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Object Lessons: The Victorians and the Material Text

George Eliot's 'Greek Vocabulary' Notebook (c. 1873) as Commodity and Rare Artefact

Le carnet de « vocabulaire grec » de George Eliot (c. 1873) : un produit et un artefact exceptionnel

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Résumés

Français English

L'objet matériel sur lequel se penche cet essai, un carnet relié de cuir (composé de pages blanches au départ), est semblable aux milliers de carnets qui étaient en vente dans les papeteries et autres boutiques des toute dernières décennies du dix-neuvième siècle. En revanche, ce qui le rend exceptionnel, c'est qu'il s'agit du carnet non daté que tenait George Eliot tandis qu'elle lisait les poètes grecs. Elle y notait des mots de vocabulaire grec de Sappho, Homère, Théocrite, et d'autres encore, accompagnés parfois de traductions, de brefs commentaires ou de notations métriques. Aucun autre spécialiste de George Eliot n'a à ce jour travaillé sur ce carnet ni n'en a reconnu l'importance, et l'un des buts de cet article est de rectifier cette omission. Plus particulièrement, cet essai montre l'intérêt qu'il y a à envisager l'objet matériel à la fois comme un outil pour l'auteur qui n'était au début qu'une simple marchandise et comme un artefact unique en son genre qui éclaire la carrière d'un écrivain britannique canonique. En outre, cet essai apporte un éclairage nouveau sur la façon dont les femmes écrivains des années 1870 et 1880 étudiaient le grec classique, offre une description informelle (ainsi que quatre images) du contenu textuel et des encre du carnet, et retrace le chemin qui a mené le carnet aux collections particulières de la Mary Coats Burnett Library, à la Texas Christian University de Fort Worth, aux États-Unis.

The material object on which this essay focuses, a notebook bound in leather (originally with blank pages), is one of thousands sold by stationers and others in the later decades of the nineteenth century. It is unique, however, as the undated notebook that George Eliot kept while she was reading Greek poets. In it she wrote out Greek vocabulary words from Sappho, Homer, Theocritus, and others, sometimes accompanied by translations, brief comments, or metrical notations. The notebook has hitherto eluded documentation or acknowledgement by other George Eliot scholars, and one purpose of the article is to rectify this omission. More particularly, the essay assesses the

merits of approaching such a material object as a commodified authorial tool and as a rare artefact that illuminates the career of a canonical British author. The essay additionally sheds light on women authors' study of classical Greek in the 1870s and 1880s, offers an informal description (and four images) of the notebook's textual contents and inks, and explains the historical route by which the notebook arrived at Special Collections, Mary Coats Burnett Library, Texas Christian University, in Fort Worth, Texas.

Entrées d'index

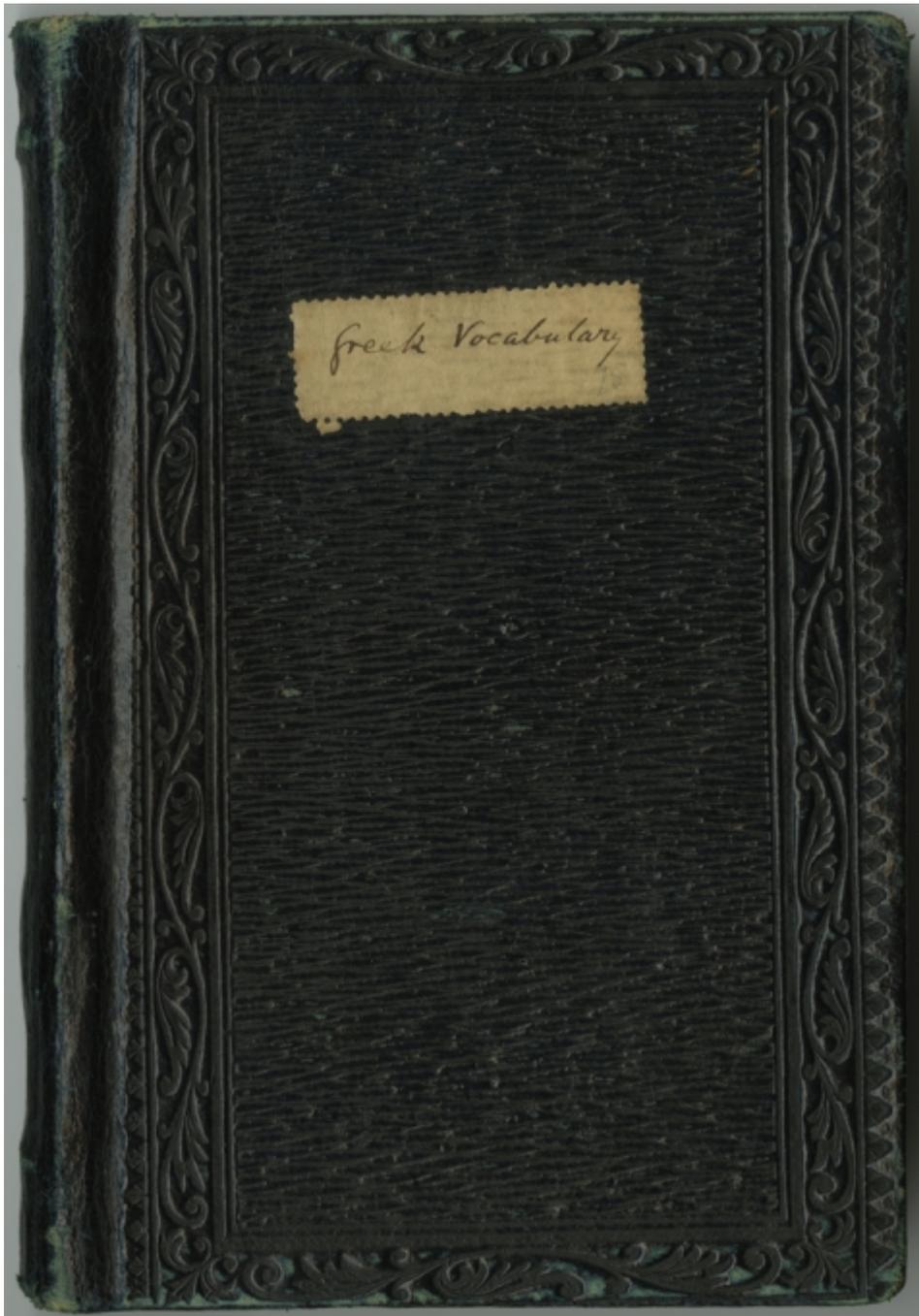
Mots-clés : carnet, Eliot (George), Sappho, poésie grecque, marchandise

Keywords : notebook, Eliot (George), Sappho, Greek poetry, commodity

Texte intégral

- 1 The object of my analysis in this special issue lies at the intersection of print and manuscript culture. When purchased, it was a slender, leather-bound book of blank pages embossed on the front cover with a handsome braided design (see fig. 1), presumably one of thousands manufactured and used in the 1870s, though the fineness of its binding suggests a more limited scale of manufacture that only relatively affluent customers could have afforded. In its materiality it was hardly distinctive, nor would it have stood apart because a sole individual wrote notes in it by hand: that was its purpose. But the individual writing those notes was George Eliot after she had been designated one of the era's great authors with the publication of *Middlemarch* (1871–72). And this notebook is more distinctive still because it has hitherto been invisible in scholarship—despite prolific twentieth- and twenty-first-century academic research on the author who, relative to the scale of scholarly publication, might be called the 'George Eliot industry'. Just as the notebook lies at the intersection of print and manuscript materials manufactured in the 1870s, so this essay occupies the intersection between commodity analysis and author-centred studies devoted to an internationally known canonical author. Besides announcing a 'new' George Eliot notebook, then, this essay offers an opportunity to reflect on the ways that commodity analysis, premised on large-scale production, and the study of a unique holograph manuscript written by an author often termed 'great' even in this post-Barthesian era can come together and become mutually illuminating.

Fig. 1: Cover of George Eliot's *Greek Vocabulary*. Unpublished notebook, n.d. Courtesy of Special Collections, Mary Coats Burnett Library, Texas Christian University.



The Notebook as Commodity

- 2 We know that notebooks were standard commodities regularly purchased and widely used by Victorians across classes, genders, and professions. A search of Google images with the term 'Victorian notebook' turns up a wide array of examples, including the paper-bound travel notebooks of Sir Charles Eastlake (1852), Emma Darwin's recipe book, the open pages of a policeman's notebook containing sketches of a walk around the Isle of Dogs, and even a notebook bound in tortoiseshell. These images remind us that writers are arbitrarily sundered from the many professions and from countless Victorian acts of writing that likewise relied on blank notebooks but that have failed to enter cultural memory.
- 3 For writers, notebooks were both commodities and mandatory work supplies that provided pages in which to take notes from research, draft passages, or even sketch, as in

the undated notebook of William Morris at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, which includes sketches, notes, and poems. The presence of so many authorial notebooks in so many international archives reveals how widespread the manufacture and sale of notebooks at stationers' shops were, how regularly writers would have laid in a stock of these before setting out on a trip or singly purchased a fresh notebook for a new project. It is a reminder of the materiality of the writing profession, connecting authors to the more lowly tasks of shopping expeditions (unless they were so successful as to dispatch servants or compliant spouses to do this for them) and the determination of where to store them: in or on a desk, in luggage, or in the odd corner of a room. Many notebooks were perhaps small enough for male authors to slip into a pocket, a gendered commodity since fashion regimes dictated that women authors be deprived of such convenient holders of writing materials on their persons. To think of writers' notebooks as commodities and personal purchases is salutary because it reminds us that Victorian authorship resided not just in minds and writing hands but also in bodies that moved away from desks or tables into streets, then shops, reaching into pockets or reticules for the ready money to hand over to stationers' clerks (some of them perhaps resembling Charles Dickens's Mr. Snagsby). Commodity analysis of notebooks generates a far less isolated and idealized image of the author; for example, the etching made by Haworth stationer John Greenwood after Branwell Brontë's portrait of his sisters reminds us that, far from remaining solely in their parsonage 'workshop,' the Brontë sisters ventured out onto Haworth streets to purchase a steady supply of paper (Preston 35). Thinking of notebooks in general as commodities and of Eliot's 'Greek Vocabulary' notebook as one in particular also illuminates the classed bodies of authors, since this leather-bound book of Eliot's is clearly a luxury version of more modest variants, bound in paper or moleskin, of a commonly purchased item.

4 The other revelation of considering Eliot's notebook as a commodity is how uninterested scholarship has been until very recently in the very questions the notebook poses as a material object.¹ I had hoped to say much about the pricing and scale of manufacture of blank notebooks, how often they were finely or plainly bound, their durability, and more. But attempts at locating relevant scholarly sources on notebooks sold to and used by writers repeatedly turned up nothing or next to nothing. Even a search for advertisements was often unsuccessful, though it did turn up ads from the London-based publisher Relfe and Fletcher ('Relfe and Fletcher'), later Relfe, Brothers ('Books for School Use'), and the stationer's firm of Robert S. Stacy ('Robert S. Stacy'). All advertise blank manuscript books for sale, but their wares were clearly aimed at schoolboys and bookkeepers rather than writers or the wide range of Victorians who needed or wanted to take notes in the course of their daily routines. I next emailed the prominent print culture historian Patrick Leary, who in turn emailed book historian Simon Eliot. Leary observed that Shirley Brooks's diaries were written in blank notebooks purchased from Partridge and Cozens (stationers with shops on Chancery Lane and Fleet Street) and that some of Charles Reade's notebooks came from the same firm. We know that the Folger Library's notebook in which Eliot inscribed materials for *Middlemarch* was a 'Partridge and Cooper's Patent Improved Metallic Book,' a leather-bound blank notebook with a metal clasp (Pratt and Neufeldt xviii), and that the Pforzheimer 707 notebook used during Eliot's work on *Daniel Deronda* was a 'Henry Penny's Patent Improved Metallic Book' (Irwin 227). Here, we can suddenly glimpse Eliot's intersection with commercial brand names and shops. But the 'Greek Vocabulary' notebook, like others in which Eliot recorded her notes, has no identifying brand name that could support inquiry further into the materiality of her or others' notebooks. Simon Eliot confirms in his response to Leary that none of his former students was working on Victorian stationery, 'but they certainly should have been; it's a much under-researched area'. He adds that 'there were large specialist firms producing blank books' and that 'W. H. Smith's, of course, and their circulating library rivals, Mudies, sold lots of blank books and had specific stationery departments'—a comment that expands our sense of how easily available such notebooks were.²

5 In some ways, it makes sense that we know so little about the large-scale production of blank notebooks in what Andrew Stauffer has called ‘a great age of paper’ (Stauffer). As unprinted, albeit bound, books, these commodities required no bibliographical registration as did catalogues, schoolbooks, periodicals, and other print commodities. It is to be hoped that a future researcher will open up the topic of Victorian stationery and its cultural significance. Meanwhile, it remains useful to recognize the marked distinction between authors’ notebooks considered as commodities and notebooks in relation to the career of a single author whose interaction with the mass production that generated the notebooks in the first place has eluded the historical record.

From Commodity to Rare Artefact

6 To pivot from a leather-bound paper commodity to a notebook kept by novelist George Eliot in the early 1870s is also to pivot from materiality to a very different scholarly context and an encounter with aura. In contrast to the paucity of scholarship on the printing, distribution, and selling of Victorian notebooks, there are many scholarly publications devoted to individual writers’ notebooks: writers’ notes have long been studied to illuminate authors’ compositional and cognitive processes as well as their sources, and more recently even doodles have been seen as a component of the creative process.³ The high value placed upon Eliot’s notebooks in particular is evident in the scholarly editions of her *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* notebooks, which would have begun as blank notebooks.⁴ And now there is another ‘new’ George Eliot notebook to announce in the holdings of Special Collections, Mary Couets Burnett Library, Texas Christian University (TCU). Any rare book remains a material object no matter how precious or rare, and one task of this essay is to explain how Eliot’s Greek vocabulary notebook came to rest in my university’s collection in 1965 and why its existence is so little known that it is currently invisible in Eliot scholarship and bibliographies. The ‘Greek Vocabulary’ notebook, as Eliot named it on her handwritten label (fig. 1), was a gift and was catalogued well before Special Collections Librarian Roger Rainwater (or I) arrived at TCU. However it was originally recorded must somehow have affected its migration to TCU’s online catalogue, for the notebook is difficult to find there. I first learned of it when, as I often do, I accompanied graduate students to Special Collections to examine our library’s rare holdings related to a seminar’s focus. That semester it was a graduate seminar on Victorian women writers, and, as an addendum to the works I had requested, Roger Rainwater brought out the notebook as something else that might interest us.

7 Indeed.

8 At that point, I assumed that Eliot scholars knew of the notebook; I found out they did not only when I began to write this essay for Mary Elizabeth Leighton’s and Lisa SurrIDGE’s special issue.⁵

9 The route the notebook travelled to TCU can be established from about the 1920s or early 1930s onward. According to materials on file in Special Collections, the notebook was owned at that time by prolific film director Alfred E. (Al) Green (1889–1960). Green’s first ‘talkie’ was *Disraeli* (1929), and his other career highlights included directing Barbara Stanwyck in *Baby Face* (1933), Bette Davis in *Dangerous* (1935), and much later *The Jackie Robinson Story* starring Robinson himself (1950).⁶ Green’s private library was purchased intact by Florence M. Ames and her sister Blanche Pryor, and Ames then displayed the Green collection in her Green Door Book and Antique Shop in Long Beach. The collection came to TCU through the offices of Ames’s son Richard C. Ames, who earned a B.S. in Commerce from TCU in 1962. Thus Green’s collection, more or less in its entirety (469 volumes in all), arrived at TCU in 1965.

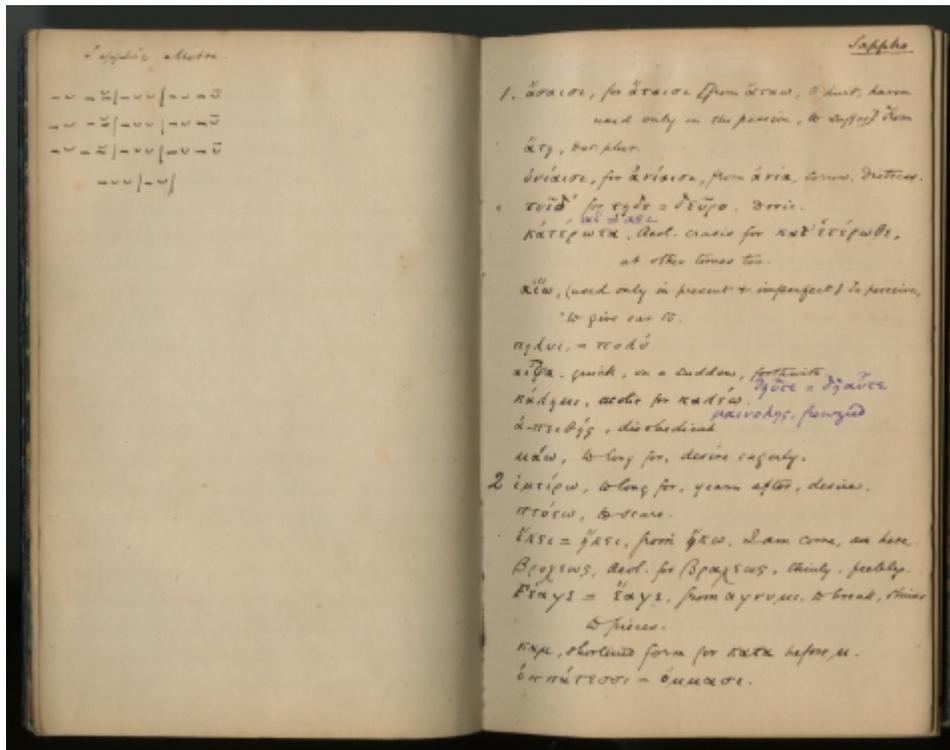
10 A letter on file from Blanche Pryor provides some of the only additional comments about the notebook:

Concerning the Greek Manuscript notebook of George Eliot, we believe it to be authentic without question but do not have any documentation to that effect. The former owner dealt only with booksellers of the highest reputation and he must have purchased it with assurances to his satisfaction that it was in her handwriting, considering the price he paid. However, he is gone now and the authentication was not with the note book—he sent word to me that it was his most prized possession. The library was in storage for something like thirty years.⁷ (Pryor n. pag.)

- 11 An official news announcement by the university after the library received the gift in 1965 noted that ‘one of the most unusual aspects of the collection is the original manuscript notebook in Greek written by George Eliot when she was mastering the language’; as the news release added, the notebook ‘accompanied the 25-volume set of ‘Works of George Eliot’’ (Knox n. pag.).⁸ But little was made of the notebook afterward, and in fact the modest column devoted to the Ames gift in the Fall 1965 *TCU Magazine* omitted any mention of the notebook at all, instead citing only first editions of William Makepeace Thackeray’s *The Virginians* (1859) and the original parts edition of Charles Lever’s *Charles O’Malley, the Irish Dragoon* (1840–41) (‘Californian’). One might say that the notebook went from storage by Green to a brief period of display and visibility in California in the early 1960s to storage in Texas once again, this time in a university archive.
- 12 Nonetheless, as an object or thing to be stored, the notebook is not without meaning. The epigraph of Elaine Freedgood’s introduction to *The Ideas in Things* is apt—‘the past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of intellect, in some material object . . . which we do not suspect’ (1)⁹—as is her method of reading things: ‘taking them literally, followed by a lengthy metonymic search beyond the covers of the text’ (5). Following the transit of the notebook through time and across spaces over a forty-year period links together the otherwise radically disparate cultural formations that have effected the deposit of the notebook in TCU’s Special Collections: Hollywood and the wealth and glamour that the movie industry generated; the operations, often hidden, of the late-Victorian and twentieth-century rare-book trade; the fond memories and family ties of a university alumnus; and the institution-specific operations of a university library in the mid-1960s.
- 13 It is not merely as a ‘thing’ that I am announcing the existence of Eliot’s ‘Greek Vocabulary’ notebook but also as the holograph manuscript penned by one of the Victorian era’s pre-eminent novelists. Accordingly, I next turn to the size, layout, date, and contents of the notebook, though mine is an informal description rather than the authoritative account of a professional librarian or bibliographer. At 17.5 cm long and 12 cm wide, the ‘Greek Vocabulary’ notebook is smaller than the Berg (20 cm) and Pforzheimer 710 (17 cm by 22 cm) notebooks, larger than the Pforzheimer 711 (14 cm by 9 cm) or 707 (14 cm by 8 cm) notebooks (Irwin 222, 224–25).¹⁰ Eliot’s notes appear on the first forty-six leaves of the notebook, often with entries on both the left and right, followed by twenty blank leaves, then brief translations of Greek family-relationship words on the final leaf. As Eliot did so often, she began by writing on the endpaper and first page of the notebook. The twenty blank leaves might indicate abandonment of the notebook due to waning interest or perhaps merely completion of the task she had set herself.
- 14 It is possible to date Eliot’s notebook to no earlier than October to December 1872, and much of the notebook seems more likely to have been filled in 1873. After citations and translations from an unidentified source on the endpaper and first leaf, Eliot’s notebook continues with four pages of citations from Sappho in Greek paired with brief English translations. We know that Eliot read Sappho’s fragments in the anthology *Poetae lyrici Graeci*, edited by Wilhelm Theodor Bergk, sometime after September 1872 and that she reread Sappho in February 1873 (Irwin 250, 250n.5). As well, though most of the vocabulary notes from Sappho are in black ink, Eliot added three annotations to the first of the pages in violet ink (see fig. 2), the ink associated with the same period of time as her reading of Sappho (Pratt and Neufeldt xxi). There is, moreover, one date in the notebook

on a page with citations and some translations of terms from Idyl 22 of Theocritus: July 28. Since Eliot was reading Bergk after September 1872, the July date may well indicate July 1873. Another page devoted to Homer and Herodotus includes '(Paley)' after their names. Irwin points out that Eliot read Frederick Apthorp Paley's 'The Odyssey of Homer' in the October 1873 *British Quarterly Review* and speculates that Eliot read this article by Paley first, then sought out an earlier article by Paley (Irwin 3-4). Cumulatively, the evidence, though not conclusive, points in the direction of the notebook's having been begun during Eliot's second reading of Sappho, since Sappho stands at the head of the identified notes on Greek poets in her notebook.

Fig. 2: George Eliot's *Greek Vocabulary* (n. pag.). Unpublished notebook, n.d. Courtesy of Special Collections, Mary Coats Burnett Library, Texas Christian University.



15 Some pages of the notebook have Greek citations only; more usually, each page lists a Greek word, phrase, or line with some English translations or grammatical notes; and occasionally there are long prose notes in English, as in figure 3, or interpretive comments. Figure 4 functions as a kind of composite insofar as the notes on the left and right, all in violet ink, include untranslated Greek words or passages, brief English translations, and, near the bottom left and right, interpretive comments that I transcribe (see note 12).

Fig. 3: George Eliot's *Greek Vocabulary* (n. pag.). Unpublished notebook, n.d. Courtesy of Special Collections, Mary Coats Burnett Library, Texas Christian University.

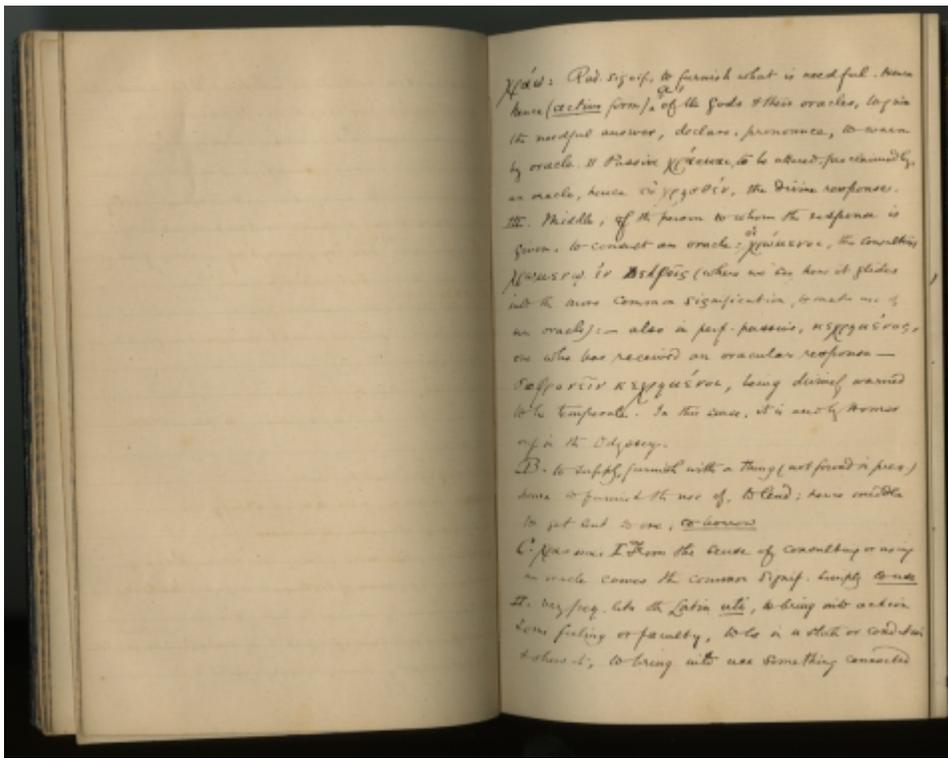
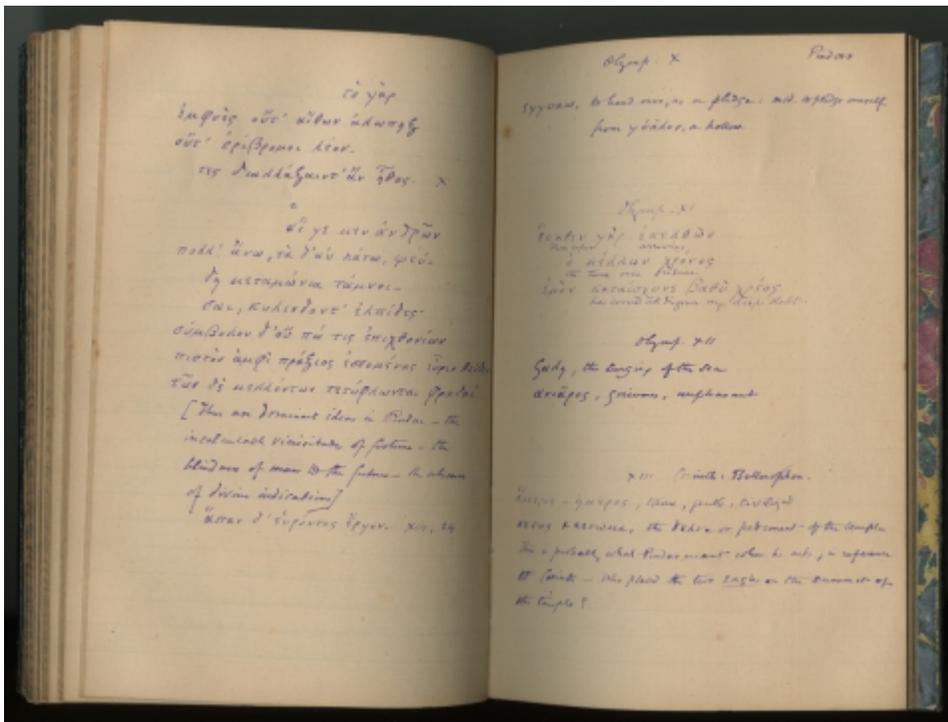


Fig. 4: George Eliot's *Greek Vocabulary* (n. pag.). Unpublished notebook, n.d. Courtesy of Special Collections, Mary Couets Burnett Library, Texas Christian University.



16 Below is a listing of the notebook's contents. Since Eliot did not number the leaves (with the exception of the opening Sappho material) and the notebook has not been paginated by TCU Special Collections, I omit page numbers as well other than for those pages dealing with Sappho:

List of Contents

- Unidentified Greek citations and some brief English translations¹¹ on the left endpaper; Greek citations only on the right

- ‘Sapphic Metre’ on the left; citations, grammatical note, and brief translations on the right (pictured in fig. 2)
- Sappho 2 numbered citations
- Sappho 3 ditto, plus some translations
- Sappho ditto; some translations appear on the left
- Homer citations, brief grammatical and analytical comments
- Homer ‘Epithets’ citations (one of which Eliot translates as the epithet ‘of the barren sea’), with additional citations and brief translations following
- Homer ‘Iliad B. [Book] VI’ citations and translations; three additional pages of the same follow, with occasional grammatical notes and some translations on the left
- Homer Book VI cont. citations with extended translation and analytical notes in English (see fig. 3), followed by three more pages of citations and brief translations
- ‘Theocritus Id. [Idyl] I’ citations and brief translations
- Theocritus Idyl I cont. on the left; ‘Theocritus XV’ appears on the right
- Theocritus XV cont.; notes from ‘Idyll XVI’ begin on same page
- Theocritus, XVI, cont. with a note in brackets identifying what the ‘Idyll’ addresses; after skipping one line Eliot enters ‘July 28.’ above ‘Idyll 22’ to the right, followed by citations and translations
- Theocritus, Idyll 22 cont.
- Theocritus, Idyll 22 cont., then citations and translations for ‘Idyl 28’
- Theocritus, Idyl 28 cont.; a brief note at the top comments on the Greek monarch, followed by more citations and translations, then ‘Doric Forms in Theocr.’ with illustrative citations and translations that continue onto another page
- ‘Theocr. Id. II’ (right-hand corner), followed by citations and translations, then citations and translations from ‘Idyll 6’ and ‘Idyll 7’
- Theocritus, Idyll 7 cont. with some citations and translations on the left as well as right; two additional pages of citations and translations follow.
- Theocritus citations and translations from ‘XVIII’ and ‘XXVIII’
- ‘Fauna’ [of Theocritus] on the left (Eliot cites only two instances, including ‘the crested lark’); ‘Flora of Theocritus’ on the right with a longer list
- ‘Odyssey B. 1’ citations and translations on the left and right, which continue onto the next page
- ‘Odyssey B. XI’ (one citation and translation), then ‘Herodotus. Euterpe. II.’ citations and translations; some addenda appear in violet ink
- Herodotus cont., in both black and violet ink, to middle of the page; then, in violet, ‘Shield of Achilles. II. [Iliad] XVIII. 478’ with citations and translations, which continue onto the next page (which also has three lines in black ink on the left)

- Iliad XVIII cont. and, two-thirds down the page, ‘B. XIX’ in violet ink, with some black and violet ink on the left
- ‘Homeric Epithets Il. [Iliad] XIX.v’ citations and translations, with some interpretive commentary on the left and right, which then continue for two pages, in violet ink with minor exceptions
- ‘Ironicisms common to / Homer Il. [Iliad] III.158’ on the left; ‘Homer and Herodotus (Paley)’ with citations (no translations) on the right from ‘Her.IV.61’
- Homer (on left) and Herodotus (on right) citations (no translations) in violet ink¹²
- Homer and Herodotus cont., then ‘Mythology in Pind. [Pindar] Olymp. [Olympian] 1’; Eliot lists Tantalus, son of Zeus followed by a longer passage in English, identifying the source as ‘*Fauriel Chants de la Grèce*’¹³
- ‘Pindar Olymp. [Olympian] 1’ citations and translations on the right; on the left, citations and in English ‘State of the Blessed 115–142’
- ‘Pindar. Olymp. 2’ citations and translations
- ‘Olympic 3 & 4’ citations and translations; on the left is a prose translation of a Pindaric passage
- ‘Ol. 6,’ ‘Olymp. VII (origin of Rhodes),’ ‘VIII,’ ‘IX (Pyrrha & Deucalion)’ citations and translations; citations only on the left
- ‘Olymp. X,’ ‘Olymp. XI,’ ‘Olymp. XII,’ ‘XIII Corinth: Bellerophon’ citations and some translation on the right; on the left, an extended citation and English note in brackets (see fig. 4)¹⁴

