

# The Allure of Archaeology: Agnes Conway and Jane Harrison at Newnham College, 1903–1907

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Jane Ellen Harrison, eccentric Newnham don and classicist, delivered an annual lecture to first year students. She delivered her lectures in dimness so her lantern slides would be clearly visible, adopting a theatrically high-pitched lecture voice for dramatic effect.<sup>1</sup> In 1903, listening enraptured in the audience, sat Agnes Conway, a first year history student. Conway wrote to her mother afterwards saying: 'it was perfectly lovely – But oh dear, I wish I knew Greek! I am perfectly fired to learn, for it is no good doing Archaeology without it, I have discovered [...]'.<sup>2</sup>

Agnes Conway's love of archaeology began from that lecture, largely due to Harrison's singular style. Few could match Harrison's delivery; Conway described how another Newnham student's paper on Knossos left her uninspired:

I couldn't help thinking how oppositely the same subject affects you when treated by different people [...] it is an enthralling subject, but if Miss Harrison had done it, I should have been out of myself by this time and rampant about Archaeology.<sup>3</sup>

Although Agnes Conway passed both parts of a History Tripos she studied Greek and archaeology throughout her university years and dedicated twenty-five years of her life to archaeology.<sup>4</sup> Her main work in archaeology was in the Middle East. In the 1920s and 1930s she and her husband George Horsfield, Chief Inspector of the Department of Antiquities in Transjordan, conducted excavations at Petra, in modern day Jordan.<sup>5</sup> Together they presented their joint work in publications and at conferences to an international community of scholars (see Conway and Horsfield 1930; Horsfield and Horsfield 1938a, 1938b, 1942).

Agnes Conway's diaries and correspondence from Newnham College are a valuable resource for understanding the dissemination of archaeological training and knowledge during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During that time organised institutional excavations of sites in the

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<sup>1</sup> Jane Ellen Harrison (1850–1928). Francis Cornford's description of Harrison's Delphi Lectures in the Archaeological Museum at Cambridge is often referenced to demonstrate Harrison's style. Cornford was a young Cambridge undergraduate in his fourth year, and Harrison's style moved him enough to contact Harrison. He would later join Harrison as one of the Cambridge 'ritualists' along with Gilbert Murray (see Robinson 2002: 125; Beard 2000: 55; Stewart 1957: 19–20).

<sup>2</sup> Conway, A. 22 October 1903. Letter to Katrina Conway. Cambridge University Library: MSS Add 7676/R1-122/R41a+b.

<sup>3</sup> Conway, A. 29 January 1904. Letter to Katrina Conway. Cambridge University Library: MSS Add 7676/R1-122/R50.

<sup>4</sup> Tripos was the term for Honours examinations at Cambridge, required to obtain a degree qualification (although for women at Cambridge no degree was granted until the 1940s). The examinations were divided into two parts. A student could leave Newnham having taken either one or both parts of the examination (see Breay 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Petra is perhaps one of the most recognisable archaeological sites in the world due to its stunning state of preservation and its place as one of Jordan's most famous tourist attractions. It has become inextricably linked to popular culture due to the use of the Treasury building as the site of the Holy Grail in the 1986 blockbuster, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. The Petra complex was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985. (<http://www.visitjordan.com/visitjordan/cms/MajorAttractions/Petra/tabid/63/Default.aspx>)

classical world, by Britons abroad, greatly increased. Students or alumni of the British School at Athens conducted many of these excavations.<sup>6</sup> Many of these students came from Oxford and Cambridge, and are the focus of this present article. At Cambridge, the development of Part II of the Classical Tripos included the formal introduction of archaeology to the Cambridge curriculum. A group of Cambridge classicists, some with direct links to archaeological institutions abroad, helped to incorporate archaeological material into classical studies. Among those involved was Jane Harrison, who became Lecturer in Classical Archaeology at Newnham College in 1899, and her ties to archaeology were solidified by this appointment.

