

ROBERT BRIDGES' MASQUE *DEMETER* AND OXFORD'S PERSEPHONES

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On 11 June 1904 the students of Somerville, Oxford staged a performance of the masque *Demeter* which had been specially written for the occasion by the poet Robert Bridges (1844-1930), with music composed by Henry Hadow, the Dean of Worcester College (1859-1937).<sup>1</sup> The performance was part of a day of activities to mark the official opening of Somerville's Library, the first to be built by an Oxford women's hall, and one of few Oxford libraries designed for the use of students rather than only Fellows.<sup>2</sup> The opening ceremony was attended by several hundred people who stayed to enjoy a garden party, the afternoon performance of *Demeter*, and an evening dance. For the first time, *The Manchester Guardian* reports, the distinguished men of the University did Somerville the honour of attending 'in something like official state'.<sup>3</sup>

The performance of *Demeter* took place, fittingly, in front of the Library itself which had been designed by Basil Champneys in a Renaissance style, with a loggia at the front supported by several pillars (see Fig. 1). Perhaps it is just as fitting that it was the Librarian Margery Fry who acted as producer: indeed, it was through her efforts that Robert Bridges—a relation by marriage—had agreed to write the masque for the occasion.<sup>4</sup> In one of her letters to him she writes that the women students 'could probably be relied upon to perform simply & without any stage tricks or vulgarity'.<sup>5</sup> This seems to suggest that there was a perceived necessity for the performance to be within the bounds of acceptable behaviour for female students (just as it had been crucially important that the all-male staging of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* in ancient Greek at Balliol College, Oxford in 1880 be both 'serious and artistic', being performed during a long ban on theatricals at the University).<sup>6</sup> The 1904 *Demeter* seems to have been the first performance put on by an Oxford women's hall before such a high profile academic audience. Indeed it may well have been one of the first public performances of any kind by women students in the city.<sup>7</sup> One reviewer declares that 'All were charmed by its beauty, and vastly proud of Somerville for achieving it with such evident power and distinction'.<sup>8</sup> Somerville's recent and somewhat controversial emergence as something more akin to a college of the University in the full sense, rather than merely a hall of residence for women, made it sensitive to 'managing the evolution of women's academic communities in such a way as to reassure local opinion'.<sup>9</sup> It was therefore of the highest importance that this performance be considered proper in the eyes of the University. However, just as the 'serious and artistic' staging of *Agamemnon* at Balliol in 1880 had given rise to several humorous caricatures, *Demeter* too had its light-hearted aspects: the audience, for example, is reported to have found the carrying off of Persephone rather funny,<sup>10</sup> and it was noted that 'to prevent the muslin costumes blowing in the wind they were dampened, which made them cling more closely than expected to the actresses' youthful figures'.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps the necessity for propriety in this public performance at such an important and high-profile occasion lay behind Fry's specific request to Bridges for a masque rather than a play, masques being highly poetic and reliant on music, set and costume for their effect rather than realism and action.<sup>12</sup> *Demeter* is properly pastoral, and some of the poetic imagery in the passages on the subject of flowers is startling: for example, on the poppy, which 'like a hurried thief, / Stuffs his rich silks into too small a bag' (lines 279-280).<sup>13</sup> A review of the performance by Helen Darbishire—who had recently completed her studies in English, and who would return to Somerville in 1908 as a Tutor, remaining there for thirty-seven years, and becoming Principal in 1931 (see Fig. 2)—accordingly states that 'the eye and ear were continually appealed to by the dance, the music, the grouping and colouring of the living figures; whilst the mind and imagination were kept active by the poetry recited'.<sup>14</sup> Darbishire goes on to consider that Bridges has chosen to 'treat a Greek story in a style and in a spirit closely akin to that of ancient Greek

art'. It becomes clear what is meant by this when one turns to Bridges' four typescript pages of 'Notes' which were given to the performers (and which later appeared alongside the text of the masque published by Oxford's Clarendon Press in 1905).<sup>15</sup> The 'Notes' offer detailed instruction on the delivery of lines ('When they interrupt her she shows no more impatience than can be expressed by the marked resumption of the tone and cadence of her narrative'), costume ('It is necessary that Artemis should be represented as the huntress, and wear the short chlamys and hunting sandals'), and stage grouping ('Demeter motions the nymphs to stand aside on either hand. They group and she attitudinizes').<sup>16</sup> It is clear that Bridges had highly developed ideas for the tone, look, and movement of the masque, all of which seem to have been faithfully executed in performance.<sup>17</sup>

