answer to my friends, he will do me a considerable favour. The article has been attributed in my hearing to Mr. Dobree of Cambridge, but I do not wish the author to discover himself, if he thinks proper to remain concealed.

[MONK] TO ELMSLEY. Copy of a letter to the Revd P. ELMSLEY, 27
December 1811

Sir,

I have just received a letter from you to Mr. Gifford, which I am desired to consider addressed to myself, as the author of an article in the ninth number of the Quarterly Review, on Mr. Blomfield's Prometheus.

The term by which you designate my Article, "a formal answer to your Article on the same subject in the Edinburgh Review," is not very appropriate. I had meditated and prepared the materials of my Critique before yours appeared. When I read your remarks I found myself anticipated in several instances. I saw that there were several points, upon which I must either be silent, or make allusions to your Article. And as it contained a new critical Commentary upon the Tragedy, & that a very learned and valuable one, I was unavoidably led to notice it; often with praise & always, I hope, with respect. You are not, I am sure, offended at the liberty I took of occasionally differing from you, & I should be really sorry if you thought there was any thing wrong or un-courteous in the manner.

Respecting the offensive sentence I cannot conceive what information you wish or expect from me. I never was told which or how many of the emendations in the Review of Schweigheuser's Athenaeus Porson claimed as his own. But I do know from various authorities that he expressed at different times & in strong terms, indignation at the unacknowledged

use of those emendations. I have also understood that this was communicated to you, if not by Porson himself, at least by others *during his lifetime*. My assertion went no farther than a fact, of which I had full and undoubted information, viz. "The indignation felt and expressed by him etc." Your letter says "The emendations, to which he alludes, occurred to me before I had them from Mr. Porson." Now you must yourself surely have a better recollection than any person living can have what these particular emendations were, and it seems superfluous to appeal to any other authority. At all events you have no right to call upon me to do more than establish the truth of my assertion; which, however, you do not appear to dispute. For my omitting to mention you by name there was this reason; I was unwilling to associate with the names of Schütz and Fiorillo that of a Scholar for whom I entertain such great and unfeigned respect as yourself. What I said was rather meant as a tribute of justice to the dead, than an attack upon the living. And though the mention of such a *fact* was unquestionably justifiable; yet I am really sorry if, by so doing, I have at all hurt your feelings. Did not the concluding paragraph disclaim such an intention, I should have deemed the motive of your letter to be merely a wish to learn who the Quarterly Reviewer was; though it is somewhat surprising that you think it more proper to apply to Mr. Gifford upon the subject now, than it was 9 months ago.

I have reasons of a nature totally foreign from the question between us for wishing not to be known as the Author of that Article. But so great is my aversion to every thing like clandestine attack, & to the appearance of saying that in secret, which I should shrink from declaring openly, that if you express a desire to know any thing further, I will waive those reasons, & write to you in my own name. If you call upon me for authorities I will give up the names of 4 or 5 Gentlemen, from whom I have separately heard the *bare fact* which I asserted; more than that I cannot do. Though I entertain an hope that you will not think it necessary to require that to be done, which may lead to unpleasant & fruitless discussions, between persons who are, I believe, inclined to respect & esteem one another. As I know not how far your indignation against the reviewer may extend, it is but justice to the person, on whom your suspicion has fallen, to mention that Mr. Dobree is at this time in Spain. A circumstance which you will think sufficient to prove an *alibi* in his favour.

I am, Sir,

With great & real respect

Your most humble Servant

ELMSLEY TO [MONK] (Copy)

Foots Cray, 2 Jan. 1812

Sir,

Mr. Gifford has just transmitted to me your answer to my letter, for which I beg you to accept my best acknowledgements. Until I read your letter, I had not the smallest doubt that the article in question was written by Mr. Dobree. My information proceeded from a person whom I thought very unlikely to be mistaken. I have reason to believe that Mr. Dobree could have pointed out exactly the emendations to which you alluded. My letter to him (as I imagined) arose out of a conversation on the subject of your article, which took place very lately between a neighbour of mine and myself. My neighbour had taken notice of the compliment paid to me by name, but was not aware of the allusion to me in the paragraph on plagiarism, until I explained it to him. After he left me, it occurred to me, that it might be desirable to obtain from Mr. Dobree, both as the author of the article in the Quarterly Review, and as a very intimate friend of Mr. Porson, a distinct statement of the emendations in question. It was not for my own information that I desired this statement, but chiefly for the purpose of restricting the accusation of plagiarism within certain bounds, when I might have occasion to explain the matter to my friends. If you were acquainted with Porson, you must be well aware, that if I had applied to him, during his lifetime, for a written statement similar to that which I expected to receive from Mr. Dobree, he would have paid no attention to my application.

Assuredly there is nothing in the remainder of your article, with which I have the slightest reason to be offended. You have convinced me that several of my criticisms on the Prometheus were erroneous. If I had the opportunity, I think that I could defend myself to your satisfaction in one or two instances. I am sorry, on so many accounts, that the author of so able a paper thinks proper to remain concealed. If, either at present, or at any future time, you will venture to discover yourself to me, you may rely on my secrecy. If I knew your name, I should be strongly tempted to ask a favour of you, which would convince you that my indignation is not very fierce. I am, Sir, with much respect, your faithful humble Servant
P. Elmsley.

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 14 October 1812

... The subject of the emendations on Athenaeus to which you allude, is a delicate one, in forming my judgement of which I have no better grounds to go upon than your declaration. I have heard the matter discussed by some friends of Porson, but I really forget what they said about it. With Porson himself I was totally unacquainted, never having been in

his company but once, in which occasion he was exceedingly intoxicated, and I was as sick of his company as he probably was of his liquor in the course of the night—I will tell you candidly my opinion of the whole affair; I have no doubt but that you had made the corrections in question, before you knew that the same had occurred to Porson. When, however, you did know it, it was, I think, *indiscreet*, tho' not disingenuous, to publish them, because it might naturally be expected that Porson would come upon you with the charge of plagiarism, and in cases of this sort, men always incline to the accuser. Literary property is so very delicate, & moreover so ill defined, that it is extremely difficult even for qualified gentlemen to sport, without running a risk of being informed against as poachers . . .

MONK TO ELMSLEY, 10 December 1812 (Monk's first letter to Elmsley)

. . . But before I endeavour to entrap you into an acquaintance, it will be but candid to confess myself a person who has no claims upon your good-will: being the unknown author of an article in the Quarterly Review, which contained an allusion complained of by you: & which was the subject of a short correspondence between us about a year ago. Relative to the subject itself, I do not now hesitate to say, that I am sincerely sorry ever to have put to paper such a paragraph—it being certainly calculated to give pain—& that I am fully convinced by your statement, that any deduction made from it to your discredit, would have been quite unmerited. The impression which I received on hearing the story was certainly erroneous: & this joined to a certain youthful devotion to the name of Porson, led me to write as I did. The very handsome mode in which you spoke in your letter, has made me ever since deeply regret the circumstance; and your late kindness towards me³⁰ has induced me to open a secret, which it would distress me much to have divulged. That critique contained compliments to Mr. Blomfield, which, tho' proceeding solely from an honest conviction of his merits, the generality of people who judge from appearances would have attributed to the partiality of friendship.

The second charge concerns Elmsley's *Acharnians*; the article of 1839 alleges that Elmsley secured illicit access to Porson's notes at Macinlay's bookshop, transcribed them and employed them in his own edition. Rogers (*supra* p.456, 194) and Clarke (*supra* n.4, 228) expose this story as malicious nonsense. Sandys³¹ wrote that Elmsley tried to

³⁰ In communicating, through the intermediacy of Blomfield, material for a review, apparently never completed, of Monk's *Hippolytus*; see p.450 *supra*.

³¹ *Op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) III 394, after CEQR, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.26).

suppress the edition because of the evidence of plagiarism it contained, “but found to his dismay that it had already been reprinted at Leipzig.” The Leipzig reprint is dated 1830, five years after Elmsley’s death! Rogers³² suggests only that Elmsley was so dissatisfied with the work “that he suppressed it before very many copies had been sold.” The second extract below shows that Elmsley’s edition was still nominally on sale as late as 1813, and neither passage lends support to stories of the author’s desire to suppress his work, for whatever reason. It is likely that, as Professor Clarke³³ suggests to me by letter, “the poor sales were the cause of the story that he had tried to suppress the edition,” and it could easily be poor sales at which Blomfield is so “exceedingly surprised.”

MONK TO ELMSLEY, 4 January 1813

... The small sale of your *Acharnenses* is the most portentous & shameful thing I ever heard of. Never did the Edinburgh Reviewers say or think anything so severe, as the fact you mention, against Oxford. I trust we are not so bad: of 40 youths who attended my Lectures on the *Oedip. tyr.* last year, not 6 were without your edition. I never fail to recommend your Play to those who are qualified to read Aristophanes: I wish earnestly for the *Knights*, or the *Clouds*, or the *Frogs*...

GAISFORD TO ELMSLEY, 22 November 1813

... I am really concerned to hear that you should have so bad success in the sale of the *Acharnenses*—The Booksellers have been, no doubt, very much to blame. At least it never appeared in the shops here, & persons, desirous of purchasing, have at times applied to me for the loan of my copy, because another was not to be procured. The *Heraclidae* will, I hope, meet with a different fate...

I have dwelt on this episode, as serving to illustrate with great clarity the elements of tralatian gossip and slander with which the history of classical scholarship is so thickly and frequently encrusted.

Of the *casus belli* between the young Porsonians and the circle of Parr and Butler,³⁴ one of the most heated lay in the reviews written by Blomfield of the first two volumes of Butler’s *Aeschylus*.³⁵ Professor

³² 191f, presumably after *The British Critic* 1 (1827) 284.

³³ To whom, as to Professor Sir Denys Page, I am most grateful for encouragement and guidance in my treatment of this controversy.

³⁴ Clarke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 85.

³⁵ For the story of the four quarto volumes and his passion for Miss Apthorp, see Clarke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 92.

Clarke writes to me: “one’s impression of Blomfield as a rather arrogant young man is confirmed by these letters.” I give a few examples of the ‘cartloads of insolence’:

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 19 February 1812

... I am about to review Dr. Butler’s 2d. vol in the next Edinburgh. *εἰ δὲ κακὸν εἴποι τάχα καὐτὸς μείζον ἀκούσει.*³⁶ I am quite willing to allow for his disadvantages, but not to submit to his arrogance; and he must not complain if he should be taught his proper place in the scale of scholarship...

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 24 July 1812

... Dr. Butler’s third volume is, I believe, in the act of being born; I understand that he *calls me names* in it; which surprizes me; as this is such an infallible symptom of a bad cause—but the Doctor is ἀκράχολος, one of the *σφήκες δευκαρδιοι* who sting in passion & repent of it afterwards. Really I do not think the article in the last Edinb. *savage*, the general opinion hereabouts is, that he has come off better than he deserves. Of course I intended it to be a sort of plaister of fish hooks, but I hope I have not treated him rudely. It would never have been written had he not been in the habit of constantly speaking with complacency of his Letter³⁷ to me, & of writing anonymous abuse of me in divers periodical publications. Pray do not imagine, in consequence of it, that I am naturally disposed to literary quarrels. No man has a greater abhorrence of them—I only wished to show that if I am provoked, I can fight.

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 25 May 1813

... With regard to Dr. Butler, you may implicitly believe me when I assure you that I have no feeling towards him bordering upon malice. I think his letter to me was a very unjustifiable, & in many parts *slandorous* attack, not only upon my literary but my moral character, which though it fell like Priam’s spear, was intended to demolish me. As he continued to deal in invectives afterwards, I judged it expedient to rap his knuckles, which I think I did to such good effect, that if ever we should shake hands, I shall probably see the *μῶδιγγες*...

Such faint hopes of reconciliation were ultimately fulfilled;³⁸ even now Blomfield’s irritation did not wholly spoil his wit:

³⁶ 19 (February 1812) 477ff.

³⁷ *A letter to the Rev. C. J. Blomfield*; cf. Clarke, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.35).

³⁸ Cf. Butler, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5) I 70f; T. Baker and J. E. B. Mayor, *History of the College of St. John Cambridge II* (Cambridge 1868) 908ff.

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 17 July 1813

... I see Dr. Butler has published a system of Geography³⁹—For a motto I would suggest *MAY*—but I have not had an opportunity of examining it, and therefore cannot say whether his chorography be of a piece with his chorography.

The other feud which Monk and Blomfield carried on was directed against the *Classical Journal*, managed by A. J. Valpy,⁴⁰ and in this case anger was beneficial, for it led to the birth of a new journal, the *Museum Criticum*, whose course was brief but undoubtedly distinguished:

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 19 February 1812

I am not very ambitious of figuring in the midst of the pestilent scribblers who infest that injudicious publication. It appears to me that all the country schoolmasters who have interleaved Greek Grammars, are seizing with avidity, the opportunity which the *Classical Journal* affords them, of venting their ingenious conjectures & truly original remarks . . .

MONK TO ELMSLEY, 14 February 1813

As for the man [Valpy] himself, I rather pity him for having fallen into bad hands. Some of the persons whom he mentions as his contributors, are of opinion that the cause of the *Class. Journ.* is utterly hopeless, & that the sooner it is given up the better. For instance, Dobree & Tate⁴¹ whose advice he has constantly rejected; & who will contribute no more. He has not the firmness, the judgement, or the scholarship requisite for the undertaking . . . Our undertaking will not fail because he boasts the support of Drs. Parr, Burgess—Messrs Hayter, Jones &c. His has always been a trading concern, & the editor has no literary character at stake.

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 19 November 1812

I may venture to inform you that a Journal strictly Classical, is about to be set on foot, from which the balderdash & pedantry so plentifully issuing from the typographeum in Tooke's Court, will be rigorously excluded. It will be conducted by Mr. Monk, Mr. Kaye,⁴² Mr. Rennel,⁴³

³⁹ *A Sketch of Modern and Ancient Geography for the Use of Schools* (Shrewsbury 1813).

⁴⁰ Clarke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 85f, 93ff.

⁴¹ Cf. Sandys, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 429f.

⁴² John Kaye (1783–1853); a candidate when Monk obtained the chair of Greek, later Bishop of Lincoln [DNB].

⁴³ Thomas Rennel (1786–1817); winner when at Eton of one of Dr Buchanan's prizes for a Greek "Sapphic Ode on the Propagation of the Gospel in India"; later a theologian of note [DNB].

my Brother, & myself, who, before we execute our plan, are desirous of obtaining the approbation of those scholars whose approbation is worth having; and of being allowed to hope that they will occasionally enrich our publication with their communications. We propose to call it “the Cambridge Literary Journal” & to put forth the first no. on the first of March 1813, price 4s.

MONK TO ELMSLEY, 10 December 1812

It is my earnest hope that you will find this publication not altogether unworthy of your assistance, & that you will think it steadily pursues the sole object which it professes, that of serving the cause of Classical Literature. The friends to whom I suggested the idea of such a publication, have embraced it with ardor, & they are all persons in whom I have a full confidence . . .

MONK TO ELMSLEY, 14 February 1813

So far from ours being instituted with views of emolument, we all made up our mind to its being a positive expence to us for the first year or more: which, however, *Murray's* offer of paying all the expences & dividing the profits (if there be any) will prevent. I have a firm reliance upon my colleagues whom I know thoroughly. They are the cleverest men that this university has of late produced: & they are all bent upon making this a work of reputation. We all shall aim at making our volumes useful for the library hereafter . . .

The founders' confidence was to receive some shocks, and Blomfield might have recalled Jeffrey's warning that his review of Butler's second volume (*supra*, pp.461f) would occupy thirty pages “while on a liberal computation, there are about as many people who will understand it.”

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 17 July 1813

Upon enquiring (in Oxford) whether the *Museum Criticum* sold well, I ascertained the undoubted sale of 3 copies, whether four had been disposed of was uncertain. I learned here that Murray has committed the unaccountable mistake of having 1000 copies printed! When unquestionably there are not 300 persons in England who will read the book, nor 100 who will understand it. I hope you will think it worthy of your powerful support and protection.

Elsewhere, however, the outlook was brighter:

MONK TO ELMSLEY, 5 November 1813

. . . The sale of the 1st. nr. at Cambridge has exceeded my expectations

—Deighton has disposed of nearly 200 copies. Of the sale in town I know nothing. Its effect upon the bilious system of the *Class. Journ.* is pretty well shown by the fellows expending some pages on the abuse of a most obvious slip of the pen made by Blomfield, & by their *reviewing* the nr. in the *British Critic*, in which the vexation & spite, & chagrin of the previous *Classical Journalist* shows itself in a way which is ludicrously obvious.

The other problem was contributors:

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 1 December 1812

... I have applied to Gaisford & received a cautious, but favourable answer. Drs. Burney,⁴⁴ Parr, etc. have, I believe, been written to. Gaisford proposes that we should call it “*Repertorium Literarium*” omitting “*Cambridge*” ...

GAISFORD TO ELMSLEY, 21 January 1815

Respecting the *Museum Criticum*—I have a great value for the work & indeed for all works of the same kind—but I have neither leisure nor inclination to contribute to it or any other work of the kind, except so far as to point out some rare tract &c. I pointed out two or three such to Mr. Valpy, one of wh. he printed, but completely spoiled my design by the manner in which he executed it ... This neglect, coupled with some other things induced me to decline correspondence with Mr. V. The *Classical Journal* however I think is rather improving ...

Elmsley himself received a very large number of letters from both Monk and Blomfield, begging for contributions; not many came, and those that did tended to arrive late!

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 23 October 1813

I am very much concerned and a little surprized, that, after all the censures which you have so freely bestowed upon the *Classical Journal*, you should still continue warmly to support it, and to withhold your assistance from the *Museum Criticum*.

Elmsley's expressed motive for withholding full co-operation was a disagreement with Murray.

