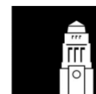

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Article:

Pender, EE (2018) Introduction: Strange Meetings. Classical Receptions Journal, 10 (4). pp. 333-355. ISSN 1759-5134

https://doi.org/10.1093/crj/cly019

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CLASSICS AND CLASSICISTS IN WORLD WAR ONE

INTRODUCTION

STRANGE MEETINGS

This collaborative study of the uses of Classics in World War One (1914-18) explores the complexities, tensions and dissensions of thought on the War arising within a very specific cultural community: those using Greek and Roman paradigms as a means to think about the War. Multiple identities and uses of Classics within public and private texts of the period will emerge, reflecting the major cultural shifts of the War period. The cultural span is limited mainly to Britain and Germany, with briefer reflections also on Ireland, South Africa, and the USA. In the societies of these two principal belligerents classical traditions in education were particularly prominent and well-regarded, and are often seen as neatly aligned with their respective imperial structures and political aspirations. However, as this collection of papers will demonstrate, in this traumatic period Classics is drawn upon to articulate and propose many divergent positions in response to the War, including those of dissent.

THE CENTENARY

At the centenary of the First World War, the magnitude of the historical events of the conflict, its legacies and continuing emotional resonances are evident. Governments and public bodies across the world are organising major services of remembrance and reconciliation through the years of 2014-18. Public participation and interest continues on an unexpected scale, with millions of people attending international, national and local commemorations. The military, civic groups, charities, arts organisations and the educational sector are reflecting on their own

communities' involvement and experiences of World War One. In the UK, in 2014 particularly, the broadcasting schedules of the BBC and independent media were dominated by WWI documentaries, drama and commentaries.

This volume arises from the shared view that since Classics was a significant feature within the cultural dynamics of the War, its communities and contributions therefore merit attention as part of the Centenary.[1] It is surprising that no other group of classical researchers has yet tackled the use of the ancient world as a distinctive approach to this important historical period. This Special Issue will therefore fill a notable gap, making new contributions to scholarship and challenging banalities on how to inform a wider public about the cultures of WWI. The volume results from opportunities at this historical landmark for scholarship to move beyond the period of oral testimony and so re-examine issues freed from concern with the appropriate sensitivities of individuals and families directly affected by the war. At the distance of one hundred years the need to avoid the perception of denigrating the personal experiences and sacrifices of people in the war, especially those of close relatives, while still important is less intense.

For the Centenary the Heritage Lottery Fund in Britain has to date funded over 1,000 community projects run by social and educational groups.[2] One public artwork in particular has come to represent the determination to remember and pay tribute to the lives lost in the unprecedented horror of the first global conflict. 'Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Blood',[3] the red poppies memorial unveiled in July 2014, drew over five million visitors to the Tower of

[1] I owe special thanks to Lorna Hardwick for guidance and generously sharing her expertise throughout this project, and to Angie Hobbs and Miranda Hickman who offered encouragement and invaluable ideas at key stages. I am grateful for the work of the *CRJ* Editor-in-Chief and editorial team, for useful critique from the anonymous reviewer and research assistance from Dylan Bage. Generous funds for the associated conferences at the University of Leeds were provided by the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, The White Rose University Consortium, and The Gilbert Murray Trust.

[2] The main funding stream is 'First World War: Then and Now'.

[3] Created by artists Paul Cummins and Tom Piper, consisting of 888,246 ceramic poppies to represent the military fatalities of British and colonial troops during the war.

London and its national tour continues to attract hundreds of thousands of people to each of its local installations. The red poppy of the British Legion is ubiquitous at public services and the white poppy of the peace movement is again becoming a familiar symbol of remembrance. The Centenary is an opportunity to promote civic identities, with recognition of alternative voices in different independent traditions and communities. The Peace Pledge Union's project 'Remembering the Men Who Said No: Conscientious Objectors 1916-19' recognises the courage of the 20,000 men who refused conscription into the British Army following the passing of the Military Service Act in March 1916. In Ireland, the Centenary of the 2016 Easter Rising – one of the defining moments of the struggle for Irish independence from British rule – was marked with due international participation and attention.

As the University of Leeds rededicated its Brotherton War Memorial in 2014,[4] amongst the poppy wreaths a banner display expressed the aims of its own commemorative research project, 'Legacies of War 1914-18/2014-18':

> It is right that the Centenary period is a time to remember those who died, and the devastation and suffering that the First World War – like all wars – left in its wake. But the anniversary is also a valuable opportunity for exploring the many ways in which people's everyday lives were touched by war. Rather than recycling myths and stereotypes, trying to understand the war in all its variation and complexity is a better way of paying tribute to the men, women and children who lived through it or who died because of it.[5]

This project of thinking differently about the war and trying to understand it in all its variation and complexity was the impetus for an international conference at Leeds in 2014: 'Classics and

[4] Three names carved on the memorial belong to men from the graduate and student body of Classicists at Leeds in 1914: R. Blease, E.M. Carré, and W.J. Moody.
[5] Written by Alison Fell, Professor of French Cultural History and academic lead of 'Legacies of War'.

Classicists in World War One'.[6] The preliminary plan was to learn about the lives and individual experiences of Classicists across Europe and the wider world and thus to explore a particular scholarly community responding to the crisis. But initial research showed that another story needed to be told: the presence of classical influences in the thought-worlds not only of professional Classicists but also of those who had studied Greek and Latin and those whose cultural understandings were being shaped by classical forms. Therefore the 2014 conference considered also the significance and meanings of classical reception throughout the war period. From the range and scope of the many submitted abstracts, it became clear that the potential material, with its global reach, would simply be too large. The decision was taken from there to focus mainly on British and German experiences while maintaining a vital international outlook.

But even within these limited parameters, further close assessment was clearly needed of some of the many contradictions and contestations emerging within the traditions of classical influences and receptions. To coincide with the 2016 centenaries of the Military Service Act and the Battle of the Somme, a further Legacies of War international conference was devoted to 'Resistance to War'.[7] A panel on 'Classics and Resistance' examined a range of responses to both war and peace amongst scholars, poets and political activists drawing on the classical tradition. An additional forum for exchange and debate through the years of the Centenary has been the White Rose Network on 'Classical Heroism in War and Peace 1914-24', an interdisciplinary project run between the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York (2013-16). These different meetings, informed by new research in a number of scholarly disciplines,

[6] I am very grateful to Edmund Richardson as co-organiser, particularly for his academic guidance, and to all the speakers. Thanks are due also to Eleanor OKell and Richard High for archival research and curating the conference exhibition from the Liddle Collection of WW1 rare books and artefacts, including the Serbian diary of the Classicist E.R.Dodds (Brotherton Special Collections, University of Leeds).
[7] Organised by Ingrid Sharp.

allowed closer attention to be directed to the various polarities and tensions within the opinions of those who used Classics in the period of the War.

ENCOUNTERS WITH CLASSICS 1914-18

My title 'Strange Meetings' alludes to Wilfred Owen's well-known poem on WW1, which presents an encounter between the narrator and a dead German soldier. The poem gradually unfolds to the nightmare of the War as Hell and to the narrator's recognition of himself as a killer. The strangeness portrayed is an expression of the catastrophe of the War, which caused an extreme of suffering and mass death hitherto unknown. The disturbed visions of the narrator convey the deep-rooted estrangement experienced by the combatants and their societies more generally: the alienation identified in 1919 by Freud in 'Das Unheimliche' (The Uncanny), the first psychoanalytical study of the effect.[8]

'Strange Meeting' has been enormously influential as a reflection on the poet's task of witnessing 'the truth untold / the pity of war'. But its achievements go further, since it has much to tell also about poetic and artistic reception. In the opening lines Owen meditates on the past 'titanic wars' that have created the seeming tunnel the soldier has now entered:

> It seemed that out of battle I escaped
> Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
> Through granites which titanic wars had groined.

[8] As Winter notes: "The front-line soldiers of 1914-18 saw things that people should not see" (1988, p.145) and "What is most remarkable is not that some broke under the strain, but that so many did not" (p.151). For Freud's wartime context and works, including *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death* (1915), see Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, pp.142-50 and 182-4.

The tunnel, 'profound' and 'long since scooped/ through granites' points to the poetic tradition, with the 'titanic wars' opening up the vast tracts of time through which poets have told of war. The 'granites' are both the deep geological structures of the earth and the profound territory of past poetry marked by war. The tunnel 'long since scooped' is the past creation of poetry through deep introspection. The effort of this creation is observed in 'groined', where the female metaphor speaks of birthing and the male metaphor of soldiers, bodies flattened, pushing their weight forward in underground military manoeuvres. The literary allusion reflects on the achievement of each poet 'groining' his space in the granite of tradition, claiming, no less than the soldier, his own bit of ground in earth compressed by the weight of centuries.

Owen presents the strange meeting of living and dead in the most extreme terms of combat. But he also attends to the encounter of his own creative practice with the centuries of dead poets revivified through its many allusions, including to Shelley, Keats and, via the *katabasis*, to Dante and thereby Virgil and Homer.[9] Read in this way the poem enacts and illuminates the central concern of this volume: classical receptions 1914-18. In the midst of alienation, confusion and immense suffering, the classical past, at once both unfamiliar and familiar through tradition, was sought out in often surprising ways. The shared approach of these essays is to concentrate on the immediate purposes of this recourse to the ancient in the

[9] Vandiver's section on 'The Classical *Katabasis*: Visitors to the Dead' (pp. 302-321) is an important source for understanding this theme in WW1 poetry. On Owen's echoes of Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid* in this poem, see pp.303-9, with p.303 fn. 42 for further references to her later discussions. See also Hardwick, *Translating Words, Translating Cultures* (London: Duckworth, 2000), p.53. Vandiver also discusses the poem's dialogue with Homer's *Iliad* (pp.132-5). On the poets' theme of alienation more generally, see pp.258-77 ('Calling the Dead to Witness') and pp.277-80 specifically on Richard Aldington's *Death of a Hero*. For Owen's other allusions in 'Strange Meeting', including to the Bible, Henri Barbusse's *Le Feu*, Sir Lewis Morris, Harold Monro and Siegfried Sassoon, see J. Stallworthy (ed.), *Wilfred Owen: The Complete Poems and Fragments* (London: Chatto and Windus 2013, p. 149). On this poem at the Centenary, see M. Malone, 'Something like Zeugma: Silkin, Soldier-poets and the Great War Centenary', *Track Changes* 9 (2016), pp.52-72 from the White Rose 'Classical Heroism' network PhD: 'That other life, so near in time and distance' (University of Sheffield 2016).

lived experience of the time. The methodology of the volume at large is therefore in line with that of Sachs who explains:

> I am working with a model of reception in which the challenge is not to focus too exclusively on tracing literary influences and literary sources but rather to ask about how ancient texts and events are used in later historical moments.[10]

In the historical moment of WW1, thoughts on Greece and Rome were prompted by a wide range of pressing motives, public and personal. In the stresses and crises of the War the unfamiliar world of the classical past was felt and made familiar by artists, politicians and society more broadly. Examining classical encounters in diverse cultural texts from the war period sheds light on the different thought-worlds and dynamics of these strange and estranging times. WWI will thus be treated as a particular and significant episode in the reception of Classics.

WW1 CLASSICS AT THE CENTENARY

Amidst the outpouring of publications for the Centenary, new research relating to 1914-18 has evolved through a huge range of interdisciplinary seminars and conferences. Those most closely related to this project included: 'Commemorating Eric Dodds' (2014) at the University of Oxford;[11] '"Portals, Gates": The Classics in Modernist Translation' (2016) at McGill University, Montréal;[12] 'Classics and Irish Politics 1916-2016' (2016) at The Royal Irish

[10] Sachs also usefully distinguishes between generic uses of classical forms and "an internally differentiated classicism", where an awareness of distinctions between Greece and Rome can be witnessed, which thus allows a greater specificity and more pointed selection of appropriate precedents.
[11] Organized by Stephen Harrison and Christopher Stray.
[12] Organized by Lynn Kozak and Miranda Hickman.

Academy, Dublin;[13] and 'Mobilizing Identities/Identities in Motion Through the First World War' (2017) at the University of Edinburgh.[14] The Dodds conference considered his unusual war experiences, as an Irish nationalist out of step with wartime Oxford.[15] The McGill conference examined 'Classical Modernisms' in literature as a dialogue between Classics and anglophone Modernist studies. Alison Rosenblitt's keynote address drew from her recent book: *E.E. Cummings' Modernism and the Classics*.[16] The Irish Academy event centred on the uses of Classics in the Irish Revolt 1916, but also ranged over its broader place in Irish politics including Bloody Sunday 1972 and the foundation myths of Cuchulainn and Oisín.[17] 'Mobilizing Identities' took a particular interest in Italian texts as illustrative of the shifting European national identities of WW1, where the values of classical heroism emerged as both traditional and contested in a range of literary and visual forms. In 2014 the American Philological Association hosted a panel on 'Classics and the Great War', later adapted for The Classical Association UK as 'Refracting the Great War: Classical Receptions in English Literature, 1918–1929'.[18] Since contributors have played a conspicuous role in these Centenary colloquia, this Special Issue arises from recent debates at the very forefront of classical and related research on the War.

The main inspiration for this new volume was the ground-breaking book by Elizabeth Vandiver, *Stand in the Trench, Achilles* (2010), which examined the receptions of Classics in the poetry of the Great War and the resonance of Classics in commemoration and

[13] In collaboration with Trinity College Dublin and the University of Notre Dame (USA), organized by Isabelle Torrance.
[14] Organized by Cristina Savettieri and Federica Pedriali, with proceedings forthcoming in Palgrave Macmillan.
[15] For Dodds' conclusion 'that this was not my war', being given white feathers, medical service in Serbia, and censure from the Oxford authorities for supporting the Irish rebellion, see E.R. Dodds, *Missing Persons. An Autobiography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1977), pp.38-52.
[16] Oxford: Oxford University Press 2016.
[17] Also N. Allen: "'out of eure sanscreed into oure eryan': Ireland, the Classics, and Independence", in *Classics and National Cultures* (2010), pp. 16-33.
[18] David Scourfield was the convenor for both.

remembrance. This appeared in the influential *Classical Presences* series which has also provided important grounding for these essays through examinations of classical receptions in different cultural contexts. Works of particular importance for this assessment of the Great War include *Classics and Imperialism in the British Empire* (2010), *Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds* (2007), and *Classics and National Cultures* (2010).[19] A further significant study is *Greek and Roman Classics in the British Struggle for Social Reform* (2015),[20] which explored the various ideological complexities of the classical tradition across centuries. The volume will complement these recent works by maintaining a breadth of vision on the wide variety of types of engagement with Classics but narrowing the scope to the years of the War and its aftermath.

In order to engage with the historical experiences and artistic imaginaries of WW1, classicists draw on the enormous body of work in modern cultural history. Within this related discipline, a number of key studies have offered important insights on the place and use of Classics in different European traditions of the War. Paul Fussell's ground-breaking book, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975) covers a great deal of ground on British experiences; he also provides a number of pertinent observations on the lives and writings of Classicists and the uses of Classics. Robert Graves and Edmund Blunden, both of whom had won scholarships for Classics at Oxford, wrote significant war memoirs.[21] While at the Western Front Oliver Lyttelton contrasted his experience of the slowness of time waiting for attack with Ovid's scenario of lovers cherishing the long night (p.193);[22] between bursts of shellfire Alexander Gillespie mused on Hector and Achilles 'and all the heroes of long ago';[23] and Cyril Falls

[19] Bradley (ed.) 2010; Hardwick & Gillespie (edd.) 2007; and Stephens & Vasunia (edd.) 2010.
[20] H. Stead & E. Hall (edd.) 2015. London: Bloomsbury.
[21]On Graves' *Good-bye to All That* (1929), pp. 255-77; on Blunden's *Undertones of War* (1928), pp. 321-37. See also p.112 on their modest social backgrounds.
[22] Fussell, p. 193 n. 1 (p. 433): *From Peace to War* (1968), p.164.
[23] *ibid*, p. 200 n.13 (p.433): in G. Chapman (ed.) *Vain Glory* (1968), p.160.

endured a shell attack by 'repeating a school mnemonic for Latin adverbs'.[24] In letters home Stephen H. Hewett quoted Horace's 'Tomorrow we'll set out again on the wide sea' (*Odes* I, vii, 32) as an oblique reference to his imminent return to the firing line[25] and Vivian de Sola Pinto requested his father send him 'an indelible pencil, candles, and the works of Petronius in the Loeb edition'.[26] (p.78). Alongside Barbusse's *Under Fire,* Wilfred Owen in December 1917 was reading 'Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus'.[27] On reading habits more generally Fussell explains how the development of 'popular education' had created at this point a respect for literature 'unique in modern times' and how this was supported through the pioneering Workmen's Institutes and the National Home Reading Union, with texts made accessible through affordable translations from Everyman's Library and Oxford World's Classics.[28] For men at the Front ancient literature served an important 'consolatory' purpose.[29]

Modris Ecksteins' influential *Rites of Spring* (1989) considered the 'rebellious energy' of the Great War as bringing about 'the birth of the modern age': the achievement of new life through rites of sacrifice and death (Preface xiii-xiv). In this dynamic, the 'awesome industrial and military power' of Germany represented 'innovation and renewal' against the conservative restraints of the *Pax Britannica* (xv). On developments in German science, engineering, electrics, chemistry, physics, architecture and design, Ecksteins observes (p. 68): 'the German advance around the turn of the century was astonishing, and at the same time suggestive of the staggering potential of the German economy'.[30] This 'cult of *Technik*' was further the basis of the pre-eminence of the German education system, with its universities recognised as world-

[24] *ibid.* p. 211 n.39 (p.434): reported by A. French in G.A. Panichas (ed.) *Promise of Greatness* (1968), p.235.
[25] *ibid.* p.301 n.24 (p.436): *A Scholar's Letters from the Front* (1918), p.66.
[26] *ibid.* p.78 n.72 (p.431): *The City that Shone* (1969), p.236.
[27] *ibid.* p. 292 n. 2 (p.435): H. Owen and J. Bell, eds., *Collected Letters* (1967), p. 520.
[28] *ibid.* pp.194-5.
[29] *ibid.* p.210.
[30] On the dangerous disparity in Germany between 'the most explosive military machine', 'the most powerful engineering industry in the world' and its 'antiquated state' of government, see Winter and Baggett, p.27.

leading centres of research (pp. 70-71). In the arts Stravinsky's opera *Le Sacre du Printemps*, produced by Diaghilev in Paris 1913, is a high watermark of modernist innovation and controversy. Earlier in 1912 Nijinsky, choreographer for *Le Sacre*, had approached Richard Strauss, via Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, to ask for a new ballet. As Hoffmannsthal explained to Strauss, 'beyond all bounds of convention is exactly what he longs for', since Nijinsky 'desires to show what he can do, in a region like the one you opened up in *Elektra*'.[31] This model of iconoclasm, which premiered at the Dresden State Opera in 1909, was a composition based on Sophocles' ancient Greek tragedy. On this paradoxical juxtaposition of 'the primitive and the ultramodern' in German culture of this time, Ecksteins reports a comment from the writer Theodor Fontane:

> What I like about the kaiser is his complete break with the old, and what I don't like about the kaiser is this contradictory desire of his to restore the ancient.[32]

The experiences of the War were to intensify both this heightened experimentation in Germany and its opposite impulse towards the ancient.[33]

Kenneth Silver (1989) is concerned with visual art in Paris and identifies Spring 1917 as the point when the 'dawning of a new classic age' was posited in *avant-garde* debates as a valid 'direction for the modern sensibility' (p.89). Since 'the equation of France and Classical Antiquity had long been a commonplace of national propaganda' (p.90), Silver sees the paradox whereby the Parisian *avant-garde* now shares the preferences of 'propagandist literature' in its 'Antique, classical, and Latin evocations' (p.95).[34] On the development of this nationalist discourse in WW1, Silver shows how a gradual opposition was formed between

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[31] *ibid.* p.41, with n. 4, p.340.
[32] *ibid.* p.89, with n.22 (p.343).
[33] *ibid.* pp. 146, 175 and 210-11.
[34] See Silver pp.95-101 on further uses of classics and classicism in French wartime propaganda.

German barbarism and French 'civilization' and 'humanity', with French superiority rooted in its classical heritage and Romance language (pp. 92-94). The new *avant-garde* classicism for Silver begins with the meeting of Cocteau and Picasso in 1915 (p.107), leading to their collaboration on the ballet, *Parade*, which premiered in May 1917. Like *Le Sacre,* this shocking modernist collaboration was overseen by Diaghilev.[35] Silver describes Picasso's overture curtain as 'a summation of the sources and mythic stereotypes of the Latin tradition' (p.119) and identifies this remarkable encounter between cubism and classicism (pp. 115-26) as 'an advanced aesthetic' too challenging to be accepted by the Parisian public of the time.[36] Nevertheless, *Parade* was a key influence on the development of *avant-garde* art into the post-war years. Analysing Picasso's 'vast *oeuvre* in the classical style' produced 1921-24 (p.282), Silver pays tribute to his ability to combine 'in a single work, classicizing and Cubist quotations from his own *oeuvre*', and through this 'interplay of stylistic polarities', modern and ancient, 'thereby to rise above the banal categories that ensnared less powerful artists' (p.316). Silver shows how, despite its earlier celebrations of change, the *avant-garde* by the end of the War had blended the classical with the cubist to express 'the tragic realization of inevitability' (p.321). Throughout this perceptive discussion Silver remains alert to the flexibility of the classical, particularly in the hands of accomplished innovators.

Samuel Hynes (1990) deals with English culture and how it was transformed by WW1. His approach stresses the 'radical discontinuity' of the War and how it came to be imagined as 'a gap in history'.[37] Within this framework Hynes tends to align Classics with allegiances to conservative values. For example, the journalist E.B. Osborn in 1914 bolsters his patriotism by dwelling on 'Heroic Spirits' (p.24):

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[35] On the place of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in Parisian culture and the effects of *Parade*, see pp. 113-26.
[36] See also Winter and Baggett, p.22-23.
[37] Hynes on this 'chasm' or 'great fracture': pp. ix-xii, 239, 244-5, 249, 252, 329.

> I myself seek equanimity nowadays chiefly in the company of Greek and Roman poets – men for whom war rather than peace was the natural order of things.

C.F.G Masterman's British Department of Information from very early in the War drew on 'the pillars of the Edwardian literary establishment', including the Classicists Gilbert Murray and Jane Harrison (pp. 26-7). Rupert Brooke, who studied Classics at Cambridge, is the paradigm for the 'old rhetoric' of war (p.109):

> One reason for the popularity of Rupert Brooke's war sonnets is that he got all the abstractions into seventy lines of verse: Holiness, Love, Pain, Honour, Nobleness, Glory, Heroism, Sacrifice, England – they're all there.

Hynes traces how this 'Big Words' rhetoric of heroes and victories was rejected by many during the course of the War.[38] In its place arose either the bitter and angry style of protest or a quiet, unheroic mode.[39] However, the high rhetoric and anti-rhetoric both remained in evidence thereafter.[40] Heroic language persisted into the 'monument-making' of the War, in anthologies 'by dead young war poets' with titles such as *A Crown of Amaranth*, or memoirs recounting *Golden Deeds of Heroism* (pp.277) but the 'anti-monuments' also continued their challenges to this vision (pp. 283-310). Hynes observes how wartime England was therefore a place of 'two cultures' (p.283):

> a conservative culture that clung to and asserted traditional values, and a counter-culture, rooted in rejection of the war and its principles. Each culture had its art, its literature, and its monuments; and each denied the other.

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[38] Cf. Fussell, pp.21-4, Ecksteins, pp.218-22, Winter 1995, p.8.

[39] See pp. 30,109-19, 152-59, 166-67 and 187-88.

[40] Hynes, p.252. Cf. Rouzeau & Becker, p.108 on how '*Devoir,* Duty, *Pflicht*' was ever-present in soldiers' personal papers and letters.

The place of Classicists and classical influences in these two cultures is not clear-cut. For while one Greek scholar from Oxford, Gilbert Murray, supported Masterman's propaganda bureau and described the times as 'a heroic age' (1915), another, Bernard 'Bill' Adams, in his memoir *Nothing of Importance* (1916) presented 'a quiet narrative where he corrects the official, popular version of trench war' and praises conscientious objectors. [41]

Jay Winter's substantial body of work on WW1 provides comprehensive and judicious accounts which include assessments of specific uses of classical material. *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (1995) considers Britain, France and Germany and pays testament to 'the sheer magnitude of the war effort, the pain of loss, the exhaustion of the populations' (p.95). Winter notes the dedication of German romanticism to classical imagery, particularly of heroism (p.72) and in France the use of the Winged Victory in wartime propaganda, including *l'images d'Epinal* (pp.129-31). But since death, loss and mourning are Winter's main themes, the primary attention to 'classical strophes' (p.5) is as a form of consolation and an appropriate mode of expressing 'the debt of the living to the dead' (p.115).[42] The central contention of *Sites of Memory* is that (p.223):

> the backward gaze of so many writers, artists, politicians, soldiers, and everyday families in this period reflected the universality of grief and mourning in Europe from 1914. A complex, traditional vocabulary of mourning, derived from classical, romantic or religious forms, flourished, largely because it helped mediate bereavement.[43]

Throughout Winter argues that the 'false antithesis of the "moderns" and the "ancients"' (p.18) needs to be replaced by a greater understanding of the 'overlap of languages and approaches between the old and the new' during the War (p.3). Winter can thus interpret Lutyen's

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[41] Hynes, p. 111 for Murray and pp. 209-11 for Adams.
[42] See particularly Ch. 4, 'War memorials and the mourning process', pp.78-116.
[43] On this power 'to mediate bereavement', see also *Sites* p.5 and p.115.

Cenotaph as 'unabashedly ancient, recalling Greek forms' while simultaneously modern in its 'elemental' simplicity, in keeping with the sombre public mood (pp.102-5). On this blend of modes Winter appreciates, no less than Silver, the remarkable dialogue between ancient and modernist forms in *avant-garde* art, including the ballet *Parade* (p.132) and the poetry of Guillaume Apollinaire, whom he describes as 'an iconoclast with a flair for tradition'.[44] In 'Conversations with the dead' (pp.210-17), Winter considers the treatment of alienation in Abel Gance's film *J'accuse* (1918-19) and identifies the trope of the return of the dead as used by poets across Europe.[45] Owen's 'Strange Meeting' is compared with Sassoon's 'Enemies' but also with Anton Schnack's 'Der Tote' ('The dead soldier').[46] In this context the potential of classical tropes to disturb traditional viewpoints can be seen in Winter's discussion of the German painter Otto Dix and his *Self-portrait as Mars*: 'after 1914, in a sense, classical mythology, mediated by Nietzsche, had come alive' (p.160).

Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker (2000) reflect on the commemorations of the 80th anniversary of the Armistice in 1998, seeing the occasion as evidence of a 'spectacular return of the Great War to the collective consciousness' (p.1). As historians working at the international research project of The Historial de la Grande Guerre in Péronne, their primary focus is French experiences of the War. Building on Winter 1995, their main theme is 'the circles of mourning' within combatant societies (p.8), with particular attention to the realities of bodily violence and wounding (p.23) as well as the sufferings of civilians and military prisoners. Like Hynes, they note how: 'an aesthetic and ethical code of heroism, courage and battle violence vanished in the immense cataclysm of 1914-18' (p.28) but in agreement with Winter they stress the continuities rather than discontinuities in values throughout the War (p.105). The brief mentions of Classics as a live discourse of the War are

[44] *ibid.* p. 216; on Apollinaire see also pp. 18-22, 136, 214-17, 222, 228-9.
[45] *ibid.* Ch 1. 'Homecomings' pp. 15-28; analysis of the film pp. 133-8.
[46] *ibid.* pp. 210-13.

accordingly limited to French concepts of superiority in the war of 'civilisation', where France was the defender of universal culture 'with its Greek origins', against German *Kultur* as merely 'sectarian' (p.149), and to the persistent 'high diction' and ubiquitous Latin inscriptions in national commemorative monuments across Europe (pp.188-202).

In *Reconstructing the Body* (2009) Ana Carden-Coyne's theme of bodily wounding and renewal in post-war reconstructions broadens debates on classicism to advertising, fashion, the beauty industries and modern dance, in addition to medicine and health, including disability, gender and sexual identity. This account of Britain, the USA and Australia in the 1920s and 30s, also dipping back into the war years, amply makes the case for the widespread presence of 'classical constructs and motifs' (p.26) in post-war cultures.[47] Carden-Coyne views classicism as a healing discourse for 'war-wrecked bodies' (p.21), using the beauty and purity of ancient forms (p.110-27);[48] its monuments function as a form of 'anaesthetics'(pp. 123-7), offering a 'sanitized vision of war' (p.126) and performing 'cleansing' and 'hygienic' functions (p.124 and p.149) by transforming images and memories of violence. In a powerful example of how classical reference might be used to achieve emotional distance, Henry Tonks, the eminent maxillofacial surgeon, is quoted imagining his war-damaged patients as classical statuary (p.101): "One I did the other day of a young fellow with a rather classical face was exactly like a living damaged Greek head, as his nose had been cut clean off".[49] Such 'anaesthetic' power is also found in the ever-present classical motifs in public memorials (pp.127-59), from the national Anzac Memorials at Sydney (pp.140-1) and the Suez Canal (pp.152-3) to lesser-known local ones, e.g. the 'digger'

[47] Although classicism's relations to specific ancient ideas and texts are not always clear. E.g. on Plato: mention of *Symposium* is needed in the discussion of 'Platonic geometry and ideal types' (p.38) to avoid the impression that Plato advocated 'passion for the body'; misleading elisions between Platonic 'mimesis' and 'copying from the antique' (p.102) and between 'Platonic' and Freudian notions of *eros and thanatos* (p.125) require further analysis.
[48] Classicism gave reassurance that civilization had survived the War: see e.g. p.120, p.126 and *passim*.
[49] Carden-Coyne, p.101, fn. 220.

memorials in Pimpana and Newcastle, New South Wales (p.137).[50] Various wartime contributions from 'vocal classical humanists' are also presented, including Kenyon's report to the Imperial War Graves Commission as informed by Athenian burial practices (p.111), and Lowes Dickinson and Murray on the need for 'the Greek spirit' to rise again to the aid of international peace (p.112-114).[51] Overall, in its public and private manifestations classicism is shown as an inherently conservative force (p.55-6): an 'aesthetic code of the British empire' and bearer of establishment values.

Theodore Ziolkowski's studies of the literary receptions of Virgil (1993) and Ovid (2005) include assessments of how these Roman poets were regarded and used amidst the turmoil of WW1. Readers and authors chose Virgil's texts because they desired 'patterns of order and stability' (p.3), while the poet himself served as a model of endurance (p.x):

> they saw in his works … a set of values and an image of security that they missed in a world transformed by World War I.

That Virgil had lived through 'civil war, revolution, expropriation, brutal agrarian reform, exile, dictatorship, and imperial aggression' (p.26) created significant grounds for identifying with him: he was regarded as 'a model of dignified survival', providing 'a certain strength for their own lives in troubled times' (p.xi). Ironically, the appeal of Ovid amongst European modernists of the same years lay precisely in his differences from Virgil. Ziolkowski observes how Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist* (serialized 1914-1915) began a notable new trend (p.36):

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[50] Cf. local memorials across northern England, pp.144-50.
[51] See also pp. 40-58 on 'Classicism in the Academy'.

> Joyce, an Irishman sharing none of the nationalist-imperialist sentiments that endeared Virgil to most of his contemporaries, wrote the first of the modernist masterpieces featuring Ovid and themes from the *Metamorphoses*.

Ovid, famously banished from Rome by the emperor Augustus, is shown to derive his popularity amongst modernists as ‘the ur-exile’ (p.42). But the themes of his *Metamorphoses* also bore significant cultural resonances in this era (p.42):

> Ovid’s notion of change, transformation, metamorphosis … anticipated the sense of spiritual renewal that motivated so many writers and intellectuals as they looked about at postwar Europe.

Ziolkowski sets out Ovidian reception in anglophone modernist authors, including Joyce, Pound, Lawrence, Woolf, and Eliot, but also in European, including Ripert’s *Ovide: Poète de l’amour, des dieux et de l’exil* (pp.46-9) and Rilke’s *Sonnets to Orpheus* (*Sonette an Orpheus),* pp. 55-66. In a series of sensitive readings, Ziolkowski identifies precisely the various motives of those who used Ovid at this time, as in the remarkable case of Osip Mandelstam (pp. 67-73). Ovid was exiled to the remote port of Tomis, now Constanţa, Romania, where he died after writing his *Tristia* and *Letters from the Black Sea* (pp. 22-24). Mandelstam’s tragic circumstances of political arrests and forced travels, including to the Crimean town of Feodosia, also on the Black Sea, forged for him such a close identification with Ovid that he strove ‘to make the Roman poet live again’ through his own verse (p.70). Mandelstam published his *Tristia* in a Russian *émigré* press in Paris 1922, and after many years of fleeing both the Soviets and the White Guard (pp.68-9), died in his final exile, ‘sentenced to hard labor in eastern Siberia’ (p.73).

Suzanne Marchand’s ‘The Great War and the Classical World’, her Presidential address to the German Studies Association 2014, also considers the varied uses of Classics in

literature and lives. After dividing traditional and innovative uses, which she terms 'historicist and anti-historicist', she further distinguishes under the former a type of 'everyday classicism': 'bourgeois liberal historicism' (pp.240-3). Marchand identifies this 'omnipresent classical imagery' (p.240), especially for the middle and upper classes as 'essentially part of the furniture, of the mind, and of the city'.[52] In contrast to this easy familiarity, Marchand sees *avant-garde* encounters with Classics as innovative attempts at 'repurposing the ancient world' (p. 242). Marchand's further German examples of these different uses include Alfred von Schlieffen's historicist debt to Hannibal in the matter of battle tactics *versus* the anti-historicism of classical receptions in 'dissonant' artworks by Reinhardt, von Stuck and Hauptmann (p.242).

Considering the mainstream, Marchand offers two important transcultural observations on Germany and Britain. In contrast to the evidence on British soldiers from Vandiver and Jenkyns,[53] Marchand concludes: 'What we know about German soldiers' reading (and writing) habits does not suggest deep interaction with the classics' (p.246); 'there is not nearly so much sentimental repurposing of Homer' (p.244). Her distinction between German and British war memorials is also illuminating: in Germany after 1915 far less classical iconography is used. Marchand's suggested explanations are that 'the classical in general works best for the victors' and that this 'symbolic language' may have been avoided because it was 'increasingly being identified with democracy and with "the West"' (p.252). Marchand calls her study 'impressionistic' (p.239) and acknowledges that future research is needed (p. 244). But she maintains that for most men in the trenches, 'the sirens

[52] An adaptation of Richard Jenkyns' memorable phrase in: 'The Beginning of Greats, 1800-1872', in M.G. Brock and M.C. Curthoys (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford* VI (Oxford: Clarendon 1997), p. 519. Vandiver also uses Jenkyn's 'part of the furniture of the mind' regarding Classics in public-schools, as acknowledged p.39 fn.22.

[53] Vandiver 2010; R. Jenkyns. 1980. *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

did not sing' (p.247) and that 'serious engagement with the classics was certainly restricted to the European elite' (p.241) – a claim which this volume interrogates in various ways.

NEW DISCUSSIONS FOR 2018

Within the huge body of scholarship on the War this Special Issue is the first extended study devoted to WW1 receptions of the classical world as a whole, drawing on its literatures, histories and cultural forms. Since any large theory or narrative needs constantly to be tested against the evidence of its component parts, this close analysis of classical receptions offers a proving ground for broader studies of the War. Its chosen parameters, of British and German experiences either of the war years or referring directly back to them, allow an intensive and sustained focus on a range of evidence that has not yet been considered or explored in sufficient detail. The volume shows how classical reception can and does move beyond the analysis of allusion and intertextuality as the sole or prime defining criterion: the essays together consider the interfaces between literary, visual and experiential insights. The project also has value in challenging preconceptions and in problematising apparently simple polarities and generalisations about classical engagements in the War. It will thus contribute to larger debates in the field of intellectual and cultural history of the 20th century, a period marked by the War's legacies.

WW1 can be regarded as a distinctive confluence of agents, circumstances and texts. The lived experience of war brought ancients and moderns together through a shared concern with death in combat. While there are evidently many differences between warfare in the early twentieth century and in ancient times, the central acts of aggression, defence and killing remain a constant. Greek and Roman soldiers, artists, writers and audiences experienced the sufferings of war and its strain on social structures and loyalties, as well as on the built and

natural environments; they understood no less than their modern counterparts the power of patriotic discourses, the demands of mourning and memorializing, and the consequences of victory, defeat and peace in its various forms. Such closer affinities promote very specific kinds of reception dialogue – in literary texts but also in mainstream media and public mourning.

The era of WW1 also produced a distinctive confluence between authors and readers of different classes. The discourse of class obligation and privilege clearly continued to exert great pressure during the War. But widespread testimony shows that the war disrupted established social relations and created new communities of mourning: soldiers were killed and families grieved regardless of status. While authors and audiences related differently to classical forms and figures according to their educational opportunities and groundings in the ancient world, in an era of affordable print media, cinema, and active workers' education, cultural horizons were changing rapidly.[54] Due to the widespread literacy created by recent educational reforms, the chance to read and write about the war was available equally to people across society: officers, lower ranked-soldiers and women in war service wrote memoirs; war magazines, literature and poetry anthologies were widely popular. Ancient texts and figures were indeed 'part of the furniture' for the well-educated middle and upper classes but, as Marchand says, this classical furniture was also encountered by anyone handling money, commuting, entering a bank, museum, library or theatre (p.240).[55] Given the cultural dynamics and interchanges of this time, and since sensibilities, imaginations and independent minds are not determined by class, it is difficult to know where awareness of classical forms or serious engagement with them starts and ends. Fixed notions of 'elite' *versus* 'popular' uses of classical material therefore need to be questioned. Further, the dichotomy between 'traditional'

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[54] See Vandiver, Ch. 1 on 'Public-School Culture' (pp. 33-92) and Ch. 2 'Middle- and Working-Class Classics' (pp. 93-162).

[55] Many theatres of the UK were home also to popular music hall. The Hackney Empire built 1901 features a prominent statue of the Muse Thalia.

and 'innovative' uses of Greece and Rome also needs to be treated cautiously. For classical receptions in opposing discourses may be equally provocative or demanding of creative energy and insight. This short collection does not try to give a comprehensive account or even an overview of the place of Classics in WW1. To do justice to that task would require many volumes. Its aim is rather to highlight how the complex and multi-faceted nature of classical receptions is revealed in a range of responses to the pressures of the War.

In the political spheres of the War Classics was used to reinforce conservative values but also to contest them. In the 19th century Classics was closely associated with imperial discourses and with elite and elitist values more generally. In establishment views, particularly of the German and British empires, Classics was regarded as *the* education for the elite who would exercise global power. Classical models were therefore adopted to support patriotism and the war effort. But amidst the dissolution of confident colonial authorities in WWI, while the 'high rhetoric' and values of glory and empire were rejected by many, classical heritage was not rejected with them. Rather, both the classically-educated and a wider public renegotiated their own cultural identifications with the lost empires of Greece and Rome. The classically-educated in Britain were active not only in the Liberal establishment (Asquith and Grey had both studied *Literae Humaniores* at Oxford) but also in activist organisations opposing it, for example, the Women's Social and Political Union, the Independent Labour Party, the Union of Democratic Control and other pacifist groups.[56] Classical references were used to resist diverse dominant discourses across Europe. The Proclamation of the Irish Republic in 1916 showed the 'radical legacy of classical ideas of political thought';[57] Gertrude

[56] Gilbert Murray's Liberal politics and commitment to the League of Nations is well documented in Stray 2007. Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson was active from early in the war in both the UDC and the No Conscription Fellowship. See M. Schwarz, *The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics During the First World War.* Oxford 1971, pp. 97-8; and E.M. Forster, *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson* (London, 1934).

[57] N. Allen, 'Classicism, Empire and Ireland', Classics and Irish Politics conference abstract; see also his 'out of eure sanscreed into oure eryan': Ireland, the Classics and Independence' in Stephens and Vasunia (eds.).

Atherton in her suffragist text, *The Living Present* (1917) valorized women munitions workers in France so that 'the Amazon-workers represented revered authority, strength and heroism';[58] the German socialist *Spartakusbund* named itself after the rebel-slave at Rome and Rosa Luxembourg compared the permanent defence of workers' rights with the labours of Sisyphus (Winter 1988, pp. 210-12). Modern and modernist artists equally used the classical heritage to provoke unfamiliar identifications between past and present, and so challenged the polarity of 'tradition' and 'innovation'. At the individual level, the use of classical texts and referents were as varied as the personal experiences that prompted them: to validate the war and equally to resist it; to affirm suffering for a greater cause, to stir the martial spirit, to seek solace amidst dehumanizing conditions; to cope with fear, stress and alienation; to seek equanimity through distancing; to mourn the loss of loved ones; to make sense of or simply to survive the War.

Classics is thus present in the public and private imagination of WWI, as both a means of expression and filter for experiences. This distinctive role arises from its deep embeddedness in European cultures, as ancient texts and forms had been used in abundance over centuries to shape identity and inform opinion. The classical tradition had become an intrinsic element in 19th century political and cultural life, useful to both conservative and progressive forces alike, due not least to its notable capacity to keep contradictory elements in play and to allow oblique and elliptical responses. The inherent flexibility of classical receptions emerges as a key theme of this collection.

As the title *Classics and Classicists* indicates, the articles in this volume hold simultaneously in their vision the uses of Classics and the particular lives and personal experiences of Classicists, as authors and audiences in WW1. It further seeks an inclusive

[58] Philippa Read, 'Female Heroism in First World War France: Representations and Lived Experiences', University of Leeds PhD thesis, 2016; part of the White Rose 'Classical Heroism' project.

approach to what might be termed 'an imagined community':[59] the Classicists of the time but also those who had been trained to any level in Greek or Latin, or been so intrigued as to study for themselves the ancient literatures and cultures, either in the original languages or through translations. It poses questions of how far this 'imagined community' might stretch, considering in what forms classical material was open to and known by a wider public during the War, and what, if any, methods can reliably identify uses of classical heritage as meaningful or otherwise.

The essays will hopefully encourage new studies of their shared themes, to develop a broader sense of the cultures of wartime and so stimulate further focus on groups traditionally regarded as on the margins of its significant events. Views of and engagements with Classics also need attention in different sites of the conflict and in colonial territories across the world, as used both to defend and to contest empire. The volume takes as axiomatic that responses to the War became formative for new traditions and approaches, which would help to set the course of the new century. It also recognises WW1 as a pivotal moment when North American audiences and academics began an intensive dialogue with European modernist traditions. Overall, the collection offers an interrogation of certain perceived or assumed classical values and modes of behaviour, encompassing the categories of 'elite', 'popular', 'traditional' and 'innovative'. In this way, the place and currency of Classics in WWI is re-evaluated.

Our expected readers include those in Classics and Reception Studies but also further academic audiences, including researchers in the disciplines of WWI History and Cultural Studies, European literatures, English literature, Modernist and Early 20th-century Studies, Philosophy and Political Theory. The discussions also intersect with recent work in the fields of Gender, Trauma and International Peace Studies. By focussing on the classical angle, the

[59] Benedict Anderson. 1983. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.

volume will illuminate other cross-disciplinary research projects on the history of the War and its cultures. Most of the papers are by Classicists working across the sub-disciplines of the history, literature, philosophy and ancient values of Greece and Rome. But, to engage more broadly, the volume also includes experts on German gender and culture studies and on modernist literature. While the papers mainly consider anglophone perspectives from the war years -- with this particular group of scholars based in Britain, Ireland and Canada -- these perspectives are also juxtaposed with German views and texts.

The volume opens with an historical piece by Christopher Stray which grounds the rest of the collection. This study of the relations between British and German Classicists during the war situates the question in the longer history of scholarly interchanges and disagreements (*odium philologicum*) stretching back to the 19th century. The combination of respect, inferiority and alarm provoked in Britain by German scholarship is discussed against the backdrop of unsettled international relations in the 19th century, as various European nations competed for power and position. Stray explains how political struggles were reflected in the competition between national scholarly programmes, including the establishment of the classical archaeological schools. The contrasting WW1 experiences of a range of classical scholars and students are assessed from the perspective of their University careers, contributions to war work and their various responses to Germany and the War.

Part One consists of three papers which turn from individual stories and viewpoints of scholars to the concepts and values of war and peace as used in the ancient world and deployed during the War. Hobbs analyses changing notions of heroism and the responses of Wilfred Owen to the classical canon, particularly Horace in his ‘Dulce et Decorum Est’. Hobbs argues that Owen’s poem criticises poets of the time who were offering ‘sanitized receptions of the Classics’ as a means of recruitment to the war. The theme of the dissenting soldier-poet challenging public and official discourses in WW1, and using classical resources to do so, is

taken up by Hardwick, who sets Owen alongside Isaac Rosenberg and Ivor Gurney and traces their poetry's cross-currents with war art, particularly the paintings of William Orpen. Hardwick shows how an awareness of classical receptions in these works helps to illuminate views of 'what peace entails' but also those wider aesthetic and historical processes through which public imagination and cultural memory are formed. This set of papers is completed with a return to a dual focus on Britain and Germany, as Morley compares the appropriation of Thucydides in British and German war propaganda. His essay shows how these combatant nations both used ideas from Thucydides, particularly Pericles' Funeral Oration, in popular media to help explain the war, to create support for it, to recruit its soldiers, and, crucially, to mourn its losses. Morley shows that one of the most significant outcomes of this wartime classical engagement -- in Britain, Germany and beyond -- was a dramatic change in the reception of Thucydides and the status of his history.

Part Two offers three literary studies of modernist texts. Where previous papers address the multiple significations of Classics from the particular perspectives of heroism and peace, Scourfield focusses more intensively on 'Classics' itself, identifying it as 'inherently unstable', given its openness to various constructions and appropriations. His paper shows some of the ways in which this instability manifested itself in the period of the War and the years following, particularly in British literature. He examines the use of Classics in the novels of Woolf and Ford Madox Ford, where the discipline itself is regarded as revitalised by and for the new era. In addition, Scourfield shows how the experiences of Johannes Basson studying in Berlin in 1912 with Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and appointed after the war to the Chair of Classical Philology at the University of Stellenbosch, provide a personal story of modernist concerns with the tensions between discontinuity and restoration as they stretched beyond Europe through the pro-German sympathies and identifications of Afrikaaner nationalism.

Kozak and Hickman consider the American poet H.D., educated in Classics at Bryn Mawr and living in London during the War. Their study shows how H.D. created from Ancient Greek poetry a feminist language responsive to the "New Women" of her time and offered new 'coming-of-age narratives' in dialogue with traditional ideals of heroism and war discourse. A close analysis of H.D.'s strikingly imagist language shows, notably through divergences from the Ancient Greek, her poetic responses to the experience of knowledge in wartime, the wounds of those on the home-front, and the overlaps between the two. Following the same progression as in Part One, the third paper in the set is concerned with German receptions. Sharp asks how *Trojan Women*, a Greek tragedy often identified in anglophone traditions as anti-war and in a translation by a known pacifist — the Austrian poet Franz Werfel — not only made it past the censors in wartime Berlin, in the spring of 1916, but was also warmly received by German critics and audiences alike in Berlin, Düsseldorf and Vienna. Sharp considers the audiences' powerful reactions to the portrayal of Hecuba as mourning mother.

As each essay treats an independent theme, no overall conclusion is arrived at or aimed for. Reflecting the heterogeneity of Classics, the collection draws out and interprets a range of classical receptions created and experienced by men and women in the War years.

Elizabeth Vandiver's Afterword reflects on the essays and on the remarkable pace of development in classical reception studies of WW1. Words from the author of *Stand in the Trench, Achilles* provide a fitting close for this Centenary volume.

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