Bridges drew on the *Hymn to Demeter* (XIII of the Homeric Hymns) for his material which he worked into a three-act dramatic masque with a prologue spoken by Hades.<sup>18</sup> In Bridges' version, Hades' Prologue immediately sets his rape of Persephone in a mild light: it is his plan to 'snatch her swiftly down; / And after shall find favour for my fault, / When I by gentle means have won her love' (51-53). The Chorus of Oceanides, who enter at the beginning of Act I, joyfully speak of the beauty of earth and the loveliness of spring, whilst at Persephone's command they pick flowers in honour of Zeus. Persephone herself then enters with the goddesses Athena and Artemis, and their conversation touches on matters such as the nature of beauty, pity, and the cycle of human life; when they leave her alone it is clear that she has not comprehended all the wisdom they offered, and she professes that she will become the goddess of flowers, but only those which 'men love for beauty, scent, or hue, / Having no other uses' (211-212). At the end of Act I, Hades enters and carries her off to the underworld to be his queen:

Help! Help! Ay me! (308)

*[Persephone rises to her feet, and amidst a contrivance of confused darkness Hades is seen rushing from behind. He seizes her and drags her backward. Her basket is thrown up and the flowers scattered].*

Bridges, in his 'Notes', specifies that Persephone's 'part throughout the first act is girlish: her answers to Athena are playful. In the third act her dress and manner are changed'.<sup>19</sup> It is indeed a more mature and worldly-wise woman who returns to her mother in Act III: when Demeter commands her daughter to 'Put off thy crown!' (857), Persephone explains that although she has been restored to her mother she also remains 'Evermore Queen of Hades: and 'tis meet / I wear the crown, the symbol of my reign' (861-862). Despite Hades' early stated intention to woo her, when she returns to her mother she talks not of love for her husband but of knowledge of 'the mysteries of evil' (953) and a respectful understanding of her position as Queen of that realm. Her maturation had in fact begun in Act I: whilst speaking with the goddesses she heard from Athena how 'desire and love may spring of evil / And ugliness, and that Earth's ecstasy / May dwell in darkness also, in sorrow and tears' (126-128), and felt pity for the first time, asking 'How should man, dwelling / On earth that is so gay, himself be sad?' (168-169). Athena explains that a human being's sadness arises from an awareness that 'beauty dies and he must die' (183). Persephone does not quite understand the full meaning of these words at this point, but she is appreciative: 'I am a child, and ye would nurse me up / A pupil in your school' (201-202). It is at this point that she decides that she would like to be considered the goddess of flowers, since mankind 'ever adareth flowers' (222) and they brighten even 'the poorest villages, around / The meanest cottage, where no other solace / Comforts the eye' (233-235). Athena responds: 'Thou sayest rightly thou art a child. May Zeus / Give thee a better province than thy thought' (253-254). Later Persephone reflects on her earlier innocence:

It was my childish fancy (thou rememb' rest),  
 I would be goddess of the flowers: I thought  
 That men should innocently honour me  
 With bloodless sacrifice and spring-tide joy.  
 Now Fate, that look'd contrary, hath fulfill'd  
 My project with mysterious efficacy:  
 And as a plant that yearly dieth down  
 When summer is o'er, and hideth in the earth,  
 Nor showeth promise in its wither'd leaves  
 That it shall reawaken and put forth  
 Its blossoms any more to deck the spring;  
 So I, the mutual symbol of my choice,  
 Shall die with winter, and with spring revive.  
 How without winter could I have my spring?  
 How come to resurrection without death? (895-909)

In Persephone's absence a deeper understanding of the human condition is also attained by her mother Demeter. Declaring that she holds 'from great all-mother Rhea / Heritage of essential motherhood' (519-520), she first threatens 'universal ruin' (516) by withholding the crops until her daughter is returned to her. In her anguish at the loss of her daughter, and being 'Self-exiled from the heav'ns' (731), she wanders amongst mortals in human guise. She searches for some occupation having observed that 'men might find distraction for their sorrows / In useful toil' (739-740). As in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* she finds occupation as nurse of the baby Demophon (777), whose cries represent to her the sorrows of all mankind: 'For in his small epitome I read / The trouble of mankind; in him I saw / The hero's helplessness, the countless perils / In ambush of life's promise [...] In him I nurst all mortal natur', embrac'd / With whole affection to my breast, and lull'd / Wailing humanity upon my knee' (779-782, 785-787). Demeter learns compassion for mankind through nursing the human baby and—as in the Homeric Hymn—she at first strived to make this one child immortal. 'I had been foolish', she reports:

... My sojourn with men  
 Had warpt my mind with mortal tenderness.  
 So, questioning myself what real gift  
 I might bestow on man to help his state,  
 I saw that sorrow was his life-companion,  
 To be embrac't bravely, not weakly shun'd:  
 That as by toil man winneth happiness,  
 Thro' tribulation he must come to peace. (810-817)

She then orders the building of a temple in her honour at Eleusis and ordains 'the mysteries of my thought' (826), since 'in the sorrow that I underwent / Man's state is pattern'd; and in picture shewn / The way of his salvation' (827-829).

On Persephone's return from Hades she tells her mother about the things she saw there which led her to accept her fate as Queen of that realm.<sup>20</sup> She declares that there are no words to convey 'the inscrutable / And full initiation of hell' (1055-1056), attempting instead to suggest its horror by painting a picture of its imagined opposite:

Suppose, dear Mother, there wer' a temple in heaven,  
 Which, dedicated to the unknown Cause  
 And worship of the unseen, had power to draw  
 All that was worthy and good within its gate:  
 And that the spirits who enter'd there became  
 Not only purified and comforted,  
 But that the mysteries of the shrine were such,  
 That the initiated bathed in light  
 Of infinite intelligence, and saw  
 The meaning and the reason of all things,  
 All at a glance distinctly, and perceived  
 The origin of all things to be good,  
 And the end good, and that what appears as evil  
 Is as a film of dust, that faln thereon,  
 May,—at one stroke of the hand,—  
 Be brush'd away, and show the good beneath,  
 Solid and fair and shining (1003-1019).

Demeter remarks, 'O child, my child! that were a temple indeed. / 'Tis such a temple as man needs on earth' (1024-1025): 'A worthy shrine to draw the worthy and good, / A shrine of wisdom trifling not with folly, / A shrine of beauty, where the initiated / Drank love and light' (1027-1030). She continues: 'I have inaugurated such a temple / These last days in Eleusis, have ordain'd / These very mysteries!' (1031-1033). The audience could not have failed to see some parallel in the newly-built temple that Demeter describes and the new Library before which, and in celebration of which, the masque was being performed. Bridges' elaboration on this theme serves both to develop the characters of both mother and daughter and also to extend the allegory of maturation and wisdom to the occasion being celebrated. If the girlish Persephone must descend like seed into the earth in order to be reborn, then the young women of Somerville must immerse themselves in learning about every aspect of the world in order to mature to womanhood and gain the wisdom of responsible and socially active members of society. At the opening ceremony the Member of Parliament John Morley hoped that once the shelves were full of books the Library might serve 'not merely the Honours schools of the University of Oxford' but also offer 'suggestions of the whole wide field of knowledge', presenting 'the great march of ideas, thoughts, gifts, and institutions—in a word, the march of humanity'.<sup>21</sup> To her returned daughter Demeter says,

... I find thee  
 Far other than thou wert, nor hurt by Hell.  
 I thought I must console thee, but 'tis thou  
 Playest the comforter: I thought to teach thee,  
 And had prepared my lesson, word by word;  
 But thou art still beyond me. (1085-1090)

In Persephone's new knowledge and sober acceptance of the existence of evil and Demeter's equally new understanding of the human condition through service and consolation might be read a call to social and community service for Somervillian women following their higher education. Before 1914, more than a third of the women students of the Oxford halls went on to teach in secondary schools, and other popular areas of work were higher education, libraries and archives, religious or missionary vocations, and voluntary and welfare work.<sup>22</sup> In her history of Somerville, Adams has written of 'an almost

Balliollesque tradition of public service at home and abroad', with regard to that all-male college's history of preparing its students for careers in the government, empire and public service.<sup>23</sup>