Exploring the network of archaeological and classical connections at Cambridge more completely reveals the development of archaeology during this period, and most importantly, the men and women responsible for its promotion. In this article I use a prosopographical approach to illuminate the social history of archaeology. Prosopography, the examination and presentation of biographical information on individuals with common interests, is often used in historical research (Carter 1984). This approach highlights the fact that the archaeologists and classicists at Cambridge during this period, were not disconnected entities, contributing fragments to the sum total of archaeological knowledge, but rather part of an evolving community that developed, influenced and effected future generations. Although few of the scholars discussed here conducted excavations themselves, and thus might now not be considered 'archaeologists' in the modern sense of the word, they were aware of the power of archaeological material, in adding a new layer to society's understanding of the ancient world.

Agnes Conway's archive also gives us some insight into how the social and economic background of women entering university education in the first years of the twentieth century influenced their futures. In Conway's case, it led to further study and a career – in all but name and remuneration – in archaeology. It also led to the creation of a valuable social network that she maintained throughout her life.

### **Women in the History of Archaeology: Background and Context**

In the absence of a well-established historiography of archaeology, as noted by David Gange (2006: 1083 n.1), histories of archaeology remain, for the most part, interesting and anecdotal introductions to more 'solid' archaeological material, or divided into categories that suit archaeological 'events' rather than historical ones. Until the history of archaeology reflects a better understanding of the historical events that shape archaeological research, the subject will only ever be useful as an introduction. Unlike the wide-sweeping histories of archaeology traditionally accepted by archaeologists, in-depth research on the historical context of archaeology is still wanting. Pamela Jane Smith's recently published PhD thesis focuses on the history of Cambridge prehistory from 1915–1950, and makes extensive use of archival and oral history resources (Smith 2009). David Gill's blog 'History of the British School at Athens' (<http://bsahistory.blogspot.com>) provides linkage between themes and topics and the school and its directors, students and affiliates. However, approaches to the history of archaeology are varied, and historical methodology still under-appreciated and under-used in the context of archaeology's history.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Gill has shown that excavations were only conducted by male students at the BSA until 1910/1911, when a Newnham alumnae, Dorothy Lamb, participated in excavations at Phylakopi, on the island of Melos. However, he notes that the excavation's Director, John Droop, disapproved of women working on excavations generally, and it was not until the 1920s that women conducting excavations became more acceptable (2002: 506). Gill also notes that excavations were conducted by women students of the American School since the turn of the century (2002: 495). Harriet Boyd (later Boyd Hawes), an alumnae of Smith College in Massachusetts, was a student in the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, although she was not encouraged to excavate while a student. Hawes conducted excavations in Crete in 1900, and again from 1901–1904. She came to Newnham College in 1905 where Agnes Conway heard her give a presentation on her work (Conway, A. 15 October 1905. MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R193).

<sup>7</sup> Also see Gange, as noted above, as well as Bruce Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*; Dyson, S. 2006

The history of science provides useful examples of how to approach the history of a discipline and practice (see Smith 2009). Archaeology sits uncomfortably in the subject divide between social science, science and the humanities. At times it is considered a science, and at other times a social sciences, or a humanities subject; in reality it encompasses elements of both. Perhaps this characteristic of archaeological research is one reason why women were able to advance so far in it, both in excavations and academia, during the early twentieth century (also see Stig Sørensen 1998: 54). Dorothy Garrod (a Newnham graduate) became the first Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology at Cambridge in the 1930s, and Jane Harrison came close to being appointed Yates Chair in Classical Archaeology at University College London in the 1890s (Robinson 2002: 116–117). Women increasingly made a significant contribution to the study of the past during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Diaz-Andreu and Stig Sørensen 1998: 11–15).

Recent work on women in archaeology has helped to identify the significant impact that women made in archaeological endeavour, redressing their absence in some histories of archaeology (e.g., Diaz-Andreu and Stig Sørensen 1998; Hamilton *et al.* 2007). Stig Sørensen's work on the historiography of women in archaeology outlines important problems in women's incorporation into the history of archaeological practice, and reasons for the necessity of this incorporation (1998). Collective biographies such as Cohen and Sharp-Joukowski's *Breaking Ground* (2004), and its parallel ongoing online project through Brown University, 'Women in Old World Archaeology' ([http://www.brown.edu/Research/Breaking\\_Ground/](http://www.brown.edu/Research/Breaking_Ground/)) have helped to identify, and bring to scholarly attention, many female archaeologists working in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Such studies, although beneficial in highlighting women's role in the discipline, place women side by side with little mention of the shared experience, and background, of archaeologists from the same nation.

David Gill's 2002 article on women at the British School at Athens does take differences between nations into account, with separate sections on women in the American School of Classical Study in Athens, and in the British School. He notes that women were actively involved in archaeological investigation in Greece before the First World War, and briefly lists the pioneering work of women students at the British School at Athens. Very importantly, however, he notes that these women were not involved in excavations, but rather undertook mainly library and museum based research until the 1920s (Gill 2002: 493–494).<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless six of the fourteen women admitted to the British School at Athens between 1890 and 1914 were Newnham students or alumnae – and five of them had taken Part II of the Classical Tripos, and had specialised in archaeology.<sup>9</sup> Of the rest of the female students, five had been educated at Girton College (three of the five Girtonians were the earliest women students at the British School in Athens/BSA), two at University College London and one at St Andrews in Scotland (Gill 2008). Gill suggests that Jane Harrison and Charles Waldstein<sup>10</sup> may have contributed

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*In Pursuit of Ancient Pasts*; Diaz-Andreu, M. 2007 *A World History of Nineteenth Century Archaeology: Nationalism, Colonialism and the Past*; and Bahn, P. (ed) 1996 *Cambridge Illustrated History of Archaeology*. Other histories of archaeology are more geographically orientated, for example Silberman, N. 1982 *Digging for God and Country*, or Kuklick, B. 1996 *Puritans in Babylon*.

<sup>8</sup> However, British women were involved in excavations in Egypt at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries; Margaret Benson was the first woman granted the right to excavate in Egypt in 1895. She worked at the site of Luxor for three seasons, assisted by Janet Gourlay. Percy Newberry and Edouard Naville of the Egypt Exploration Fund were also involved in the excavations. See Gill 2002: 505; Peck, W. 2004. Margaret Benson *Women in Old World Archaeology Project*, Brown University, [http://www.brown.edu/Research/Breaking\\_Ground/bios/Benson\\_Margaret.pdf](http://www.brown.edu/Research/Breaking_Ground/bios/Benson_Margaret.pdf). Women were also involved in archaeological work on Petrie's digs, some as copyists of tomb paintings (Janssen 1992).

<sup>9</sup> Although the British School at Athens opened its doors to students in 1886, the first woman, a Girton graduate named Eugenie Sellars, was not admitted until 1890. She would become the Assistant Director of the British School at Rome from 1909–1925. Gill 2008: Students at the British School at Athens 1886–1914; Toynbee, J. M. C. rev. Dyson, S. 2004: Strong, Eugenie (1860–1943). *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press. (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36352>, accessed 19 Feb 2009)

to the high percentage of Cambridge-educated women who became BSA students (Gill 2002: 496; Breay 1999: 61).<sup>11</sup> Agnes Conway's diaries and correspondence from 1903 to 1907 illustrate the impact of both Harrison and Waldstein on studies in archaeology. But Harrison and Waldstein are not the only ones who used archaeological discoveries and materials in their classes. At that time there were a number of classicists interested in archaeology amongst the Cambridge faculty who all gave lectures that women students attended.

The presence of so many Cambridge educated women in the lists of BSA students before the First World War is probably due to the fact that some of the school's founders were themselves Oxbridge educated (Waterhouse 1986).<sup>12</sup> In addition both Oxford and Cambridge contributed annually to the school's subscription fund from 1895 onwards, with some individual colleges making separate contributions that enabled the school to establish studentships (see BSA 1895/1896: 30–31; BSA 1896/1897: 221). Despite the emergence of alternative higher education institutions, Cambridge and Oxford remained *the* places to study (see Peacock 1988: 25 referencing Halsey and Trow 1971: 39). The classical knowledge required to obtain a degree at Cambridge was a good preparation for classical scholarship, and for archaeological work in classical regions. Nonetheless, the large proportion of Cambridge women amongst BSA students also reflects the inclinations and influence of Cambridge members of staff before the First World War. It is vital to appreciate the support and inspiration that Cambridge educated women received from their peers, their lecturers, and their tutors, in pursuing their studies.

There have been several micro-historical and biographical studies of the community of women resulting from the emergence of the university education for women, and the domestic nature of women's education in the nineteenth century has been elucidated (Dyhouse 1981; Tullberg 1998 [1975]; Vicinus 1985; Robinson 2008). Vicinus' work on women's colleges makes the essential point that the residential communities that these institutions embodied provided women with an intellectual and social freedom they had never known before (Vicinus 1985: 124).<sup>13</sup> Other scholars have discussed women students and researchers at Cambridge in the context of the history of science, the history of classics, or the history of women's education (Gould 1997; Richmond 1997, 2006; Breay 1999; McWilliams-Tullberg 1998 [1975]; Vicinus 1985).<sup>14</sup>

The history of women in science has shown the difficulties that women experienced in gaining acceptance for studying subjects considered beyond their mental capabilities, or dangerous to their health (Gould 1997: 127, 131). Paula Gould (1997: 132) and Marsha Richmond (Richmond 2006: 565; 1997: 455) both have presented the marginalisation of women in the history of science due to their unofficial participation in scientific work. Referencing Margaret Rossiter's 1997 article, Richmond argues that at Cambridge women were able to participate in experimental research because such

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<sup>10</sup> Charles Waldstein (1856–1927) was Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum from 1883–1899. He became the Director of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens from 1888 to 1892. Returning to Cambridge, he was Slade Professor of Fine Art from 1895–1901 and again from 1904–1911 (Spivey, N. Walston, May 2008: Sir Charles Waldstein (1856–1927), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edition <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48709>, accessed 29 Aug 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Gill's biographies of Dorothy Lamb (1887–1967) and Winifred Lamb (1894–1963), both Newnham College alumnae and students at the British School at Athens, note that Harrison played a role in enhancing their interest in Archaeology (Gill 2004: Dorothy Lamb. Women in Old World Archaeology Project, Brown University; Gill, D. 2004: Lamb, Winifred (1894–1963), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. [Online]).

<sup>12</sup> Founders of the British Schools at Athens included: Richard Claverhouse Jebb, George Macmillan, T. H. Sweet-Escot and Walter Leaf.

<sup>13</sup> Vicinus concentrates on the women's colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, as well as Royal Holloway and Westfield Colleges, two other institutions dedicated to the higher education of women.

<sup>14</sup> Pamela Jane Smith's chapter on Dorothy Garrod (2009: 69–102) also discusses Garrod's Cambridge education and its impact on her career.

research was not accepted by the established scientific community, and thus could not necessarily attract male science students who wanted to advance professionally (Richmond 2006: 566; Rossiter 1997). In addition, she points out that students at Newnham and Girton colleges were not eligible for fellowships in the university, or funds that would have allowed them to conduct further research, so the opportunity to do such research would have been welcome (Richmond 2006: 578).

Many of these studies focus on the struggle that women, who fought for, and attended these schools, had to endure in the face of negative opinions about women's education. However, there are some positive aspects to the experiences of 'graduates' of these women's colleges. Several of the lecturers at Newnham College in the early 1900s attended Newnham in 1870s and 1880s; Marsha Richmond notes that in the sciences a number of demonstrators at Newnham College's Balfour Laboratories were drawn from former students as an alternative to obtaining permission for women to attend science lectures in the University (Richmond 1997: 434). Their re-entry into Newnham as teachers reflects the fact that the majority of educated women went into teaching as a profession; a considerable number of people believed teaching to be almost the only profession an educated woman should undertake (Robinson 2009: 203–211). Nonetheless, these women helped initiate future generations of women into scholarly endeavour. This circle of students and alumnae, growing as an institution and enhancing their experiences in academia, provided incoming students with an atmosphere in which they could develop independence and enhance their self-esteem through the support of the collegiate system. This atmosphere was especially important considering the larger debates on women's suffrage occurring at the same time.

The pupil-teacher relationship between Agnes Conway and Jane Harrison is an important example of the intellectual milieu that developed in the women's colleges at Cambridge. Unlike male undergraduates and Girton students, women at Newnham did not have to take Cambridge's Previous Examination in order to proceed to Tripos work. Other examinations, which tested students on more subjects than the Previous Examination's classics and mathematics, were deemed suitable alternatives (Gardner 1921: 48–49). This fundamental part of the college's academic character, which reflected the philosophy of Newnham's founders, would play an important role in the student experience there (Sutherland 1998: xii). Guided by their teachers, Newnham students were able to progress according to their talents and interests, and Agnes Conway's experience at Newnham reflects this environment.<sup>15</sup>

Richmond points out the necessity for re-examining the 'traditional analysis of research programs, research schools, professionalisation, publication records, and other signs of 'normal' academic achievement' when it comes to women in scholarship (Richmond 1997: 455). For the history of archaeology this kind of examination is essential – not only for women, but also for men as well. Archaeology was still developing into a profession and an academic discipline up until the Second World War. Throughout that period there were few opportunities for either men or women to make a living in archaeology, and few posts in academia were specifically devoted to archaeological studies.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The difference in educational models between the two Cambridge women's colleges is noted in Gould, P. 2001: *Models of Learning? The 'logical, philosophical and scientific woman' in Late Nineteenth Century Cambridge*, in Smith, J. and Stray, C. *Teaching and Learning in 19th-Century Cambridge*, Woodbridge: Boydell Press; and Sutherland, G. 1994: *Emily Davies, the Sidgwick and the Education of Women at Cambridge*, in R. Mason (ed.) *Cambridge Minds*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 34–37; and discussed at length in McWilliams-Tullberg, R. 1988 (revised edn): *Women at Cambridge*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>16</sup> There were a few Professorships in Archaeology established during the 19th century. University College London's Yates Chair in Classical Archaeology was established in 1885; Ernest Gardner (brother of Newnham alum and History Tutor Alice Gardner) was its first incumbent. Their brother Percy Gardner was Disney Chair of Archaeology (est. 1856) at Cambridge from 1880–1896, and Lincoln and Merton Professor of Classical Archaeology at Oxford (est. 1887) from 1887–1925. Flinders Petrie was appointed Professor of Egyptology at UCL in 1892. One of his students, John Garstang, set up an Institute of Archaeology in Liverpool in 1903. He was Honorary Reader in Egyptology, and then Professor of the Methods and Practice of Archaeology

A historian of archaeology should be aware of the different types of contributions to the subject made by both men and women, in order to understand the context in which the discipline developed. To increase our awareness of the variety of contributions made, we need to understand the background of the people involved in archaeological research *in addition* to their contributions to archaeology. The two elements are fundamentally linked, and understanding the backgrounds of archaeologists is instrumental in being able to interpret their work.

### Jane Harrison and Archaeology

Jane Harrison's life, and impact as a woman in the classics, has been chronicled fairly extensively (Harrison 1925; Stewart 1959; Peacock 1988; Breay 1999; Beard 2000; Robinson 2002). Robinson, Vicinus and Peacock discuss Harrison's role as a teacher, and Peacock notes students' fascination with Harrison's persona (Robinson 2002: 188–189, Vicinus 1985: 155–156, Peacock 1988: 152–157). However, detailed evidence of Harrison's students and the community at Cambridge during her time there has remained tantalisingly unexplored. Jessie (Crum) Stewart's book on Harrison is the only published account of Harrison's life through a former student's perspective (Stewart 1959). Although the terms of her contract at Cambridge made her teaching responsibilities light, in comparison to other Newnham faculty, Harrison had a huge impact on her students, and was certainly visible to those she did not tutor personally (Breay 1999; Robinson 2002: 122).

Students at Cambridge during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had plenty of opportunities to explore archaeological topics, even though a Department of Archaeology had yet to be established at the university. In addition to the formal inclusion of archaeology into the classical curriculum after 1879, the Greek play, instituted at Cambridge in 1882, and performed every three years, highlights the way in which the Classics and Classical archaeology were explored by students and lecturers (see Easterling 1993).<sup>17</sup> Jane Harrison's teaching style reflects this sense of theatricality and drama in exploring a past way of life – although it must be said that not all Cambridge lecturers in archaeological subjects were as dynamic, and Robinson notes that Harrison's approach was not necessarily effective for all of her students (2002: 188–189). However, her ability to enthral students in the topic, and the sense of physical interaction with the past, must have had a significant impact on her students if they were, like Agnes Conway, actively pursuing intellectual engagement with history and archaeology. Conway was not the first student Harrison had encouraged to undertake archaeological study; another former student, Jessie Crum, mentioned above, had accompanied Harrison on a trip to Greece in 1900; where they met and toured with several German and British archaeologists (Peacock 1988: 104; Stray 1995). Harrison and the other dons at Newnham provided a community in which their students could focus on their studies while ensuring that they could obtain as many advantages as possible during their time at college, despite the fact that they were denied degrees and full membership in the university.

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from 1907–1941. Percy Newberry succeeded Garstang as Professor of Egyptology at Liverpool from 1906–1919. Robert Carr Bosanquet became the Professor of Classical Archaeology at Liverpool from 1906–1920. 'NEWBERRY, Percy Edward', *Who Was Who, A & C Black, 1920–2008*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Dec 2007, <http://www.ukwhoswho.com/view/article/oupww/whowaswho/U229734>, accessed 3 Sept 2009; J. M. C. Toynbee and H. D. A. Major, 'Gardner, Percy (1846–1937)', rev. John Boardman, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33328>, accessed 3 Sept 2009; 'BOSANQUET, Robert Carr', *Who Was Who, A & C Black, 1920–2008*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Dec 2007, <http://www.ukwhoswho.com/view/article/oupww/whowaswho/U206381>, accessed 3 Sept 20; O. R. Gurney, 'Garstang, John (1876–1956)', rev. P. W. M. Freeman, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, online edn, May 2009. (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33341>, accessed 3 Sept 2009)

<sup>17</sup> The opening performance was Sophocles' *Ajax*. Easterling details the early history of the Cambridge Greek Play and details of Cambridge student and staff involvement in it. Many of the classical lecturers mentioned in this article, including Charles Waldstein, R. C. Jebb and A. W. Verrall were involved in the Greek play productions.

Harrison retired from teaching at Newnham College in 1922. Many of her former students and colleagues presented her with a memorial on the occasion, and Agnes Conway played an important part in organizing this commemoration (Evans 1966: 251). Conway carefully recorded Harrison's role as a teacher in the early years of the twentieth century; she was one of the few students Harrison tutored personally who became a working (and a published) archaeologist in later life.<sup>18</sup>

### **Women's Education in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries**

The educational background of girls and young women during the nineteenth, and well into the twentieth centuries, was completely different than it is today. A very small proportion of the female population of England had more than a little formal schooling. An even smaller portion of those educated girls went on to formal higher education. When Agnes Conway entered Newnham College in October 1903, she was one of a privileged few – girls who had the means, familial support and intellectual ability to obtain a place at one of the nation's most prestigious educational establishments. