

Sir James G. Frazer and A. E. Housman: A Relationship in Letters

Robert Ackerman

THE FOLLOWING group of letters (hitherto unpublished in the main) both from and between Sir J. G. Frazer (1854–1941) and A. E. Housman (1859–1936) is of a substantive interest that goes beyond that attributable simply to the eminence of the correspondents, great though that is.¹ Here of course one assumes and includes their extraclassical work as well, for the genius and industry of both permitted them the highest accomplishments in more than classical studies. However low Frazer's standing today among his professional descendants,² he is even now the most well-known and widely read anthropologist in the world, and we omit here any consideration of his immense cultural importance as a creator of central metaphors for the 'modern consciousness';³ Housman is still among the best known and most popular poets in English of this century, the supremely elegant enunciator of an ironic elegy to that which is irretrievably lost.

As to their personal relationship, George L. Watson, one of Housman's most recent biographers, speaks of Frazer as merely a "nodding acquaintance,"⁴ but this is plainly wrong. Beyond the tone and substance of the letters presented below, which in themselves

¹ This essay is offered as the first fruits of the project on which I am currently engaged—the preparation of an edition of the letters of Sir James Frazer (with the intention of later writing a life of Frazer). It contains a certain amount of biographical speculation on Frazer that is, in view of the preliminary stage of the undertaking, necessarily provisional. Thus I present this material not only because of its inherent interest, but also in the hope that I might hear from readers who know of the whereabouts of Frazer letters, especially those in private hands, or who have other biographical information concerning Frazer. I shall of course be more than pleased to acknowledge in print any assistance so furnished.

² For a representative modern assessment of Frazer by a leading anthropologist, see E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (Oxford 1965) 27ff.

³ See Stanley Edgar Hyman, *The Tangled Bank: Darwin, Marx, Frazer and Freud as Imaginative Writers* (New York 1962).

⁴ George L. Watson, *A. E. Housman: A Divided Life* (London 1957) 212.

bespeak a much more than casual connection, there is documentary evidence to the contrary. First, Housman was asked to compose the address to Frazer delivered at the inauguration of the Frazer lectures (of which more below—see letters iv and v). Then Frazer's one-time private secretary and biographer R. Angus Downie asserts that Housman and Frazer "enjoyed a friendship of over thirty years."⁵ Beyond that, and conclusively, Mr A. S. F. Gow, the friend and biographer of Housman and colleague at Trinity College of both Frazer and Housman, in a letter to me of 26 October 1973, flatly denies that they were merely academic acquaintances. In his memoir Gow spoke of meeting Housman for the first time in 1909 or 1910 at a dinner party during one of the latter's visits to unnamed Cambridge "friends." He writes now to say that those friends were in fact the Frazers. It may fairly be conjectured that this relationship derived from Housman's activities as a member of the Cambridge Philological Society, which he had joined as early as 1889.⁶ The letters between Housman and Frazer printed below seem to be the only ones extant, but plainly in view of the length of their friendship, they cannot be but a small fraction of the entire correspondence.⁷ (It might be noted that, despite this long-lived friendship, there are no letters from Housman to Frazer in Henry Maas's recent exemplary edition of *The Letters of A. E. Housman* [Cambridge (Mass.) 1971]—hereafter, *Letters*.)

In addition to the letters presented in full in this article, I have turned up three others from Frazer to Housman, dated 9 May 1929, 17 August 1930, and 21 August 1930 (Mss: Trinity College Add. mss. c. 111:18, Frazer 1:42, and c. 111:19), none of which seemed important enough to print in its entirety here. (An extract from the letter of August 17 appears as item x below.) The first thanks Housman for his "letters and queries" concerning specimen pages of the *Fasti* that Frazer had sent him. It also thanks him for his kind "inquiries" (presumably after the health of Frazer and his wife) and concludes "My Wife and I are well, and we join in all friendly greetings to you." The second letter (in the portion preceding what is printed below in x) refers to the fact that Housman was "so kind as to send me some queries on the specimen pages of my Ovid which had not been finally revised by me." After noting a minor printer's error in the specimen

⁵ R. Angus Downie, *Frazer and The Golden Bough* (London 1970) 20.

⁶ A. S. F. Gow, *A. E. Housman* (New York and Cambridge 1936) 47.

⁷ There is one note to Lady Frazer in *Letters* 234–35.

pages, Frazer comments that he would be glad to receive from Housman a list of errors that the latter might detect in going through the edition, so that these might be corrected in the future. "Or if you prefer to publish your corrections in a review or otherwise, I would equally receive them gratefully and attend to them carefully, nor would I in the least object to any severity of language you might employ in laying on the rod, believing as I do that your severity is always just and deserved." The third and last item is a brief note about a printer's error, which, however, turns out to be the same one referred to in the preceding letter. Frazer had forgotten that he had already written to Housman about it only four days earlier.

Of the more important letters, I and II (typed copies: Trinity College Add. mss. b. 36:82, 82 *bis*) have already been published, albeit incompletely, by Frazer himself in the *The Golden Bough*⁸; they offer Housman in the unaccustomed rôle of ethnographic informant. They concern the well-known folk custom of lighting celebratory bonfires and form a small part of Frazer's elaborate treatment of the subject of fire festivals in the volume entitled "Balder the Beautiful" (1913).⁸ From the postscript to I, the incident recounted is likely to have been something Housman mentioned in conversation, whereupon Frazer pressed him for particulars. Letter II is plainly the response to Frazer's (no longer extant) reply to I, in which he seems to have asked whether Housman, who frequently traveled to southern Europe, had ever seen the fires lighted in the past, and if so whether the rites had come to differ over the years.

Letter III (typed copy: Trinity College Add. mss. b. 36:83) offers Housman's thanks for Frazer's gift of his selected *Essays of Joseph Addison*, published in February 1915. Addison was a greater favorite of Frazer's than of Housman's as witnessed not only by the existence of this edition but also by his several imitations of Addison's Sir Roger de Coverley papers, which formed the nucleus of *Sir Roger de Coverley and Other Literary Pieces* (1920).

Letters IV and V (MSS: Clare Cornford Chapman), as indicated above, refer to the address to Frazer composed by Housman (see *Letters* 184 for the text) on the commencement of the Frazer lectureship in 1921.

⁸ J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*⁸ (London 1913) X 106ff, for fire festivals generally; the Housman items (which do not appear at all in *Letters*), in slightly edited versions, are on X 221.

The lectureship had an interesting history.¹⁰ In January 1914, upon the completion of the great twelve-volume third edition of *The Golden Bough*, a group of Frazer's friends and admirers desired to make a gesture that would appropriately commemorate the magnitude of his achievement. At first a portrait was mooted and then discarded in favor of a 'Frazer Fund for Social Anthropology' that would "make grants to travelling students of either sex, whether connected with a University or not, with a view to their investigating problems in the culture and social organization of primitive peoples, a department of Anthropology which Dr Frazer has always been eager to promote. This proposal affords an opportunity to that wide public, both at home and abroad, whose interest has been stimulated by Dr Frazer's work, to co-operate in doing honour to a student whose reputation is world-wide and whose speculations, founded on an immense accumulation of facts, have affected the main current of thought in several subjects."¹¹

The Frazer Fund was but one of the many scholarly enterprises put into suspension by the outbreak of war in 1914. The idea had not been forgotten, however, for on 3 April 1920 we find Frazer (in an unpublished letter—ms: Clare Cornford Chapman) writing to F. M. Cornford to thank him for his "generous and unwearied exertions" on the Fund's behalf. In the interim, though, the organizers' conception of the Fund had changed from the subvention of anthropological expeditions to the foundation of a lectureship. And when the idea met general approval, the lectureship was established. Its 'rotating' format was and is unique so far as I can tell, the lectures being delivered in successive years at each of the four universities—Oxford, Cambridge, Glasgow and Liverpool—with which Sir James was connected over the course of his academic career.¹²

¹⁰ The outlines of the project are to be found in the introduction by Warren E. Dawson to the collection of the first eleven *Frazer Lectures* that he edited (London 1932). This introduction (xi–xiii) also included the text of Housman's address, along with that of Frazer's reply to the subscribers. It might be mentioned that, although subsequent Frazer lectures have not been collected, the foundation is still active, and the roster of lecturers includes many of the most eminent anthropologists in the world.

¹¹ I quote from the printed memorial (which identifies Cornford as the Secretary and Treasurer of the Organizing Committee) that was widely circulated to potential subscribers at the time. The copy that I consulted is to be found in box 91 of the Gilbert Murray Papers in the Bodleian Library; although many copies must have been sent out, I have nowhere seen it published.

¹² Frazer's lifelong connection with Cambridge needs no comment; he was a student at

In its tone of friendship, letter vi (ms: A. E. Housman Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress) offers still more evidence, if more be needed, that Frazer and Housman were much more than the usual academic acquaintances, content to nod to one another in corridor or at table. The most remarkable aspect of this letter—and in this it resembles letter vii—is the way in which this note, ostensibly written to thank Housman for the gift of a copy of his *Last Poems*, seems, as it were, to escape from its writer, and becomes a diatribe on the relative merits of the prose styles of Heine and Goethe. The letter's strong emotion is quite gratuitous and unsuited to the occasion; although, as I shall indicate below, there are grounds for believing that the disquisition on Heine may have biographical significance. In any event the passion of the letter offers something of a contrast, and perhaps even a shock, to the reader accustomed to the measured movement of Frazer's published prose. In it one may also observe a residue of anti-German feeling left over from the war (frequently to be observed in British writing in the 1920s), as well as a marked philo-Semitism that definitely was not a usual sentiment in Frazer's milieu. It was no secret that the British academic establishment before the First War (and well afterwards too) was never enthusiastic about the access of Jews to university positions; Frazer, however, numbered as one of his best friends Dr Solomon Schechter, reader in Talmudic at Cambridge until 1901, when he left for New York and the chancellorship of the Jewish Theological Seminary. This is not merely to say that 'some of Frazer's best friends were Jews', for there are other appreciative references in the unpublished letters to Jews and their achievements that mark Frazer, a man of deeply conservative temper and politics, as a person of an unusually open mind for his time, at least in this respect.

We know that Heine had long been one of Frazer's favorite writers. In the very earliest days of his association with Macmillans, his lifelong publishers, we see Frazer (in an unpublished letter to George Macmillan, 18 July 1886, B.M. Add. ms. 55134) suggesting an anthology of Heine's lyrics as an addition to the firm's Golden Treasury series. "If

Glasgow from 1869 to 1873 before going up to Trinity College; he was appointed professor of social anthropology at Liverpool in 1907 (the sole teaching position he ever held) but suffered what can only be described as an attack of homesickness for Cambridge and returned after only one year away (he resigned the professorship finally in 1920); and he was awarded an honorary D.C.L. from Oxford in 1899.

you decide to publish such a volume, it would give me great pleasure to make and arrange the selection. As I am fairly familiar with his best poems (he being one of my favorite authors) I could very shortly furnish you with a list of poems and the printing could proceed rapidly.” In a penciled note on the letter Mr Macmillan expressed tentative interest in the proposal, but the project was (presumably) forgotten, swept away by the pressure of work on Pausanias and later on *The Golden Bough*, and was never brought up again.

Although Frazer published nothing on Heine, there is good reason to believe that the figure of the German lyric poet came to embody and connote a group of intense emotions for him. At this point there is not enough documentary evidence in hand to warrant going much beyond such a formulation; one may speculate, however, that Heine (rather than another poet), because of his preoccupation with the themes of the past and of loss, may have been especially attractive to Frazer. In any event, as I hope to show below, it seems clear that Heine was associated in Frazer’s mind with emotions that only rarely found expression in the ordinary, unruffled course of his life and writings.

With the strong feelings for Heine gratuitously expressed in letter vi as background, consider the following two references to him in unpublished letters. The first occurs in a very long one written December 15, 1897 (ms: Trinity College Add. mss. Frazer 1:40) to John Forbes White, like Frazer a close friend of the well-known Cambridge semiticist and biblical scholar William Robertson Smith (1847–1894). White apparently had been canvassing those who had known Smith for recollections to be used in a memoir; Frazer, thus asked to reminisce and, as it were, to ‘free-associate’ concerning him, wrote in part as follows: “I used to think of him as a fine musical instrument, sensitive in every fibre and responding instantaneously to every touch. If the conversation touched on any subject above the common, if any hint of the poetical or heroic were dropped in passing, it seemed as if you could almost feel the chords vibrating in him. And this one felt sometimes more by a sudden and unusual silence on his part than by anything he said at the moment. Two little instances. . . will illustrate this. . . once when his friend the late Donald McLennan. . . was spending the day with him in Cambridge. At Robertson Smith’s wish I rowed them up the river, he sitting in the bow behind me and McLennan in the stern facing me. As we neared Grantchester we

heard a rumbling sound. McLennan asked, "Is that a train?" I said, "No, it is the mill-wheel, *Ich höre sein fernes Gesumm.*" Robertson Smith, as I have said, was behind me so that I could not see him, but I knew perfectly, by the sudden silence that fell on him and that lasted for a minute or so, that the rest of Heine's beautiful verses were passing through his mind."¹³

I find this anecdote suggestive because Heine's name and verses are invoked in the narration of an incident involving the then recently deceased, and sorely missed, Robertson Smith, Frazer's academic sponsor when the younger man was quite unknown, and until his death Frazer's mentor and friend. It was Smith who more than any other person caused Frazer to become interested in anthropology; had he not met Smith, who had come to Cambridge as professor of Arabic after his heresy trial in Scotland, Frazer might well have settled down to a more usual Cambridge classical career, editing texts. This is obviously not the place to offer an extended discussion of the undoubted and undeniable psychological importance of Smith to Frazer; it must suffice here to remark the juxtaposition in an emotionally charged setting of Smith and Heine, in a chance recollection elicited by a biographer's query.

The second reference to Heine comes in a rather pensive letter from Frazer to his good friend Professor Hermann Diels (ms: Staatsbibliothek, Berlin), dated 5 May 1908. Most uncharacteristically for Frazer it is a personal and emotional letter, written at a difficult and troubled juncture in his life. In 1907 he had surprised everyone in Trinity by uprooting himself from Cambridge after more than thirty years of residence there to accept a professorship of social anthropology in the University of Liverpool. The move represented the greatest personal upheaval Frazer ever faced in a generally uneventful life. He was exchanging the quiet and tradition-ruled life of Cam-

¹³ Some relevant data that serve to indicate the depth of Frazer's regard for Smith: Frazer's obituary, "William Robertson Smith," *Fortnightly Review*, n.s. 55 (1894) 800-07, which he chose to reprint twice: in *Sir Roger de Coverley and Other Literary Pieces* (London 1920) and again in *The Gorgon's Head* (London 1927). Next, the fact that Frazer was close enough to Smith to be chosen in 1894 to help see through the press the second edition of the latter's most important work, *The Religion of the Semites*, when Smith fell ill and could not himself do it. And finally, the fact that all three editions of *The Golden Bough* are dedicated to the memory of William Robertson Smith. For Smith see J. S. Black and G. Chrystal, *The Life of William Robertson Smith* (London 1912), which amply documents Frazer's closeness with Smith. The Heine reference is to "Mein Herz ist traurig," *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. F. Strich (Munich 1925) III 369-70.

bridge and Trinity College for the bustle of Liverpool and its relatively new university. From being a research fellow, with no academic obligations to any institution beyond his college, he was translated to a professorship, with an attendant complement of duties—lectures to deliver, committees to sit upon. Beyond that there was the inevitable disruption resulting from changing one's physical surroundings, finding and moving into a new house, setting out anew one's books and meeting new colleagues, that many academics dread, especially a person so shy and set in his ways as was Frazer. The letter to Diels, then, is a pained acknowledgement that he had made a mistake in going to Liverpool, that the challenge represented by his new post and surroundings was simply more than he could meet. He writes: "As to the professorship I do not intend to lecture much. My real work is done in the study, which I never quit willingly to appear in public. I am not at home in a professor's chair and doubt whether I shall long occupy it. It is a great change from the pensive beauty and historical memories of Cambridge to the bustle and tumult and squalor of a great commercial seaport. I seem to have left part of my heart on the willows by the Cam and cannot say how soon I may go to reclaim my lost property!"

"I grieve to hear of the cause which prevents you from coming to England this Whitsuntide. I trust that your stay in Rugen will restore your Wife to health as it has done before. How charming those old beech woods must be, with the summer breeze from the sea blowing through them. I wish we could meet there and talk of our studies in the green arcades. I love the German woods. We have nothing like them in England. To a German in a foreign land the memory of the German woods must be peculiarly tender

*Ich hatte einst ein schönes Vaterland
Der Eichenbaum wuchs dort so hoch.*"¹⁴

Once again we mark the lines from Heine in a context of strong feelings; as in the anecdote about Smith, those feelings are connected with a natural setting—the woods—which are linked, in terms of the progression of emotion and image of the letter, to the willows by the Cam where Frazer has left part of his heart. The emotional logic of the letter also implies a resemblance between himself as invalid and

¹⁴ The lines from Heine make up the opening of the third of three parts of "In der Fremde," *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. F. Strich (Munich 1925) VII 100–01.

the ailing Frau Diels, and at the same time suggests a parallel between himself and Heine as fellow expatriates. The letter bespeaks a profound disturbance in the recent past (as did the letter about Smith), and its symbolic culmination comes in the quotation from, and evocation of, Heine, and thus the poet must be seen as the image and embodiment of pain and loss.

Letters VII, VIII, IX and X (Mss: Trinity College Add. mss. c. 111:17, Frazer 1:41, c. 111:16, and Frazer 1:42) constitute a remarkable exchange between Frazer and Housman. The letters touch on two different subjects: one is a technical question concerning a reading in the *Fasti*, which Frazer was editing at the time (1927); the other relates to the opinions of the correspondents on Professor Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848–1931). Let us take the first, and much more straightforward, matter first. The discussion in the letters relating to Frazer's doubts about the reading *tangor* in *Fasti* 5.74 (the unanimity of the mss notwithstanding) is self-explanatory. Frazer simply could not or would not believe that Ovid could have written *tangor*. Fortunately he applied to Housman for confirmation of his intuition, and the latter set him firmly to rights. I find Housman's answer interesting because not only does he adduce relevant classical parallels, but he also argues on the basis of the way in which poets extend the meaning of words and constructions; one wonders to what extent his own poetic practice is here perhaps reinforcing his scholarly argument.

Frazer's note to this passage (quoted below) is characteristic in its careful acknowledgement of Housman's help. Beyond that, it is also typical of his practice in *The Golden Bough*, in succeeding editions of which, as he changed his mind, he buried (rather than deleted) his older speculations. He could, after all, have suppressed all comment on the line; alternatively, he could simply have quoted Housman's letter. Instead he quotes Housman but in a sense gets in the last word himself in the last line of the note. He writes: "In this passage the use of *tangor* (line 74) in the sense of *inducor ut credam*, 'I incline to think', is peculiar, and I formerly thought that the verb must be corrupt. But Professor A. E. Housman, whom I consulted on the point, wrote to me as follows: [Here Frazer quotes Housman, letter VII, 'Cicero . . . sense required.'] I accept at any rate my learned friend's defence of *tangor*, and have accordingly cancelled the conjectures by which I had proposed to emend, or rather corrupt, the text. The

poet's meaning would be given and the metre preserved by the substitution of *censeo* for *tangor*."¹⁵

The interchange on Wilamowitz is much more interesting, and much more difficult to understand. The ascertainable background facts are these: in an unpublished letter (ms: Jewish Theological Seminary, New York) to Dr Solomon Schechter, dated 22 December 1902, Frazer writes that he and his wife had just returned from a visit to Berlin. "Our Cambridge friends gave us introductions to various people at Berlin, and we found every one very friendly. We heard lectures by Pfliederer, Paulsen, Diels and Wilamowitz, and we were introduced to all these eminent men."¹⁶ In addition there are three letters from Wilamowitz to Frazer (Trinity College Add. mss. c. 59:17, 61:26, and 59:18), dated 26 November 1905, 21 December 1905, and 27 November 1906. In these Wilamowitz does not hesitate to state his disagreements with some of Frazer's positions as enunciated in *The Golden Bough*² and more especially in *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship* (1905), copies of both of which Frazer had sent him as gifts.

But the tone of the letters is unfailingly friendly and courteous, and sometimes a good deal more than that. For example, Wilamowitz goes out of his way, in the letter of 27 November 1906, to compliment Frazer on the beauty of his prose style, saying that his own early predilection for the sound of French and Italian had long made him believe that English was not an especially flexible or euphonious language, but that Frazer (along with Swinburne) had shown him he had been mistaken. What's more, several times in these letters he expresses his gratitude to Frazer for all that he has learned from him. Finally we have the fact that Frazer's temperament and practice were distinctly unpolemic, and that his comments about other scholars in letters accord well with the unmalicious, unvindictive authorial *persona* we know from his published work and from the reminiscences of him by those who knew him.¹⁷

Having established from the exchange of books and the cordial letters that, on Wilamowitz' side at least (and by implication on Frazer's side as well), a friendly relationship existed, we have now to

¹⁵ J. G. Frazer (ed. and trans.), *Publii Ovidii Nasonis Fastorum libri sex* (London 1929) IV 7.

¹⁶ Otto Pfliederer (1839–1908), historian of religion; Friedrich Paulsen (1846–1908), philosopher; Hermann Diels (1848–1922), the pre-Socratic scholar.

¹⁷ See, e.g., R. Angus Downie, *James George Frazer* (London 1940) 119.

examine other aspects of this puzzling case: namely, finding a plausible explanation for this seemingly unprovoked attack, and as well for the context in which Frazer chose to make it. Here are some facts: Wilamowitz was generally known to be among the handful of scholars for whom Housman had high regard.¹⁸ In the light of this, how are we to understand Frazer's expression *to Housman* of glee at the sorry spectacle of Mommsen's having trounced his son-in-law in public?¹⁹ We must assume that Frazer, among the least combative of men publicly or privately, either never knew of Housman's high opinion of Wilamowitz—which I find hard to accept—or else conveniently forgot it so that he might have the pleasure of telling the story and of gloating. It is remarkable in turn that one so sensitive as Housman, and withal one so acerbic as he, was content merely to inform Frazer, without asperity, of his esteem for Wilamowitz. It is likewise worth remarking Housman's habitual attitude of ironic self-deprecation here in the way in which he slightly deflects and deflates the force of Wilamowitz' compliment (and thus the presumed immodesty in repeating it himself) by framing it between the pseudo-biblicism of “and Wilamowitz spoke these words and said. . .” and the last sentence of the letter.

We have now to consider another aspect of this puzzle: the rationale that Frazer offers for this striking and gratuitous attack, namely, “I do not forget how with the stick (wrong end up as usual) he belaboured my poor old friend Pausanias . . .” Perhaps it might first be noted that Frazer is not responding to a hostile review by Wilamowitz of his own edition of Pausanias;²⁰ had that been the case there would have been no need to search further for a motive. But Frazer here is rising to defend Pausanias, not himself.

We must therefore proceed. It is of course always possible that Wilamowitz disparaged Pausanias in an unpublished lecture or even in a chance remark that came to Frazer's notice, but this possibility is remote, if only because Frazer, as shown by his letters, was quite unworldly and never indulged in academic gossip. It is also possible

¹⁸ See Gow, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.6) 39.

¹⁹ Perhaps as a result of Housman's defense of Wilamowitz, Frazer makes no mention of the latter's controversy with Mommsen in his note on the appropriate passage on the Floralia (*Fasti* 4.945).

²⁰ In 1898 (2 ed., 1913) Frazer published his monumental six-volume edition of *Pausanias's Description of Greece*; a series of extracts were later published under the title *Pausanias and Other Greek Extracts* (1900).

that the ostensibly friendly relations between Frazer and Wilamowitz might have soured as a result of some incident that took place after the three letters noticed above were written—*i.e.*, after 1906; having read several hundred of Frazer's unpublished letters written after 1906 I can say only that if anything like this happened, Frazer never mentioned it to anyone. It is also conceivable that after the war Frazer had simply turned on the patriotic Wilamowitz as a 'Hun'; such scholarly chauvinism was certainly not unknown. But this argument falls because of the terms of Frazer's invective. He says that his impression of Wilamowitz' sophistry and lack of plain dealing derived from the unwarrantedly bad treatment of Pausanias that the German scholar had meted out at some unspecified time in what sounds like the distant past. No date for the outrage is given, but it clearly occurred so long ago that Frazer's initial bad impression has had ample time to enforce itself as Wilamowitz' career has unrolled.

So we are driven to inspect what we can of the record of Wilamowitz' handling of Pausanias; perhaps here we may find the source of the offense. The index to Freiherr Hiller von Gaertringen and G. Klaffenbach's *Wilamowitz-Bibliographie 1868 bis 1929* (Berlin 1929) offers only three entries under 'Pausanias' (we shall see that at least one more item should be so indexed). Frazer's scholarly diligence being famous, it is safe to assume that he was familiar with all three items, especially since all had appeared before his own monumental edition of Pausanias was published in 1898, during which time he presumably would have read literally everything touching his author.

None of the entries is a major piece of work. The earliest, dating from 1878, which I have not seen, is obviously the least important.²¹ It figures in the *Bibliographie* as the first of five extremely brief "Erwiderungen"—the five occupy but four pages—in this case, to a Greifswald dissertation by one P. Hirt, *De fontibus Pausaniae in Eliacis*. The editors describe the dissertation as "[von W. angeregt]," *i.e.*, inspired by Wilamowitz, which is to say that its inspirer probably wrote a paragraph or two to precede the thesis. The last of the three Pausanian productions is scarcely longer—the fifth of twenty-three brief "Lesefrüchte" in *Hermes* (1898).²² It is an unpolemical half page setting right a misleading conjecture by Camerarius on Pausanias

²¹ "Erwiderungen," *ZGymnasialwesen* 23 (1878) 280–83.

²² "Lesefrüchte 1–xxiii," *Hermes* 33 (1898) 513–33; the fifth item, "Pausanias über das lakonische Pyrrhicha," takes up one paragraph on pp.515–16 (= *Kl.Schr.* IV 26–27).

ACKERMAN PLATE 11

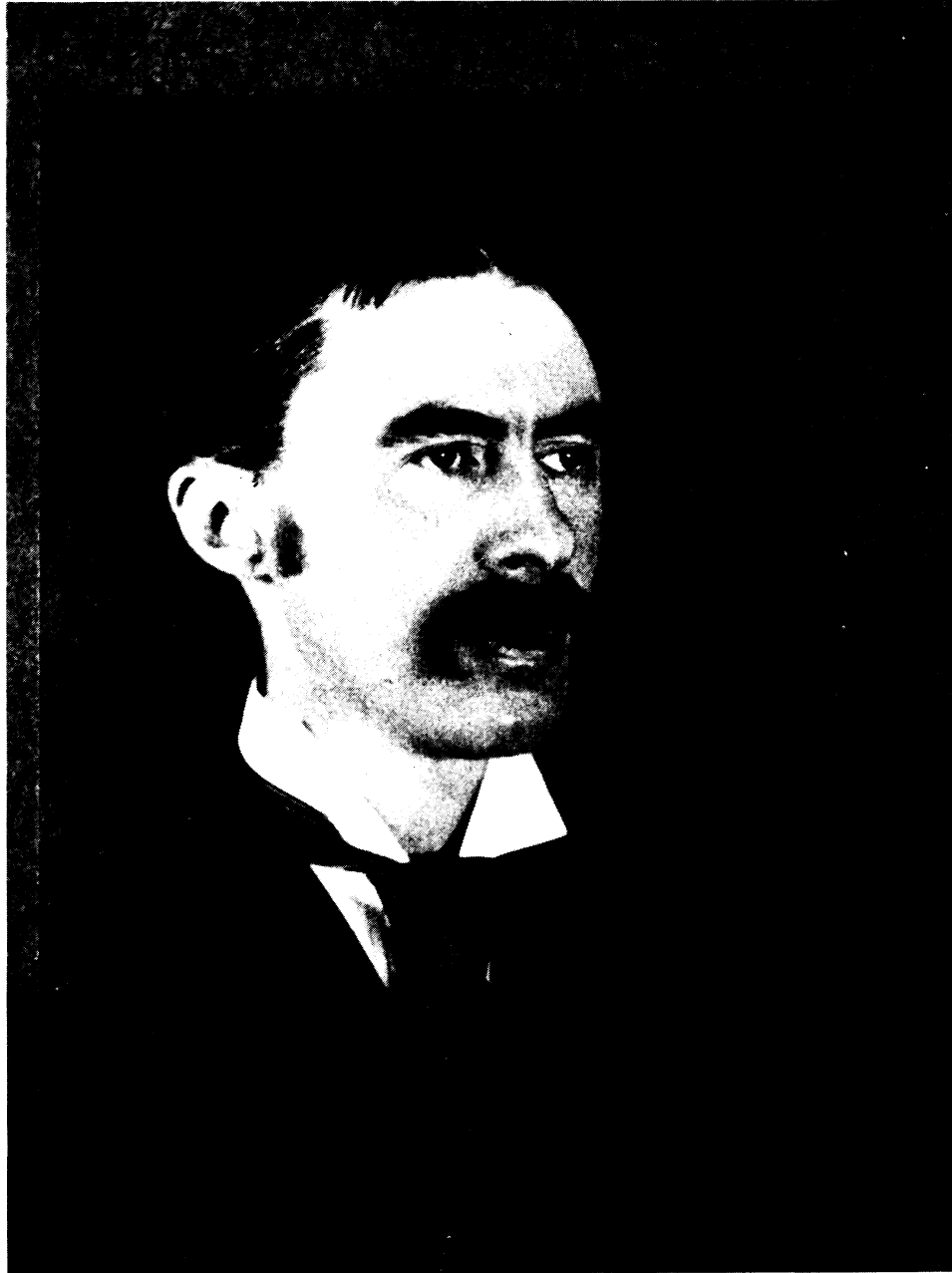


SIR JAMES GEORGE FRAZER

Photographer, place and date [1880s?] unknown

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PLATE 12 ACKERMAN



ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN

After a photograph taken ca 1898 by Hermann Lea

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3.25. And finally we have the *magnum opus* of this little group, nine pages of "Pausanias-Scholien" (1894).²³ This, however, is not a series of Wilamowitz' own scholia on Pausanias but rather a discussion of the scholia supplied by an unknown Byzantine commentator. Its tone is dispassionate and objective, for Wilamowitz is mainly concerned here with using these scholia as a means of clarifying several difficult passages in Callimachus and other writers. By no stretch of the imagination can this article be construed as an attack on Pausanias, and thus in turn as the motive for Frazer's attack on Wilamowitz.²⁴

These three entries in the *Bibliographie*, however, do not exhaust the repertory of Wilamowitz' utterances; it would be absurd to imagine that he adverted to Pausanias only three times in his long career. For instance, the first and second editions of his extensive survey, "Die Griechische Litteratur des Altertums" (1905, 1907),²⁵ contain a reference to Pausanias, in which a denigration of his style ("der Stil so zerhackt und verzackt, so altbacken und muffig ist") effectively submerges the faint praise of Pausanias for providing a storehouse of valuable archaeological and topographical data. The third edition (1912) differs from its predecessors only in that Wilamowitz, while retaining the dismissal noted above, adds in the chapter on "Rhetorik" a disparagement of Pausanias from the point of view of originality as well ("den Stil des gesucht naiven Herodotnachahmers Pausanias" [p.169]). But these remarks demonstrate only that by the first decade of this century, and presumably earlier as well, Pausanias, primarily on stylistic grounds, was no favorite of Wilamowitz'. This, however, can hardly account for Frazer's dislike of the latter since Pausanias has never drawn much praise from anyone in this regard; even Frazer himself, in no uncertain terms, describes his author's awkwardness: "[Pausanias'] is a loose, clumsy, ill-jointed, ill-compacted, rickety, ramshackle style, without ease or grace or elegance of any sort."²⁶

But in fact we still have good reason to believe that Frazer conceived his animus during the 1890s, when he was working on Pausanias (so

²³ "Pausanias-Scholien," *Hermes* 29 (1894) 240-48.

²⁴ Wilamowitz does permit himself a remark (p.245 n.1) on one passage to the effect that Pausanias wrote it "mit seiner ganzen Biederkeit"; but even Pausanias' admirers would never claim sophistication as one of his attributes (see n.26 *infra*).

²⁵ In P. Hinneberg (ed.), *Die Kultur der Gegenwart* I.viii. In the first ed. (1905) the reference to Pausanias comes on p.163; in the second (1907) on p.165; and in the third (1912) on p.238.

²⁶ J. G. Frazer, "Pausanias and His Description of Greece," *Pausanias and Other Greek Sketches* (London 1900) 108-09.

that there is no point in canvassing Wilamowitz' later writings). In his six volumes on Pausanias Frazer makes two slighting references to Wilamowitz that shed some light on this vexed question.²⁷ In his notes on Pausanias 2.17, Frazer has occasion to discuss the expression *Ἐλευθέριον ὕδωρ*, 'the Water of Freedom'. It seems that, according to Athenaeus (3.123c), there was a fountain or conduit called Cynadra, the water of which was drunk by manumitted slaves as a token of their new freedom. Under discussion here is whether the fountain of Cynadra is the same as the 'Water of Freedom' that Pausanias mentions as being on the way from Mycenae to the Heraeum. After surveying the archaeological evidence, Frazer recapitulates the arguments of one of the excavators, Captain Steffen, who had concluded that the Water of Freedom was not in the ravine called 'Revma tou Kastrou' but in a different place, nearby on the road to Mycenae. Frazer then turns to Wilamowitz' discussion of this minor point: "Prof. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff agrees with Captain Steffen in identifying the Cynadra and the Water of Freedom with this spring on the road from Mycenae to the Heraeum. Yet though he assumes on the authority of Pausanias the Water of Freedom was here, and not at Argos, he charges Pausanias with having taken his information from the book from which Eustathius and Hesychius [Pausanias cited in Eustathius on Homer, *Od.* 13.408; Hesychius *s.v.* *ἐλεύθερον ὕδωρ*] derived their information—that is, from a book which stated that the water in question was at Argos. It would thus appear, on Prof. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff's own showing, that the book from which Pausanias copied made a mistake, which fortunately cancelled the original error of his authority, with the net result that he finally blundered into placing the water quite correctly where Captain Steffen found it. It requires less credulity to suppose that Pausanias saw the water for himself. See U. v. Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, [*Ἐλευθέριον ὕδωρ*] in *Hermes*, 19 (1884), pp.463–465." Upon consulting Wilamowitz' article, one can only conclude that Frazer's comment, severe though it be, is fair. Wilamowitz asserts, without offering any evidence whatever, an elaborate and most unlikely theory involving two successive blunders, the result of which was that Pausanias emerged from his confusion right for the wrong reasons. Although

²⁷ J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias's Description of Greece* (London 1898) III 179–80 and II 528–29. I am indebted to Professor Eugene Vanderpool of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens for these references.

the entire controversy is inconsequential by any objective standard, there is no doubt that Wilamowitz' contribution here is unimpressive and might well have led Frazer to think poorly of his scholarship at this time.

Moreover, Wilamowitz, throughout his career, was mainly concerned with the completed, the achieved—with establishing a text and then elucidating its meaning primarily through the use of the most rigorous philological methods. Frazer, on the other hand, never cared much for texts but instead by disposition was mainly interested in (primitive) behavior, and therefore in pretextual and non-textual *realia*, both archaeological and anthropological. In this case, then, when Wilamowitz attempted ineffectually to settle by exclusively textual means what Frazer no doubt saw as entirely an archaeological question, it is not too hard to see why the latter might well have bridled.

But the matter is perhaps more complicated than this small scholarly difference would lead us to believe. Recall that in the mid-1890s Wilamowitz, a professor at Göttingen and about to be translated to Berlin, had already achieved a great reputation for his seeming mastery of the entire world of antiquity; by comparison Frazer (just six years younger than his German colleague) was still only an obscure fellow of Trinity, the author of an obscure treatise on the priesthood at Nemi. In 1890 and again in 1895 Frazer was in Greece, literally trudging in Pausanias' dusty footsteps, trying to retrace his author's itineraries and to amplify his often crabbed text in the light of what archaeology had established and anthropology might suggest. Frazer worked on Pausanias for more than eight years and no doubt, quite naturally, identified with him strongly. This surely would account for much of the scholarly indignation that he must have experienced when he came to read Wilamowitz on the Water of Freedom, filled as it was (or so it would have seemed to him) with unjust aspersions.

There may be even more here. We have already seen that Frazer had no higher regard for Pausanias' style than did Wilamowitz. But for the latter, to notice this rhetorical ineptitude was to pass a sufficient judgement on the plodding Periegete, whereas Frazer regarded Pausanias' maladroitness as a kind of guarantee of his accuracy and trustworthiness.²⁸ Thus Wilamowitz' suggestion that Pausanias had

²⁸ Indeed, he offers an instructive comparison between Pausanias and the pseudo-Dicaearchus, who also left what purports to be a 'description of Greece'. Frazer compares

clumsily tried to pass off a literary reference as a personal observation might well have gone further with Frazer than the trivial matter of the location of the Water of Freedom would seem to warrant. It very likely struck Frazer as undercutting Pausanias' reliability and, by implication therefore, carried the fearful suggestion that his own efforts to edit the text on such a grand scale were misplaced or overdone, perhaps even foolish. It is not difficult to imagine the agitation that this might have aroused in his mind and heart.

Frazer's second reference to Wilamowitz comes in the addenda to volume II, where he has collected various conjectures and notes not included elsewhere, in the main because new data had come to hand after the body of the text had been set in type. He writes: "Here, too, I desire to correct a mistake of my own. In the text (vol. 2 p.442) I have spoken of Athens as if it were an unwallled town at the time of the battle of Marathon. I did this, not in reliance on the opinion of Professor von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (*Aus Kydathen*, p.97 sqq. [= *Philologische Untersuchungen* I, 1880]) and Dr Dörpfeld (in Miss Harrison's *Ancient Athens*, p.21 [= J. E. Harrison and M. deG. Verrall, *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens* (London 1890)] that it was so, but merely because I overlooked the testimony of Herodotus (ix.13) and Thucydides (i.89) that it was not. On the question of the state of Athens in the fifth century B.C. I decidedly prefer the evidence of Herodotus and Thucydides to that of Dr Dörpfeld and Professor von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff."

Because Dörpfeld now shares in the asperity directed toward Wilamowitz, the passage is more puzzling than the earlier one, where it was possible to understand generally the grounds for Frazer's displeasure. One cannot simply say that Frazer, the man in the field,²⁹ is running down the armchair scholars because of course Dörpfeld was

the highly colored, vibrant depictions of part of an itinerary from pseudo-Dicaearchus with the stolid plodding of Pausanias and concludes that, whereas the former may be more interesting and pleasurable to read, precisely because of his rhetorical accomplishments he is much less reliable, especially as a guide to the sort of idiosyncratic aspects of a largely bygone period that Pausanias, in his dogged antiquarianism, gives us. Thus the former is merely deft, whereas the latter is invaluable. Frazer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.26) 56-69.

²⁹ It is of course ironic that Frazer, whom we now regard as the archetypal armchair anthropologist, should represent the field worker in this controversy. But in the 1890s Frazer not only went out to Greece twice to work on Pausanias, but at one point was even thinking of accompanying the anthropologist A. C. Haddon to Borneo, as an unpublished letter from Frazer to Sir Francis Galton of 10 October 1897 shows. One suspects that Frazer's marriage in 1896 went far toward quieting such adventurous longings.

perhaps the most eminent classical field archaeologist of his time. It may be that Frazer is objecting to both of them as being too quick to theorize on the basis of incomplete data, and on their willingness to dismiss ancient testimonies.

There is one more witness to be heard before one can come to any conclusion on this vexed and difficult interchange. Mr R. Angus Downie, as noted above Frazer's private secretary in the 1930s and subsequently his biographer, in a letter to me of 12 December 1973, gives his impressions (admittedly obtained many years after Frazer conceived his opinion of Wilamowitz, and now recorded many years after that):

"So far as Wilamowitz is concerned, I think you must realise that there was still a lot of anti-German feeling, even in academic circles, after the 1914–18 War. In fact I think Housman disliked German scholars as a race even earlier than that. Frazer did speak to me about W. I rather think it was in response to some remarks of mine, for I admired the way in which the German scholar had tackled more or less the whole of Greek literature instead of specializing on a single author for a lifetime. But Frazer told me that on several points where he had occasion to look into matters closely he had disagreed with W. And he cited some Cambridge scholar (forgotten now, if indeed he was ever named) who had gone over the same ground as W.—perhaps an edition of Anacreon—and had found him wanting.³⁰

"Here again perhaps Lady F. gave a clue by indicating that there was a basis to the dislike that had nothing to do with scholarship. At some meeting or other of classical scholars, where all the oratory had been in English, Wilamowitz, who was perfectly capable of speaking in English, had insisted on an oration in German. To the outspoken annoyance of the Irish scholar Mahaffy, and no doubt to the less vocal but enduring annoyance of Frazer."³¹ This incident, occurring as it did years after *l'affaire Pausanias*, could only have been the proverbial

³⁰ Downie's memory fails him here, for Wilamowitz never edited Anacreon.

³¹ This nearly certainly was the Fourth International Congress of Historical Studies that met in London in April 1913. Wilamowitz (*Erinnerungen*² [Leipzig 1929] 313–14) attended and spoke "for all the Academies"; because he does not say that he spoke in English, it is likely that he spoke in German. Also, his statement on p.313 that when the Congress had been held in Berlin in 1908 the delegates spoke their own languages may suggest that he thought himself unjustly criticized for speaking in German in 1913. And from an unpublished letter of 1 April 1913 from Frazer to John Roscoe (MS: Trinity College Add. mss. b. 35:54), we know that Frazer attended the Congress.

straw to Frazer's camel's back, confirming what he already knew—that Wilamowitz was an unpleasant, irritating man whose personal manner was as unacceptably highhanded as his scholarship.

It seems to me that we have here a good example of what psychologists call 'overdetermination'—Frazer's actions seem to have been caused, or at least influenced, by a superfluity of motives, any one of which might have inclined him to feel and write as he did. In such cases it is likely that the behavior in question is the expression of several motives, each augmenting and masking the others in complex and unknowable ways.

Returning to the text of letter x once again, one may note that Housman's reputed Germanophobia seems to have been somewhat exaggerated by others, and that Frazer's (and Downie's) reference to it is wide of the mark. It is of course true that Housman sent some of his sharpest attacks winging across the North Sea, and, as noted already, it is equally true that strong anti-German feeling persisted after the war. Nevertheless I find it impossible to impute simple jingoism to a sensibility so discriminating as Housman's, and it is here worth recalling what he wrote in a letter to J. S. Phillimore just after the war (30 November 1919): "I should say that for the last hundred years individual German scholars have been the superiors in genius as well as learning of all scholars except Madvig and Cobet; and that the herd or group vices of the German school which you particularly reprehend took their rise from Sedan and may be expected to decline after this second and greater Jena: though indeed they have already been declining since the early years of the century."³²

Finally, the last item, letter xi. In 1934 both Frazer and Housman were in failing health, Frazer blind and Housman experiencing serious heart trouble. During the 1930s Lady Frazer was kept extremely busy getting enough money to live on (Frazer had only his Trinity fellowship—he never had a university teaching position—along with a Civil List pension and his royalties, these last much diminished by both the depression and the shift in anthropology away from evolutionism that had taken place in the 1920s). She had as well the perhaps equally difficult task of keeping Frazer occupied, accustomed as he was to long hours of daily scholarly work. Thus her letters of those years to Frazer's publishers, Macmillans, are filled with a succession of

³² Gow, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.6) 30 n.; *Letters* 167–68.

proposals to reprint one or another of Sir James' works, to which he would contribute a new preface or the like.³³

And to her credit, in the face of great odds she was successful in a number of cases (despite an understandable lack of enthusiasm on the part of Macmillans). For in this period of his total blindness—from 1933 onward—Frazer, working with a series of private secretaries, brought out a steady stream of volumes, all of which had as their common characteristic the fact that they represented practically no new or original work.³⁴ It is thus impossible to be certain, but the reference to Pausanias most likely is a response to an effort on Lady Frazer's part to enlist Housman's academic support for the republication of either of Sir James' books on that writer (see *supra* n.20).

The Letters

I A. E. HOUSMAN TO J. G. FRAZER

[Trinity College]

17 May 1913

In 1906 I was in the island of Capri on Sept. 8, the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin. The anniversary was duly solemnized by fireworks at nine or ten in the evening, which I suppose were municipal; but just after sundown the boys outside the villages were making small bonfires of brushwood on waste bits of ground by the wayside. Very pretty it looked, with the flames blowing about in the twilight; what took my attention was the listlessness of the boys and their lack of interest in the proceeding. A single lad, the youngest, would be raking the fire together and keeping it alight, but the rest stood lounging about and looking in every other direction, with the air of discharging mechanically a traditional office from which all zest had evaporated.

A. E. H.

Here it is: not much, you see; but I cannot spin it out to more.

³³ The firm of Macmillan has recently donated its entire back files of correspondence with authors, along with other working papers, to several university libraries and to the British Museum. The Frazer letters (including those by both Sir James and Lady Frazer, who also published [French textbooks] with Macmillan) are B.M. Add. mss. 55134-55, and cover the relations between the Frazers and the firm from 1884 to 1940.

³⁴ e.g., vols. 2 and 3 of *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion* (London 1934 and 1936); *Creation and Evolution in Primitive Cosmogonies and Other Pieces* (London 1935); *Aftermath: A*

II A. E. HOUSMAN TO J. G. FRAZER

Trinity College
21 May 1913

Dear Frazer,

The pious orgy at Naples went through the following stages when I witnessed it in 1897. It began at 8 in the evening with illumination of the facade of Sta. Maria Piedigrotta and with the whole population walking about blowing penny trumpets. After four hours of this I went to bed at midnight, and was lulled to sleep by the barrel-organs, which supersede the trumpets at about that hour. At four in the morning I was waked by detonations as if the British fleet was bombarding the city, caused, I was afterwards told, by dynamite rockets. The only step possible beyond this is assassination, which accordingly takes place about peep of day. I forget now the number of the slain, but I think the average is eight or ten, and I know that in honour of my presence they murdered a few more than usual.

I enclose the extract from the *Standard* about Satan in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,
A. E. Housman

III A. E. HOUSMAN TO J. G. FRAZER

Trinity College
Cambridge
7 March 1915

My dear Frazer,

I have had for some time your two volumes of Addison without acknowledging the gift as I ought to have done, for it has made me read some parts which I had not read before of an English Classic, and also a paper which I had no chance of reading before: though I do not believe it is by Steele or Budgell, nor Tickell neither.³⁵

I am not brought round to any hearty liking for Addison, apart from the Coverley pages: he is a terribly industrious humourist, like Charles Lamb, and Fielding in the introductory chapters to the various books of *Tom Jones*; and his admired English has nothing like the vernacular raciness of the best of Cowper's earlier letters, for

Supplement to The Golden Bough (London 1936); *Totemica: A Supplement to Totemism and Exogamy* (London 1937). These last two, as their names imply, are merely updateings (mainly bibliographical) of the early works named in the subtitles.

³⁵ Sir Richard Steele (1672–1729), the principal collaborator with Sir Joseph Addison (1672–1719) in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*; Eustace Budgell (1686–1737) and Thomas Tickell (1685–1740), sometime contributors to these and similar journals.

instance. Indeed I really think the vogue of the *Spectator* impoverished the language of prose. But it is a comfort to have Addison alone, and to be rid of Steele.

I am going in a few days to the Riviera, which Providence, for my benefit, has cleared of Germans. In its normal state I always refused to visit it. Whewell's Court is now a barracks, and soldiers above my ceiling practice step-dancing with a vigour which ought to be prophylactic against frost-bite.

I hope you and Lady Frazer are still contented with your metropolitan hermitage.³⁶ With kindest regards and thanks,

I am, yours sincerely,
A. E. Housman

IV A. E. HOUSMAN TO F. M. CORNFORD Trinity College
3 May 1920

Dear Cornford,

After declining to stand for the Oratorship³⁷ I suppose I shall make myself unpopular if I refuse the next request which is made of me, so I will try to write something for Frazer. But oh, why was I born? This is a rhetorical question, and does not expect an answer.

Yours sincerely,
A. E. Housman

V A. E. HOUSMAN TO F. M. CORNFORD Trinity College
14 October 1920

Dear Cornford,

I send you this draft of an address to Frazer because I despair of making it better by keeping it longer. It seems to me not only too ornate, as some of Frazer's own writing is, but also stilted, which Frazer's writing is not. Perhaps you and Giles³⁸ can improve it, or create something better of your own.

Yours sincerely,
A. E. Housman

³⁶ Referring to the Frazers' having moved in 1914 from Cambridge to rooms in the Middle Temple, London.

³⁷ For more on Housman's decision to decline the post of University Public Orator, see Gow, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.6) 25. The vacancy occurred when Sir J. E. Sandys stepped down and became Public Orator emeritus; he was succeeded by T. R. Glover.

³⁸ Peter Giles (1860–1935), classical scholar, master of Emmanuel College, and member of the Organizing Committee for the Frazer Fund, *per* the memorial referred to *supra* n.11. See Joshua Whatmough, "Peter Giles," *Word Study* 30 (1954) 1–3.

VI J. G. FRAZER TO A. E. HOUSMAN

Bridge Hotel
Bedford

24 October 1922

My dear Housman,

I am grateful to you for your kindness in giving me a copy of your *Last Poems*. I have read them all with pleasure and admiration, tinged with melancholy; for the dominant note which they seem to me to strike is *sunt lacrimae rerum*. In their general tone as well as in their easy musical flow, in their haunting phrases, and in the effect which they produce by the use of the shortest and simplest words, they remind me of Heine, and I cannot say fairer than that, as I regard Heine as one of the most consummate geniuses who ever used human language to express human thought and emotion. His mastery of language seems to me to approach the magical and supernatural. So I hope that you will not take it ill that I compare you to—I was about to say a German poet; but I never forget that Heine was not a German, but a member of a far finer race, who handled the German language and drew music from the instrument in a way that no native of the coarser German race has ever, to my knowledge, approached. Compare for example Goethe's cumbrous, heavy, slouching prose with the light, airy, vivacious movement of Heine's prose. The instrument on which the two play is the same, but how different is the execution! The one is a master musician, the other a bungling apprentice. It is only when he gets into verse that Goethe spreads his wings and begins to fly. In it, I admit, he attains to great heights. The first part of *Faust* I rank among the few greatest works of literature.

But I am wandering or hovering, as we say in Scotland. Many thanks once more for the poems. I like them all and think that they will live.

Yours very sincerely,
J. G. Frazer

The only fault I find with your book is the title. I hope that the poems will prove not to be the last, but the penultimate at least or something still further remote from finality.

p.s. We return to Cambridge on the 26th.

VII J. G. FRAZER TO A. E. HOUSMAN

Queen Anne's Mansions
St. James's Park
London, S.W. 1
21 October 1927

My dear Housman,

There is one word in the *Fasti* which I feel sure is wrong, though there appear to be no variations in the mss. and none of the commentators seem to have stumbled at it. In *Fasti*, V.74 the commentators explain *tangor* by "*inducor ut credam*," which is the sense seemingly implied by the context, but, so far as I can see, it is absolutely impossible that *tangor* can bear that sense. Various emendations have occurred to me. The first was *fertur* (impersonal), "it is rumoured." But is *ferri* used impersonally in this sense? It is not recognised in this sense by Smith's Latin dictionary, the only one I have beside me. Then I thought of *rumor*, which, I take it, is possible without *est*. Also I have conjectured *auguror aetati et* or *suspikor aetati et*. But none of these is satisfactory. *Rumor* is perhaps the least bad.

Can you help me to a correction of the text? If you can and will I should be grateful, and should of course be proud to acknowledge the help in my book.

I have just seen the amusing spectacle of Mommsen tripped up by his son-in-law Wilamowitz on the question of the date of the Floralia, which Wil (that, I believe, is the correct contraction of Udalrich [*sic*] von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff) appears to have dated on the 1st of April instead of on the 1st of May. If you wish to see the father-in-law falling in a heap on the son-in-law look at Mommsen's *Römische Forschungen*, vol. II, p.13 note 30. It might perhaps be going a little too far to say that Wilamowitz knows as little of Latin³⁹ as Mommsen knows of Greek, but at least it seems safe to say that Wil. is not a safe guide in correcting Greek texts or indeed in anything else. He has always seemed to me a sophist with an infallible instinct for getting hold of a stick by the wrong end. I do not forget how with the stick (wrong end up as usual) he belaboured my poor old friend Pausanias and no doubt many a better man. But this is a digression.

Yours ever,
J. G. Frazer

³⁹ On Wilamowitz' Latin scholarship, see Ed. Fraenkel, "The Latin Studies of Hermann and Wilamowitz," *Kleine Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie* II (Rome 1964) 565-76.

VIII A. E. HOUSMAN TO J. G. FRAZER

Trinity College
Cambridge
22 October 1927

My dear Frazer,

Cicero has several examples of the brachyology found in *de diuin.* I 35 *nec adducar* (ut credam) *totam Etruriam delirare*; and I do not think it incredible that a poet should extend the usage to *tangor*, "I am influenced (to believe that)." Somewhat analogous is Tac. ann. IV 57 *permoueor* (ut quaeram) *num ad ipsum referri uerius sit*. Such at any rate seems to be the sort of sense required, and I do not think that *rumor* would suit. *aetati et* ending the first half of the pentameter would have two metrical vices, for *et* is not one of the monosyllables which Ovid puts in that place, and he does not allow elision (as distinct from aphaeresis) at that point either.

Wilamowitz may be all that you say in your sphere; but where I come across him, in verbal scholarship and textual criticism, he is a very great man, the greatest now living and comparable with the greatest of the dead. He has not written much on Latin, but what I have seen of it is good. (No, not all.) I am really bound to stand up for him, because last year one of my old pupils went to see him, and Wilamowitz spoke these words and said; "Although we Germans know that Housman is a rabid Germanophobe, we are unanimous in regarding him as the greatest authority both on Greek and Latin among the English-speaking peoples." Unfortunately he is almost as wrong about my Greek at any rate as he is about my Germanophobia; but it is an amiable error.

Yours sincerely,
A. E. Housman

IX J. G. FRAZER TO A. E. HOUSMAN

Queen Anne's Mansions
St. James's Park
London, S.W. 1
24 October 1927

My dear Housman,

I thank you heartily for your letter, which is very helpful. Your defence of *tangor* seems to me sound and justified by the apt parallels which you cite. I had thought it quite impossible Latin. I now believe that Ovid wrote it, and with your permission (which I will take for

granted unless I hear from you to the contrary) I will quote your explanation verbatim in my commentary and will suppress my conjectures, which I now see would have been corruption rather than corrections of the text.

I am very glad to hear that you rate Wilamowitz's Greek scholarship so highly. It is always much pleasanter to me to think well of a man than to think ill of him. As you know, I am not an exact verbal scholar either in Greek or Latin, and it would be the height of presumption (of which I hope I am incapable) in me to criticize the verbal scholarship of such giants as Mommsen and Wilamowitz. I ought not to have chuckled at what seems to have been a momentary slip of memory on the part of these great men. It is only on questions of history (not language) that I occasionally venture to differ from them both. From Mommsen I of course learn much, but with Wilamowitz, so far as I remember, I have never found myself in agreement about anything. Hence I am apt to regard him as brilliant, but misleading, rhetorician rather than a historian.

Wilamowitz's opinion of your Greek and Latin scholarship is, I imagine, the one held by all English-speaking scholars all over the world, and it is very gratifying to us to learn that the same opinion is unanimously held in Germany.

Once more many thanks for the instruction and pleasure I have derived from your letter.

Yours very sincerely,
J. G. Frazer

X *Extract*, J. G. FRAZER TO A. E. HOUSMAN, 17 August 1930

If you have seen H. J. Rose's review of my Ovid in the last number of the *Journal of Roman Studies* you may have noticed that he accepts your defence of *tangor* in *Fasti*, V.74.⁴⁰ Wyse,⁴¹ whom I consulted before you, agreed with me in thinking it impossible Latin, and when I communicated to him your defence of it, he was not (so far as I remember) convinced. I still have scruples on the point.

⁴⁰ Rose's review is *JRS* 19 (1929) 235–39; he says (p.235), treading lightly, that Frazer's edition "is a most interesting example of how nearly right one who is not an Ovidian specialist can come by the light of strong good sense, aided by a more than respectable knowledge of Latin, intelligent use of earlier editors from Heinsius onwards, and photographs of some of the principal mss."

⁴¹ William Wyse (1860–1929), fellow of Trinity College, editor of *The Speeches of Isaeus* (1904), and Roman historian; he was one of Frazer's closest friends.

XI A. E. HOUSMAN TO F. M. CORNFORD Trinity College
1 May 1934

My dear Cornford,

I told Lady Frazer that I know precious little of Pausanias and was not in any way an appropriate sponsor; and Robertson⁴² would be much more suitable. Your labours on the Ovid, and your kindness in undertaking them, appear to be much appreciated.⁴³

Yours sincerely,
A. E. Housman

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
February, 1974

⁴² Donald Struan Robertson (1885–1961), fellow of Trinity College and later Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge.

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