The character of Hades is not strongly developed, and by lessening the charge of rape with the claim of love Bridges to some extent avoids the difficult issue of sexual aggression. But if the solitary male figure of Hades is understood to stand as representative of the predominantly male institution, then Persephone's partial liberation reinforces the unequal position of women within the University: 'the ostensibly progressive male acceptance actually reinforced the fact that women were still fundamentally dependent upon the cooperation of men in every walk of life. The outcome of the dramatic story appears symbolic in relationship to the event the masque was celebrating: women may have gained the privilege of their own college and library, but only through the lengthening of the leash on the part of the male'.<sup>24</sup>

At Oxford, women students were by this time an important and visible presence, but their full acceptance into University life was slow. They were far from being able to enjoy full equality with their male peers: they were allowed to study, but not to take degrees and graduate until 1920;<sup>25</sup> only in 1959 were the women's halls at last considered to be full colleges of the University. Nor could women students act in the ancient Greek or modern plays staged by the Oxford University Dramatic Society, despite the injunction against male undergraduates taking the female roles. Indeed, at this time women students could not even attend an OUDS performance without a chaperone.<sup>26</sup> However, it would seem that the spotlight on Somerville's production of *Demeter* in 1904 persuaded the male Greek Play Committee and Oxford University Dramatic Society that the female scholars of the University had at least something to contribute to Greek dramatic activities. Following in the footsteps of the classical archaeologist Maria Lathbury (Lady Margaret Hall) who gave advice on the costume design for the OUDS production of Aristophanes' *Frogs* in 1892, the costumes for the 1905 OUDS production of Aristophanes' *Clouds* were made in Oxford under the direction of Hilda Lorimer, Fellow and Classical Tutor at Somerville (see Fig. 2).<sup>27</sup> She was the solitary female on the Greek Play Committee which was otherwise made up of the Vice-Chancellor, a raft of classical scholars and high officers of the Dramatic Society: 'The OUDS performance of the *Clouds* was of peculiar interest to Somerville College, as Miss Lorimer was a member of the Organizing Committee, and there Miss Jamison lent effectual help in designing the costumes and grouping the chorus'.<sup>28</sup> By 1909, when OUDS staged Aristophanes' *Frogs*, further progress had been made, for the programme relates that the costumes were made in Oxford under the direction of the five members of the Ladies' Committee, which comprised Hilda Lorimer, Emily Penrose (Principal of Somerville), Mrs Godley (probably the wife of A.D. Godley who was a classical scholar at Magdalen), and two others. Lorimer and Penrose also performed this function for the OUDS production of Aristophanes' *Acharnians* in 1914, although mention of any Ladies' Committee is absent from the programme for this production.<sup>29</sup>

One man who was actively involved in the education of women at Oxford had a special relationship with Somerville: for Gilbert Murray (1866-1957) not only taught its students and served on its various committees (including twenty-four years as Chairman of the Library Committee), but his daughter Agnes studied classics there from 1913 to 1915 (when she left to do war work), and the benefaction which founded the Lady Carlisle Research Fellowship in 1912 was given to Somerville on the suggestion of Murray and his wife, Lady Carlisle's daughter.<sup>30</sup> He first sat on Somerville's Council in 1909, having moved to Oxford in 1905 for a fellowship at New College and been appointed Regius Professor of Greek at Christ Church in 1908. In fact, such was his sustained contribution to Somerville that in 1936 Margery Fry (who was introduced above as the Librarian of Somerville, producer of *Demeter* in 1904, and Principal, 1926-1931) declared that she would 'always think of him first and foremost as the pilot who brought the ship into the haven of her hopes, as not only a much loved benefactor, but in a very real sense as an honoured founder of Somerville College'.<sup>31</sup>

Murray's interest in translating both the texts of the ancient dramatists and encouraging live performance of them—either as readings or as drama—meant that he also developed a close association with Somerville's amateur dramatics which followed in the footsteps of *Demeter* and which were no doubt encouraged by its example. Murray's rhyming verse translations of Greek plays had become extremely popular as both reading and acting editions from early in the century, and amateur groups, especially those led and made up by women, seem to have been particularly attracted to performing his translations. For example, the Oxford Students' Dramatic Reading Society read his translation of Euripides' *Medea* on 20 November 1908;<sup>32</sup> the girls of Oxford High School staged Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris* in February 1910 (the year of its publication);<sup>33</sup> the Oxford Home-Students Dramatic Society read his translation of Euripides' *Hippolytus* late in 1910,<sup>34</sup> and the second-year undergraduates of Somerville staged Aristophanes' *Frogs* in 1911.<sup>35</sup>