MONK TO ELMSLEY, 5 November 1813

... The business of Murray never entered into my head—nor could it,

⁴⁴ Charles Burney (1757–1817); son of the musicologist and friend of Parr and Porson Clarke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 77f.

for two reasons. 1st. He told me last July that he withdrew his objections to your making what use you chose of your articles,⁴⁵ & unless I am vehemently mistaken, I mentioned this to you in town. 2dly., I never could have suspected that any displeasure against Murray could operate to the prejudice of the Museum Criticum: nor did it ever enter into the head of any one of us to allow Murray a moment's influence or control over that work.

But Elmsley, we may feel, as a man on cordial terms with Butler, Burney and Gaisford, for example, as well as with Monk and Blomfield, was, whatever his expressed motives, simply unwilling to commit himself wholly to any clique or party—or to its organ.

It is also clear that he was not much moved by the great obsession of Monk's early years in the Cambridge chair, that concerning Edmund Henry Barker.⁴⁶ Monk writes to Elmsley of the *Classical Journal*, 29 October 1813:

It has sunk into a state of contempt and degradation from which even you cannot rescue it, and that is saying a great deal. In this book your papers are absolutely buried & lost. I have not been able yet to see them: as the Cambridge Booksellers will not now encounter the risk of having a single number in their shops, & I know no body (except Dobree) of whom I can borrow it. So long as $\frac{1}{2}$ the nr. be the production of E. H. Barker, with his name, the whole will infallibly draw its reputation from him.⁴⁷

I turn to illustrate the conditions under which classical scholars were working during and shortly after the Napoleonic wars, and begin with libraries:

GAISFORD TO ELMSLEY, 20 December 1814

The Bodley is now so cold that I cannot sit there the requisite time for due collation . . .

Abroad, the problems were rather different:

⁴⁵ Cf. Monk to Elmsley, 22 November 1813: "If we deserve the notice at which we aim, much of the contents of the M.C. will at some period or other, tho' perhaps remote, find their way into other books."

⁴⁶ Clarke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 94f, gives details of his pathetic career (1788–1839).

⁴⁷ Barker's talents for self-praise, pseudonymous reviewing, slandering his seniors, verbosity and strident protest are now no more than comical, though at the time his actions and the rage they provoked were even marked abroad; cf. Hermann to Butler, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5) I 35, referring to Barker as an *amicus*!

GAISFORD TO ELMSLEY, 13 May 1820

These persons⁴⁸ confirm the character you give of Mai⁴⁹ in every particular: I think, if any thing, they abuse him more than you do. He made the library at Milan quite inaccessible to them. Nor do they speak in the highest terms of Del Furia,⁵⁰ for though permission was granted them to have access to the Laurentian at hours when the public are excluded, yet he refused to let them see many mss wh. they wished to examine, & actually removed several to places of wh. he only kept the key, in order to be certain that by no manoeuvre or contrivance they should get a sight of them.

R. FINCH⁵¹ TO ELMSLEY, 6 July 1819

The envoy⁵² declaim'd very bitterly against the little rosy pedant Del Furia, a collatorial Thersites, whose tone and temper seem now to be pretty well known. The baron is adverse to any thing being put in print about the illiberality and narrow-mindedness of these gaolers of manuscripts. I must avow that I am of a different opinion. Truth should be sometimes told, if well told, and to the exclusion of personalities.

Compare:

GAISFORD TO ELMSLEY, 21 February 1819

Though your use of the library [the Laurentian] seems to be so much circumscribed . . .

No wonder Gaisford exclaimed (to Elmsley, 7 May 1819): "better surely that mss should be so placed [sc. in a private collection] than kept chained to the shelves of an inaccessible monastery . . ." France could be little better:

GAISFORD TO ELMSLEY, 9 September 1819

I am surprized at the want of accommodation you have met with at Paris, where liberality to the greatest possible extent, in all times ancient and modern has been invariably the order of the day.

Elmsley himself, an assiduous traveller and collator, has left us the

⁴⁸ Bekker and Brandis; see below p.473.

⁴⁹ Angelo Mai (1782–1854), Jesuit, librarian, editor and Cardinal (1838); see below pp.468f.

⁵⁰ F. Del Furia (1777–1856), Laurentian librarian; cf. C. Fratti, *Diz. bio-bibliografico dei bibliotecari . . . s.v.*, and for a survey of Italian libraries in general at this date, *Handbuch der Bibliothekwissenschaft* III.2 (Leipzig 1940) 427ff.

⁵¹ Robert Finch, F.S.A. (1783–1830) [DNB].

⁵² B. G. Niebuhr (1776–1831) was Prussian ambassador at Rome, 1816–1823; see A. Momigliano in *Enciclopedia Italiana*, s.v.; see below pp.468f, 473.

following account of his *modus operandi* (to his sister-in-law?), 6 February 1817:

It is generally eight or ten minutes from my arrival at the foot of this staircase (the great staircase of the Vatican), before I am quietly seated in the library with my manuscripts before me. I contrive to place myself there a few minutes after nine, so that I am compelled to rise early. When Monsignor Baldi and his underlings shew a disposition to turn me out and to lock the doors, I take myself off, and as I am usually very cold after sitting so long without a fire, I take a turn in St. Peter's, which is always warm in cold weather and cool in hot weather. I then go home, and set down correctly many things of which, in order to save time, I only make short notes in the library. This occupation detains me usually till four or later . . .

Scholars who could not or would not travel had to contract to have their collations done; Elmsley was markedly obliging in sending Gaisford specimens to help him decide which mss—of the *Suda* particularly—were worth fuller enquiry.

GAISFORD TO ELMSLEY (*in Florence*), 21 February 1819

If you can find a reasonably good collator, I empower you to contract with him for the performance of the work; promising only, that I have engaged a person at Paris to do a similar job for nine hundred francs—I mention this in order that you may have some clue to guide you in making the terms of the agreement.

R. FINCH TO ELMSLEY, 6 July 1819

Before leaving Rome, I had a long confabulation with that most unfindable unvisitable man Baron Niebuhr. He says that Amati⁵³ frequently collates in a slovenly manner. I should hope that in your case he has not done so. I found that he was very shy of my looking over him, or his work, so I thought it most prudent to abstain.

GAISFORD TO ELMSLEY, 2 February 1820

[Mss of the *Suda* in the Vatican] . . . As Mai is now become a great man, I suppose money would not tempt him to undertake such a task; but perhaps if I were to write to him, he would direct me to some other person to set about it for a proper consideration [the collation of certain letters] . . .

⁵³ Girolamo Amati (1768–1834); epigraphist, expert on ancient tachygraphy, etc. *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, s.v.

Even the equable Gaisford caught some of the prevailing animus against Mai:

GAISFORD TO ELMSLEY, 13 May 1820

I am not quite clear that Niebuhr wd. *now* be the best person in the world to assist researches in the Vatican. You know, or do not know, as the case may be, that he, among others, has reprinted one of Mai's palimpsest publications with considerable improvements in Germany. This proceeding, however advantageous to literature is not of a nature likely to conciliate the favour of such vermin as the *prelatus domesticus*.⁵⁴

Books could prove almost as inaccessible as manuscripts:

MONK TO ELMSLEY, 18 June 1813

The only two copies of Hermann's two plays⁵⁵ which I know of are those belonging to Dobree . . .

Absence of comment on contemporary events in these letters is to us almost incredible, but there were sometimes special reasons why books might prove hard to come by:

MONK TO ELMSLEY, 3 July 1814

The fourth Nr. of the *Museum Criticum* is postponed till October by the advice of Messrs. Murray and Deighton, who state that since the arrival of the Emperor & Blucher no books have been purchased, & that it would be ruin to anything to be published till the public mind has recovered its ordinary tone.⁵⁶

Blomfield's attempt to procure the latest books from Germany as soon as circumstances permitted constitutes in itself a small tragedy:

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 30 April 1813

. . . I have a brother⁵⁷ who is going to take advantage of the next long vacation, & to take a trip to Sweden & Russia. If the coast is clear he will probably visit Hamburgh. I think of giving him a copy of my two plays with a note for Hermann, which he will send if opportunity offers—Shall I give him also a copy of your plays?⁵⁸ . . .

⁵⁴ Domestic prelate to Pius VII; for his relations with Niebuhr, cf. G. Gerrasoni, *Studi e ricerche sui filologi* (Rome 1929) 110ff.

⁵⁵ Probably Eur. *HF* (1810), *Suppl.* (1811).

⁵⁶ Field-Marshal Prince Blücher received his LL.D. 4 July 1814 and was admitted as a nobleman at Trinity the following day (J. and J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses* [1922]; Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge* IV (1852) s.v.; but the Emperor of Russia, Alexander I, had sailed from Dover on his way home on 27 June (*Annual Register*, s.v.)!

⁵⁷ Edward Valentine Blomfield (1788–1816) [DNB]; Sandys, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) III 401.

⁵⁸ The letter continues: "Far from being flattered by the intelligence that my name has

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 7 December 1813

I would readily tell you the names of my new books, but for one circumstance—I have not got them. I suppose they are in the warehouse at Gottenburgh, or on board one of the seven hundred & fifty vessels which are detained by the *ἐχενήιδες ἄπλοιαί*⁵⁹ of the North Seas—I am anxiously looking for their arrival . . . The account of the state of classical literature in Germany was written by my brother⁶⁰ . . .

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 8 June 1814

My acquaintance with recent German publications is limited by the circumstances of my not having any. I bought near £100 worth last year, but they never came to hand, nor do I know where they are; probably *κύλλονται πρὸς ἀναύδων παιδῶν τὰς ἀμιάντου*.⁶¹

Foreign scholars too were quick to make up for the years of enforced silence:

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 13 December 1814

I have received a present of some Opuscula from Hermann, and a letter, written on a very dirty piece of paper, in which he speaks handsomely of Porson.

Getting books to the Continent could prove just as difficult:

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 24 February 1813

I approve of your plan of transmitting certain cwt. of criticism to Hermann. It should be insured before it goes—172 lb. of Greek—what will be the premium? As he has been for many years about Aeschylus, I wish he could see my two plays before he publishes. I am not aware that I have anywhere mentioned him with disrespect . . .

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 25 May 1813

Upon my suggesting to Mawman⁶² the practicability of insinuating our books through some of the sallyports of the iron coast which till lately

crossed the Atlantic, I look upon it as an indication of the melancholy fate which my books have already undergone; as it is clear that the Americans can only have come to the knowledge of me, by encountering the title page of my book on the outside of a bale of goods—a parcel of Sheffield knives, for instance.”

⁵⁹ Aesch. *Ag.* 149.

⁶⁰ “Account of the present state of classical literature in Germany,” *Museum Criticum* 1 (1816) 273ff.

⁶¹ Aesch. *Pers.* 577f.

⁶² “Whom if I had to mention in Latin I should call Gastrander,” Blomfield to Elmsley, 19 and 23 March 1813.

surrounded France & Germany, that cautious bookseller replied as follows—"No doubt Sir—your book might be sent to the continent with little difficulty." Author. "Where then does the difficulty lie?" Bookseller. "In getting the money for them *from* the continent."

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 23 October 1813

My brother has been requested by Prof. Wolf⁶³ to transmit it [*Museum Criticum*] to him regularly; & by his means I expect that some of our lucubrations will be known on the Continent. The first No. is now at Berlin, & will probably make the tour of Breslau, Leipzig, & Jena . . .

Contacts with scholars abroad were perhaps surprisingly wide and varied:

ELMSLEY TO HIS FAMILY, UNADDRESSED, 12 July 1816

. . . At Leyden I found a friend, the professor of Greek at Oxford, who is fixed here for some months with his wife and her sister, for the purpose of collating manuscripts in the university library. Gaisford (that is his name) and I went together to pay a visit to professor Wyttenbach,⁶⁴ a person of great celebrity in the Greek and Latin world, at his country house half an hour from Leyden. Here they measure distance by hours. The professor was very civil to me, and was pleased to express his wonder, how so learned a person as he understood me to be, could be so *hilaris* or merry. He added, that Valckenaer and Ruhnkenius⁶⁵ were quite of a different turn. When we returned to Leyden, Gaisford repeated this part of the conversation to his wife, who told us, that the people of the house had remarked to her, that the other English professor (meaning me) was a vast deal more *vrolük* than Münheer Hhaisford . . .

Relations with France were limited but highly satisfactory:

GAISFORD TO ELMSLEY, 29 November 1814

I have for some months been in correspondence with Boissonade,⁶⁶ who has been very attentive to my commissions . . .

⁶³ Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824); Sandys, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) III 51ff; see below p.473.

⁶⁴ Daniel Wyttenbach (1746–1820): Sandys, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) II 461ff: "this learned man, for he is a most learned man," Gaisford to Elmsley, 6 March 1814; Dobree, on his visit to Leyden in 1815 (Monk to Elmsley, 12 July 1815) and Gaisford on his in 1816 (Gaisford to Elmsley, 2 February 1820) comment on the burdens of his blind old age.

⁶⁵ Valckenaer (1715–1785) and Ruhnken (1723–1798): Sandys, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) II 456ff; for a contrasting view of Ruhnken, cf. R. Porson, *Facetiae Cantabrigienses* (1825): "I went to Worts and got more drunken | With that more learned Professor Ruhnken."

⁶⁶ Jean François Boissonade de Fontarabie (1774–1857); Sandys, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) III 249f.

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 7 October 1814

What you tell me of Boissonade convinces me that he is a man of sound judgement & clear discrimination; I must get some of his publications & compliment him handsomely.

Boissonade was himself generous in sending books (letter to Elmsley of July 26 1822), and he writes interestingly to Elmsley of the motives and problems of his publication of late Greek texts:

Lutet. a.d. 8 Jan. 1823.

P. Elmsleyo viro Rev. . J. F. Boissonade S.P.D.

Responsum a te de *Anecdotis Graecis* a me e Pariss. libris collectis exspectabam; nam exspectare jusseras. si non nimis molestum fuerit, aliquid rescribas, precor. Lapitham et Georgidium⁶⁷ homines esse tenuissimi ingenii non nego; nec Maximus ille Planudes, quem Minimum appellare malim, heroibus illis est comparandus, Thucydidi, Demostheni, aliis qui prela Academiae vestrae exercent. Non sunt tamen prorsus negligandi. Si horum scriptorum et similium notitia supprimitur, historiae literariae per ultima Graeci Imperii tempora orbis non potest impleri et hiat lacunosus. Atque liceat mihi fari quae sentiam. Scriptores illi, quamvis infra classicorum quos vocant censum ingeniumque, tamen fere magis digni sunt in quos edendos, hac qua sumus aetate, principes viri aut divites Academiae sumtus erogent. Thucydidi aut Xenophonti, quibus non possunt emptores deesse, nec redemptores deerunt. Horum edendorum provinciam nemo homo inter bibliopolas vel avidissimos refugiat, quippe qui suam sibi pecuniolam, dummodo res aliqua cum cura geratur, non parvo cum faenore redituram probe sciant. sed auctores, ab hominibus tantum eruditus evolvendi, quorum nunquam magnus est proventus, et publicis bibliothecis destinati, quum non possint Sosiorum favorem experiri, generosioribus et ditioribus egent patronis.

Vive, vale, vir eruditissime; meisque verbis Gaisfordium salutes rogo.

Thirdly, the Germans; Blomfield reports on his younger brother's impressions—more entertainingly than E. V. Blomfield does himself in the article cited above (n.60):

BLOMFIELD TO ELMSLEY, 31 August 1813

I received yesterday a letter from my brother dated at Berlin—he had

⁶⁷ Boissonade edited two series, *Anecdota Graeca* and *Anecdota Nova*; Lapithas: presumably Georgios Lapethis (XIV-cent.; K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur*² II [Munich 1897] 781f), ed. by Boissonade, *Notices et Extraits* 12.2 (1831) 1–74; Georgidius: possibly the IX-cent. (?) excerptor Johannes Georgides (Krumbacher 602), ed. by Boissonade, *Anecdota Graeca* I (Paris 1829) 1–108.

just been conversing with Professor Wolf the Prolegomenist, whom he thinks a very heavy & spiritless man—To him, however, the continental scholars look up with the utmost reverence. He says that Porson was a decent critic, but far inferior to Tyrwhitt,⁶⁸ and that he had no notion of writing Latin—We small critics are not so much as known by name in those barbarous regions; but we soon shall be—for my brother at Mr. Wolf's request that he would mention a fit person to send him all the classical publications which had appeared in England of late years, named Murray. A pupil of Wolf's, one Bekker, is about to publish a great collection of Anecdota from the Parisian Library—Bothe lives at Berlin, but as my brother was informed, in a state of extreme indigence,⁶⁹ and publishes for bread—Not a single old edition of any classical author is to be met with in that part of the Continent. Nicolai, the principal bookseller at Berlin, says that the rapacity of the English booksellers has occasioned the dearth of them . . .

GAISFORD TO ELMSLEY, 13 May 1820

I have lately been enabled to make considerable enquiries into the condition and contents of several Italian libraries in the following way. Ten days ago my door opened, and in marched two Prussian professors, Bekker,⁷⁰ & Brandis.⁷¹ The former is known to you: the latter is engaged in the delightful task of collating the edited, and transcribing the inedited commentaries upon Aristotle, preparatory to an edition of that author, which is to be undertaken by the joint efforts of all the philological force at Berlin.

R. FINCH TO ELMSLEY, 6 July 1819

I have been negligent in never delivering your message to Bunsen.⁷² To tell you the plain truth they are *queer* people, "Arcades ambo et pares." They are so icy that I fear catching cold. I have seen Mrs. B. but once in the house of a Cardinal, and then she was so dirty and so slat-

⁶⁸ Thomas Tyrwhitt (1730–1786), polymath [DNB]; Sandys, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) II 419f.

⁶⁹ Friedrich Heinrich Bothe (1770–1855), "who held no educational position, but spent his whole life in the mechanical manufacture of classical books" (Sandys, *op.cit.* [*supra* n.12] III 103f).

⁷⁰ Immanuel Bekker (1785–1871); Sandys, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) III 85f; Gaisford to Elmsley, 22 September 1819: "his experience in mss is now so considerable that any work of his must very much excite the curiosity of literary men"; Gaisford to Elmsley, this letter: "I had no idea of industry and diligence till I saw Bekker's collations. There is scarcely an author in Greek wh. he has not collated with mss . . ."

⁷¹ Christian August Brandis (1790–1867), secretary to the Prussian embassy at Rome from 1816; Sandys, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) III 173.

⁷² Christian Charles Josias Bunsen (1791–1860), secretary of embassy to Niebuhr from 1818, and successively *chargé d'affaires* and minister after Niebuhr's withdrawal to Bonn.

ternly, and so affected that I felt perfectly tranquil at so learned a lady not condescending to notice me.

The information given in these letters about the attempt made by Elmsley and Sir Humphry Davy to unroll the Herculaneum Papyri—an attempt that is distressingly under-documented, is disappointingly small, but what there is I reproduce in full:⁷³

Extract⁷⁴ of a letter from Sir Humphry Davy Bart.⁷⁵ to William Hamilton Esqre⁷⁶ dated Bagni di Lucca July 23rd. 1819:

I have at this moment received your very gratifying Letter.

I beg you will have the goodness to offer my thanks in the most respectful manner to Lord Liverpool⁷⁷ and Lord Castlereagh⁷⁸ for the support the Government has been pleased to give to the undertaking⁷⁹—I shall do the best I can to make it effectual.

I shall write this day to Sir Wm. Gell⁸⁰ and to Elmsley: I hope my letter will still find the last in the North of Italy: but even if he be returned to England, he will I hope be induced to make another journey to assist an object so connected with his literary pursuits and to which his great learning would be of so much importance.

I hope to give you some account of our progress with respect to the m.s.s. before the end of November or the beginning of December, provided the Neapolitan Government, permit my plan to be carried into execution.

I do not expect to be at Naples before the end of October—there is plenty of time therefore to discuss the Plan of operation & to find the

⁷³ I gratefully acknowledge the learned assistance of Drs Walter Cockle and David Sedley with the following notes.

⁷⁴ “This extract appears to be in the same hand as the manuscript letters and despatches of Sir William A’Court (British Museum Add.Mss. 41517, 41519, 41520, 41536). A’Court (later Baron Heytesbury) was special envoy to Naples and Sicily 1815/6 and later ambassador to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies” (Cockle).

⁷⁵ Sir Humphry Davy (1778–1829), at Naples summer 1818–1820 [DNB].

⁷⁶ William Hamilton (1777–1859), antiquarian and diplomatist; at this date under-secretary of state for foreign affairs [DNB].

⁷⁷ Lord Liverpool: prime minister at this date.

⁷⁸ Lord Castlereagh: foreign secretary at this date.

⁷⁹ H. Davy, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 1821, 191. Hamilton was sent on account of Davy’s first enquiries into the papyri (inadvertently published in *The Quarterly Journal of Literature, Science and the Arts* 7 [1819] 154ff), and on his representations Liverpool and Castlereagh ensured that Davy was kept in funds; the Prince Regent, patron of the whole undertaking, had from 1800 taken a personal interest in the quite distinct attempts at unrolling the papyri made by the Revd John Hayter (W. Scott, *Fragmenta Herculansia* [Oxford 1885] 2ff).

⁸⁰ See below, p.477.

necessary assistance. On this Subject I shall write immediately to Sir Wm. A'Court inclosing your letter.

With respect to a Chemical Operator, if Mr. Faraday⁸¹ of the Royal Institution could have made it convenient to come, he would have been a most excellent assistant.—A *Gentleman* Chemist will be of no use to me, I want a man who can work with his hands and whose principal business would be to make and regulate fires.

Mr. Brande in a letter to me speaks of Mr. James Burton⁸² as likely to be sent out, but the work to be done would not at all suit a Gentleman of his education and habits. I should prefer a Neapolitan, unless an English Operator could be found accustomed to do even the dirty work at Lectures.

GAISFORD TO ELMSLEY, 9 September 1819

... I am much more sanguine as to the good to be derived from the Farnese & other mss in the royal and conventual libraries in that city (Naples) than that which some people think likely to arise from the unrolling the Herculaneum cinders. However I am glad to find that you are appointed to Sir H. D.⁸³ The experiment will now be fairly tried;⁸⁴ and I have no doubt, supposing things to go on smoothly, that 12 months will tell us whether the remains of any author worth preserving are to be recovered out of the ruins. In one thing you will assuredly acquire much information. I mean Palaeography. Of course you will be desirous of printing, as [*sic!*] least of copying as fast as they are unrolled, the different books in a character similar to that to be found in the original mss. If a

⁸¹ Michael Faraday (1791–1857), at this point employed at the Royal Institution and closely associated with Davy; he did not take part in the Naples experiments [DNB].

⁸² Burton: as James Haliburton the Egyptologist (1788–1862) was known at this date [DNB]. Mr Brande: William Thomas Brande, who succeeded Davy as Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Institution (1788–1866) [DNB].

⁸³ *Gentleman's Magazine* 95.1 (1825) 376: "In 1818 he went again to Italy; and after returning in the spring of 1819, was easily persuaded to accept a sort of commission from our government, jointly with Sir Humphry Davy, to superintend the development of the papyri found at Herculaneum." Cf. Davy, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.79) 204, "[Elmsley] began to examine the fragments unrolled"; and ms note in Bodleian ms. Clar.Press d.44 fol.31 (see n.87 *infra*), "compared with the originals by Revd.P.E." Falconer Madan, in his description (attributed to Madan by Bodleian Catalogue 34.280) of Ms. Clar.Press d.44 (preface to *Herculaneum Papyri*, [*infra* n.87] 4), reproduces the ms note in full and comments that the pencil notes in the margins of the transcripts are in Elmsley's hand.

⁸⁴ R. Finch to Elmsley, July 6 1819: "I do not hear anything said in this quarter about Sir H. Davy's invention in which you ought to take a share." Davy describes the chemical processes employed in the accounts mentioned above (n.79). The fires were used variously in the application of iodine and particularly chlorine under heat to separate the leaves and improvements upon the simple but effective methods used by Father Piaggio from the 1750's (described by, e.g., L. Deuel, *Testaments of Time* [London 1966] 63ff); Davy applied hot air or ether under heat to assist the older mechanical processes of separation.

copy can once be accurately made, it can be multiplied any number of times, by the art of Lithography, which is now rapidly advancing to a state of perfection. A person by name Marward (?),⁸⁵ who lives in Manor place Chelsea, has printed a set of specimens, chiefly from Oriental mss in the Museum, w^h will show you how neatly & exactly such representations can be made. You may see the book at Priestley's.⁸⁶ Over and above the superior accuracy it has to engraving, lithography is infinitely less expensive. I have no doubt that it may be employed with the greatest advantage in publishing the Herculaneum remains⁸⁷ . . .

R. FINCH TO ELMSLEY, 16 January 1820

. . . I hardly know whether I ought to congratulate you on your Parthenopean appointment, and this perhaps because I do not like to see my old friend Sophocles shov'd for a time into the back-ground. I doubt if your labours prove "digni vindice," since I have barren hopes of your finding any thing, which can be added to our choice store of Hellenic literature alas! too poor.⁸⁸ Your abode at Naples however pleases me for two reasons—first on the score of your health;⁸⁹ and secondly, because it may lead to a promotion that, permit me to tell you, your merits not merely deserve, but exact. I say nothing of the *mischievous* advances that you will make in the science of *decomposing* chemistry. If you return to Florence, Del Furia will search your person for deleterious drugs, and will tremble for his jealously-imprison'd parchments.

[GELL ?] TO ELMSLEY, n.d.⁹⁰

My dear Sir,

I bring back all your Papyri having copied all I want out of them & the

⁸⁵ Cf., possibly, *Egyptian Monuments . . . engraved by T. Nedland* (London 1805-1807), *BM Cat.* CXXI, col. 564 *infra*.

⁸⁶ Priestley's; perhaps a bookseller; possibly John R. Priestley, 37 High Holborn, London.

⁸⁷ The illustrations in *op.cit.* (*supra* n.79) are by J. Basire and are clearly copperplate engravings. The original drawings are in the Bodleian Library, Ms. Clar.Press d.44, and some only are reproduced in *Herculaneum Papyri* (Oxford 1889)—photographs executed for the Oxford Philological Society, largely of the lead-pencil facsimiles made by Hayter's assistants (*cf.* n.79 *supra*).

⁸⁸ Cf. Blomfield to Elmsley, 17 July 1813: ". . . Callimachus' forte certainly lay in elegiac verse. His hymns are sad stuff—So in fact are two-thirds of the Grecian poems that are come down to us. But we gain credit for putting the μὲνs and δὲs in their right places, and it is not our business to tell the world that we do it very little good by our labours. *Floreat ars critica!*"

⁸⁹ On Elmsley's health, *cf.* *The British Critic* 1 (1827) 286, 293; *op.cit.* (*supra* n.83), "Mr. Elmsley returned to England in 1820; but having imprudently exposed himself too much to the heat, he was seized with a severe fever at Turin, from which, it is probable, the subsequent failure of his constitution may be dated."

⁹⁰ Since the letter is addressed simply to "Albergo della Speranzella," it must be earlier than Elmsley's return to England in the late spring or summer of 1820 (n.89 *supra*). Accord-

rest of the book being only the ornamental part.⁹¹ Will you do me the favour to decide upon the title page whether Latin or English & send me the precise words I am to write. If His most gracious Majesty should disappear before the book be presented Sir Humphry will of course change George to Frederick when he gets to England.⁹² If you determine upon Latin to puzzle the King and Parliament you will entail on yourself the trouble of diverse other scraps—such as “Basso rilievo found near Delphi showing how the Papyri were read”⁹³ again “Present appearance of Papyrus No . . .” again “End of the Papyrus, No . . . showing how it was rolled up round the Umbelicus.”—

This is for Your Excellency’s present consideration, having done which I shall beg the favour of a communication. You know I suppose that the father of His people George IV having tried in vain to find a ministry to set about the Queens persecution, has given it quite up, “*out of regard to the welfare of the Nation.*”⁹⁴

Ever Yours

AVLVS GELLIVS⁹⁵

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ing to Dr Cockle, BM Add.Ms. 41536 fol.5–6 shows that by February 29 of that year work on the papyri had been abandoned on account of obstruction by the local authorities. Davy, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.79) 204, comments: “When however the Reverend PETER ELMSLEY . . . began to examine the fragments unrolled, a jealousy, with regard to his assistance was immediately manifested; and obstacles which the kind interference of Sir WILLIAM A’COURT was not always capable of removing, were soon opposed to the progress of our enquiries; and these obstacles were so multiplied, and made so vexatious towards the end of February, that we conceived it would be both a waste of the public money, and a compromise of our characters, to proceed.”

⁹¹ If Gell had ever planned to publish a work on the Davy-Elmsley experiments, he did not in the end do so. The ms note in Bodleian Ms. Clar.Press d.44 (*cf.* n.83 *supra*) states that the fragments of papyri are “delineated by Sir W.G., F.R.S., F.A.S.” The actual drawings, however, are all signed either by F. Celentano or R.B. (according to Dr Sedley, an unlikely form of signature for one of the Italian draughtsmen, but perhaps that of R. Biondi, who was making drawings at the Naples officina in the 1850’s). Gell’s precise rôle must therefore remain obscure.

⁹² George: *sc.* IV—about whose health there were grounds for concern at this time; Frederick (*sc.* Duke of York, second son of George III) was heir-apparent at this date.

⁹³ I have not, despite widespread enquiries, been able to identify the *basso-rilievo*.

⁹⁴ *Cf.* Christopher Hibbert, *George IV* (London 1973) 147f.

⁹⁵ Professor P. E. Corbett is certain that this letter is in the hand of Sir William Gell, which he recognises from other letters in his hand in the uncatalogued Cockerell papers in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum; Sir William (1777–1836) was chamberlain to Princess Caroline and gave evidence at her trial when Queen; then he denied any impropriety between her and the courier Bergami, but in his letters of 1815 and 1816 gossiped about her above such signatures as “Blue Beard,” “Adonis,” “Aulus Gellius” (thus *DNB s.v.*, 116).