17 In providing the above list, I am operating within protocols of author-centred studies, offering details that might assist Eliot scholars in making biographical and/or interpretive connections—an obvious point, but I draw attention to it to underscore the divergence between such an approach and a consideration of the notebook as commodity, even though both conceptualizations meet in the material pages of the ‘Greek Vocabulary’ notebook. In terms of author-centred analysis, the notebook demonstrates how thorough Eliot’s immersion in Greek studies continued to be in late 1872 (if the notebook was begun by then) and 1873. Possibly, her close reading of Bergk and vocabulary entries in the notebook continued unabated during Eliot and Lewes’s trips to Cambridge (May) and Oxford (June), when having come fresh from immersion in Greek studies would have enhanced the readiness of her learned conversations with professors. Her reading of Greek may also have continued during Eliot and Lewes’s summer holiday in France and Germany (see Haight 464–65), which in 1873 would have encompassed July 28, the date Eliot inscribed alongside Theocritus citations in her notebook.

18 The Berg notebook, as Irwin documents, has extended notes from Paley and four pages of Pindar citations (Irwin 6–15). The Pforzheimer 711 notebook mentions Sappho fragments as among the works Eliot had read since September 1872, but it has no citations from Sappho’s poetry; Pforzheimer 711 also includes a brief comment on Erinna’s poetry (Irwin 250, 367). In all, the representation of Eliot’s Greek studies in the Berg and Pforzheimer 711 notebooks is slight. In contrast, the ‘Greek Vocabulary’ notebook has forty-seven detailed pages of notes generated by Eliot’s reading of Greek poets and thus is the strongest evidence of Eliot’s intensive study of Greek in 1873. The contents of the notebook also suggest some form of (or attempt at) systematization since the notes seem to follow each other in a deliberate sequence. To what end Eliot undertook this work beyond intrinsic interest in Greek studies cannot be determined. Certainly, as Wendy Williams points out, Eliot’s poem ‘Erinna,’ written around this time, had a link to Sappho

in Bergk since Erinna's fragments immediately followed those by Sappho (Williams 29–30).¹⁵ If Eliot was simultaneously planning an additional poem or novel based on Greek poets, just as she had earlier contemplated an epic poem on Timoleon (Pratt and Neufeldt xxviii), there is no extant trace of such an intention.

19 The significance of the notebook and the activity that lay behind it is somewhat easier to determine in relation to print culture of the 1870s. Long before the 1870s, George Grote's twelve-volume *History of Greece* (1846–56) inspired popular as well as learned interest in Greek language and culture, including Greek mythology (Markley 16). A number of publishing events then coalesced in the late 1860s and early 1870s to make esoteric study of the Greeks, including Greek poetry, of interest to cultural elites. Walter Pater's essay 'Winckelmann' appeared in the *Westminster Review*, a journal that Eliot once edited, in January 1867, which helped propel a fresh strain of inquiry into Greek literature and art by way of German scholarship; this fresh strain was less overtly indebted to moral earnestness than mid-Victorian works on Greece had been and was more open to sensuousness and to divergences from Christian values (see, for example, Evangelista 24). Seven months after Pater's essay appeared, Matthew Arnold presented the first of his Oxford lectures, entitled 'Culture and Its Enemies,' that would become, when published in book form, *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) (Super 408–09, 496–97). *Culture and Anarchy* itself had the effect of driving a deeper wedge between popular and high culture (a distinction that helped enhance Eliot's own standing after the publication of *Middlemarch* and her elevation to the status of sage¹⁶). Around the same time, public support for the centrality of Greek and Latin to mass education began to wane (Jenkyns 276–79; Evangelista 10). If on the one hand this abating of classical studies marked a decline in the general influence of Greek culture on Victorians, it also opened the way for more erudite, *recherché* study of Greek literature (as well as the dissident sexuality of much classical-inspired literature among aesthetes and decadents). Significantly, the same year that Eliot was rereading Sappho in Bergk, John Addington Symonds published *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1873), which, according to Evangelista, aligned Greek studies with scientific and secular culture and the highest ideals of aesthetic beauty (Evangelista 12)—associations congenial to Eliot and Lewes as well. Though Eliot created her notebook in private in the form of a manuscript, her 'Greek Vocabulary' notes likewise operated within a network of print that linked Greek studies, criticism predicated on increasing secularism, and literary works aligned with high rather than popular culture.

20 For me, the most significant feature of the notebook is the opening four pages devoted to Sappho since they mark the interest of a woman writer who has studied classical Greek and directly accessed Sappho from Greek sources rather than from the tradition of the Ovidian Sappho who leapt from the Leucadian rock out of frustrated love for the younger man Phaon. The Ovidian Sappho not only underwrote dominant heterosexual norms but also became, as Yopie Prins points out, 'a proper name for the Poetess' (Prins 14), a recurring figure in nineteenth-century poetry until Algernon Swinburne shattered precedent by depicting Sappho as a violent lesbian lover in 'Anactoria' (1866). Another turning point in the displacement of Ovid's heterosexual Sappho and the recovery of the lesbian Sappho was Henry Thornton Wharton's *Sappho: Memoir, Text, Selected Renderings, and a Literal Translation* in 1885. Wharton's edition was to have a profound effect on Michael Field and their publication of *Long Ago* (1889), a volume of lesbian lyrics that used Greek epigraphs from Sappho as points of departure (Prins 4, 74). Positioning Eliot's 'Greek Vocabulary' notebook amid a cluster of print texts that presented variant versions of Sappho suggests to what degree Bergk opened an outlet for women who knew Greek to access Sappho not as an imagined Ovidian character or figure for the poetess but as fragments of Greek poetry written by a woman that had remained famous over two millennia despite being broken into fragments. As such, the 'Greek Vocabulary' notebook bears an indirect relation to poetic tradition as well as to print and manuscript culture—and to both the working and imaginative life of a woman writer in material and intellectual terms.

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Notes

1 I wish to express warmest thanks to Roger Rainwater, Special Collections Librarian, Mary Coats Burnett Library, Texas Christian University; Susan Swain, Library Specialist, Special Collections, Mary Coats Burnett Library, Texas Christian University; and Heidi Hakimi-Hood, Addie Levy Research Fellow; they all provided vital help as I prepared this essay for publication. An important exception is Lisa Gitelman's recent *Paper Knowledge* (2014), the first chapter of which examines job printing and the production of numerous blank forms (see 21–25). I wish to thank Jason Camlot for drawing my attention to Gitelman's work and for sharing his fascinating work in progress on scrapbooks and blank albums in relation to nineteenth-century interactive reading practices, format theory, and literary culture's implication in and intersections with material culture.

2 My thanks to Patrick Leary and Simon Eliot for permission to cite their comments.

3 See, for example, Bushell and Woof. In contrast to my comment above on the gendered nature of Victorian pocketbooks, Woof speculates that Dorothy Wordsworth may indeed have kept her notebook in her pocket at times (Woof 5–10).

4 The most recent of these is Jane Irwin's edition of Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* notebooks (1996). See also Baker and Pratt and Neufeldt.

5 For example, the notebook is listed neither in David C. Sutton's *Location Register of English Literary Manuscripts and Letters* nor in Joanne Shattock's *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*.

6 For fuller details, see Barson and the listing for Green's films in *Film Index International*.

7 Quoted courtesy of Special Collections, Mary Coats Burnett Library, Texas Christian University. The loss of documentation from the bookseller who sold the notebook to Green unfortunately means that the notebook's ownership after it left the hands of Eliot or her survivors in the Lewes or Cross families cannot be traced.

8 Quoted courtesy of Special Collections, Mary Coats Burnett Library, Texas Christian University.

9 The epigraph is from Marcel Proust's *Du côté de chez Swann*.

10 The first measurement is from the New York Public Library website (Pratt and Neufeldt report their findings in inches rather than centimetres).

11 Henceforth, 'citations' are always in Greek, 'translations' in English.

12 Henceforth, notes are in violet ink unless otherwise designated.

13 See Fauriel in Works Cited for further details.

14 Transcription of the English passage on the left: '[These are dominant ideas in Pindar—the incalculable vicissitudes of fortune—the blindness of man to the future—the absence of divine indications]'. Transcription of English words on bottom right: 'tame, gentle, civilized . . . the delta or pediment of the temple. This is probably what Pindar meant when he asks, in reference to Corinth—Who placed the two Eagles on the summit of the temple?'

15 Erinna was represented by far fewer fragments than Sappho was. In the 1853 edition of Bergk that I have consulted (owned by the New York Public Library and available in digitized form from its internet archive), Sappho's poetry extends from pages 664 to 702, Erinna's only from pages 702 to 704.

16 For one account of this elevation, see my 'Constructing Fictions of Authorship'.

Table des illustrations



Titre

Fig. 1: Cover of George Eliot's *Greek Vocabulary*. Unpublished notebook, n.d. Courtesy of Special Collections, Mary Coats Burnett Library, Texas Christian University.

URL

<http://journals.openedition.org/cve/docannexe/image/2973/img-1.jpg>

Fichier

image/jpeg, 584k

Titre

Fig. 2: George Eliot's *Greek Vocabulary* (n. pag.). Unpublished notebook,

	URL	n.d. Courtesy of Special Collections, Mary Couts Burnett Library, Texas Christian University.
	Fichier	http://journals.openedition.org/cve/docannexe/image/2973/img-2.jpg
	Titre	Fig. 3: George Eliot's <i>Greek Vocabulary</i> (n. pag.). Unpublished notebook, n.d. Courtesy of Special Collections, Mary Couts Burnett Library, Texas Christian University.
	URL	http://journals.openedition.org/cve/docannexe/image/2973/img-3.jpg
	Fichier	image/jpeg, 696k
	Titre	Fig. 4: George Eliot's <i>Greek Vocabulary</i> (n. pag.). Unpublished notebook, n.d. Courtesy of Special Collections, Mary Couts Burnett Library, Texas Christian University.
	URL	http://journals.openedition.org/cve/docannexe/image/2973/img-4.jpg
	Fichier	image/jpeg, 687k

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