By 1911 dramatic entertainments at Somerville had become a regular feature in the social and academic calendar: it was, for example, by now tradition for the second-year women to put on a comic play at the end of Michaelmas term. The decision to stage Aristophanes' *Frogs* in Michaelmas 1911 is likely to have been influenced by the OUDS production of the play in ancient Greek just a couple of years earlier, but that Somervillians did independently look to ancient Greece for dramatic material can, for example, be seen in the performance in 1910 of 'an Athenian trial' by classical students under the direction of their tutor Emily Penrose, Principal of Somerville.<sup>36</sup> In 1911, 'numerous topical allusions' were introduced into Murray's translation of *Frogs*: for example, 'mention was made of the Registration Fee, which had penetrated to Hades under the guidance of Miss Rogers'.<sup>37</sup> These topical allusions must have been introduced in collaboration with the translator himself, who is said to have 'allowed himself to be smuggled secretly into college to direct and stage-manage the second-year play [...] which had, traditionally, to be kept as a surprise for the rest of the college; as an official guest on the night of the actual performance, he rose from his seat beside the Principal to express his thanks with the words "It was so good that we all felt we really were in Hell" ' (one of the scenes of the play).<sup>38</sup>

Greek tragic productions at Oxford—which began with Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* in 1880—were serious events which attempted to bring to life the ancient Greek performance through insights gained from recent archaeological discoveries in the ancient lands of the Mediterranean—on display in the British Museum and reproduced pictorially in the national press—and inspiration from modern artistic representations of antiquity in the visual arts by painters such as Lawrence Alma-Tadema. By contrast, the more numerous Greek comedies staged by OUDS were lively and energetic affairs which sought to interpret the humour of the original plays in terms of local topicality, using the conventions of classical burlesque such as 'stage business' and musical puns to reference male University life: for example, in the 1892 OUDS production of *Frogs*, which happened to coincide with the intra-University rowing races known as Torpids, the scene between Charon and Dionysus was played in the manner of a rowing coach and a new undergraduate out 'tubbing' (practising rowing) on the river.<sup>39</sup> The very fact that Oxford women were from the early years of the twentieth century beginning to appropriate Greek plays and classical material for themselves through establishing a new tradition for staging them in adaptation and translation—in the very University where their more fortunate male coevals were acting in traditional and somewhat self-referential original-language productions of Greek drama—in itself suggests a degree of socio-political engagement which simply does not arise in the contemporaneous all-male student productions staged by OUDS. Isobel Henderson's depiction of members of Somerville College's Senior Common Room in Figure 2 humorously conflates the modern and the ancient worlds by drawing on ancient Greek statuary and vase-painting whilst referencing contemporary activities such as taking tea and playing tennis. Drawn three decades after the 1904 performance of Bridges' *Demeter*, it seems to suggest that the women of Oxford had continued to appropriate ideas of ancient Greece for themselves and on their own terms.



Figure 1.

The cast of Robert Bridges' *Demeter* in front of Somerville's new Library, 1904.

Reproduced by courtesy of the Principal and Fellows of Somerville College, University of Oxford.



Figure 2.

Somerville College's Senior Common Room, depicted in 1934 by the Junior Fellow Isobel Henderson. Front row (left to right): Miss Stonedale, Miss Beauchamp, Miss Starkie, Miss Sutherland, Miss Clarke. Back row (left to right): Miss Lorimer, Mrs Henderson, Miss Darbishire, Miss Lascelles, Miss Farnell.

Reproduced by courtesy of the Principal and Fellows of Somerville College, University of Oxford.



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### Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to Pauline Adams, Peter Brown, Carol Gillespie, Lorna Hardwick, Anne Manuel, Yopie Prins, Oliver Taplin, and Rebecca Weatherall for help of various kinds in the writing of this essay; to the journal's anonymous readers and the Associate Editor Trevor Fear whose perceptive comments helped to improve it; and to the Principal and Fellows of Somerville College, Oxford for permission to reproduce two images from the College's archive.

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<sup>1</sup> Both were 'Oxford men': Bridges had read classics at Corpus Christi College in the 1860s and Hadow, a historian of music, lectured on both classical and musical subjects at the University. Hadow's score was published: see Hadow (1905), and Anon. (1905a) for a short but dismissive review. Twenty-five years after its foundation in 1879, Somerville, and the other women's halls in Oxford (e.g. Lady Margaret Hall, also founded in 1879, and the Society for Oxford Home Students, founded in 1893) were still 'private ventures, dependent on goodwill for their survival. Although the committees that ran them included male dons, they had no claims on the University. Whereas Cambridge in 1881 officially recognized Newnham and Girton as colleges presenting students for examination, the Oxford halls remained extramural and unrecognized until 1910, when a Delegacy for Women Students was set up' (Howarth (2000: 250)).

<sup>2</sup> Adams (1996: 65). *Demeter* was performed again on 22 June. It was revived in 1954 to celebrate the library's 50<sup>th</sup> and the college's 75<sup>th</sup> birthdays: a new prologue, written by Bridges' daughter, the poet Elizabeth Daryush ends with the lines: 'But in an altered world the myth sublime / Seems even more closely moulded to our time; / ... Interpret, maybe, now, in terms more true / Its ancient theme, of meaning ever new' (see Anon. (1954a) and Anon. (1954b)). It was also performed in 1908 at the University of Liverpool (Weisse (1908)); in 1919 at Ashburne Hall by the pupils of Manchester High School for Girls (Anon. (1919a) and Anon. (1919b)); and in 1933 at the Frensham School in New South Wales (Stanford (1978: 134)).

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *The Manchester Guardian*, 15 June 1904. In a detailed account of the speeches given at the opening ceremony *The Times* records that Edward Caird, Master of Balliol, declared this to be 'the first occasion on which the University, or those who were its supreme representatives, had attended a ceremony at this college' (Anon. (1904)).

<sup>4</sup> Bridges was the husband of Fry's cousin Monica (née Waterhouse). Fry (1874-1958) had studied mathematics at Somerville; she left shortly after the Library's official opening to take up the wardenship of a women's hall of residence at the University of Birmingham, but she continued to serve on Somerville's council and later returned as Principal, 1926-1931 (Hodgkin (2004)).

<sup>5</sup> Letter from Fry to Bridges, 21 January 1904 (Somerville College Library, *Demeter* 1904 and 1954 file).

<sup>6</sup> Adderley (1888: 20). On the 1880 *Agamemnon* see Wrigley (2010).

<sup>7</sup> At this time professional female actors, or lady amateurs, took the female roles in Oxford University Dramatic Society (OUDS) productions (Carpenter (1985: 66)). A few months earlier, the women of Girton College, Cambridge had put on *The Bees*, a loose adaptation of Aristophanes' *Birds*, which 'featured two heroines named Peithetaira and Euelpide leaving Cambridge University because it refused to let them graduate officially, and founding the feminist Beebuzzborough College instead' (Hall (2007: 86)). Beard, King and Stray (1998: 34) suggest that the Girton adaptation of *Birds* (which also draws on Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*) was directly inspired by the Cambridge Greek Play production of *Birds* in ancient Greek some months earlier.

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<sup>8</sup> McKillop (1904: 24).

<sup>9</sup> Howarth (2000: 253).

<sup>10</sup> Adams (1996: 65).

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Daryush, Bridges' daughter, quoted in Stanford (1978: 126). The classical archaeologist Maria Millington Lathbury (Lady Evans) of Lady Margaret Hall is said to have advised on the costumes (Adams (1996: 65)). In 1892 she had also helped with costume design for the OUDS production of Aristophanes' *Frogs*: the close association is suggested by the dedication of her book, *Chapters on Greek Dress*, published the following year, to OUDS 'in remembrance of their performance of the *Frogs* of Aristophanes' (Evans (1893); see also Wrigley (2007a)).

<sup>12</sup> Bridges' dramatic output had included one other masque, *Prometheus the Firegiver*, written in 1881 and staged at least once, at a boys' grammar school near Newbury (Stanford (1978: 126)). His plays—several of which were on classical subjects (such as his two *Nero* plays; *The Return of Ulysses*; *The Feast of Bacchus: A Comedy in the Latin Manner & Partly Translated from Terence*, based on Menander's *Heautontimorumenos*; and *Achilles in Scyros*)—were written for performance, but some were never staged and those that were did not meet with much success.

<sup>13</sup> The line numbers refer to Bridges (1905). The publication of the masque (or 'mask', as Bridges prefers) generated a positive critical reception of his telling of the myth, although several reviewers were not so impressed with his metrical experiments in the choral sections. For example, 'An experiment in classical metres is but poor compensation for an achievement in English ones' (Anon. (1905b)). On the metre of the choruses see Stanford (1978: 137).

<sup>14</sup> Darbishire (1904: 29-30).

<sup>15</sup> 'Notes' (in Somerville College Library, *Demeter* 1904 and 1954 file); also Bridges (1905: 57-61).

<sup>16</sup> Bridges (1905: 60, 57-58, and 60).

<sup>17</sup> By contrast, the producer of the Liverpool University performance of *Demeter*, staged four years later in 1908, does not seem to have paid much heed to Bridges' instructions: *Demeter*, played by Miss Blanche Brew, is said to have 'made a most effective entry by running and stumbling, with flowing robes and flying hair, across a couple of hundred yards of rough country, and arriving breathless and distraught upon the scene' (Weisse (1908)).

<sup>18</sup> On the *Hymn to Demeter* see Foley (1994, ed.); on its modern literary reception see Louis (2009) and Richardson's 'Introduction' to the Penguin edition of *The Homeric Hymns* ([Homer]. 2003: xxviii-xxxii).

<sup>19</sup> Bridges (1905: 58).

<sup>20</sup> Stanford (1978: 134) notes that at the time of writing *Demeter* Bridges' daughter Margaret was seriously ill and that this 'may have deepened and darkened the tone'. Louis (2009: 76) records that Bridges had first intended to end the masque on a pessimistic note, but Fry had insisted that this would be not at all 'proper for young ladies on a festive occasion'.

<sup>21</sup> Anon. 1904.

<sup>22</sup> Howarth (2000: 293, 297).

<sup>23</sup> Adams (1996: 352).

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<sup>24</sup> Weatherall (2005). Extract from this unpublished essay reproduced by kind permission of the author. See also Howarth (2000: 307), who on this point references Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949).

<sup>25</sup> See Ewins (2008) for an overview, and for a more detailed treatment Hurst (2006).

<sup>26</sup> Howarth (2000: 278).

<sup>27</sup> On Lathbury and the 1892 *Frogs* see n. 11 above. On Lorimer see Waterhouse (2004). Lorimer had published an article on 'Some Notes on Dress in Homer and in Archaic Greek Art' two years earlier in the January 1912 issue of the *Proceedings of the Classical Association*, printed by John Murray, London.

<sup>28</sup> Lees (1905).

<sup>29</sup> Programmes for the OUDS Greek plays exist in the John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

<sup>30</sup> Wilson (1987: 183-184, 263-265).

<sup>31</sup> Fry (1936: 61).

<sup>32</sup> *The Fritillary*, March 1909: 791.

<sup>33</sup> See Birch (1910) for a review. Murray advised on this production, his connection with the girls' school being that his young son Basil had been in the (mixed) kindergarten in 1908/09. I am grateful to Elizabeth Sloan, Librarian of Oxford High School, for this information.

<sup>34</sup> *The Fritillary*, December 1910: 901.

<sup>35</sup> I am grateful to Pauline Adams for information on the 1911 *Frogs*. On Murray's assistance with a production of his 1942 translation and reconstruction of Menander's *Perikeiromene* (under the title *The Rape of the Locks*) by the women undergraduates of St Hugh's during the Second World War, see Wrigley (2007b) and (2010).

<sup>36</sup> This 'exceedingly interesting performance' may have been a dramatization of the trial of Socrates, as told by Plato or Xenophon, but no details about precisely what was acted have yet surfaced (Darbishire (1910)). In 1892 Emily Penrose was the first woman to attain a First in Greats (having begun her studies with no Latin and only modern Greek), although as a woman she was ineligible for an Oxford degree; she returned to Somerville in 1907 as Principal (Adams (2004)).

<sup>37</sup> Walton (1912).

<sup>38</sup> Adams (1996: 118-119), who notes that in 1946 *Frogs* was chosen as the first major post-war production of Somerville's Dramatic Society, and that 'Gilbert Murray was again present'.

<sup>39</sup> See further Wrigley (2007a) and (2010).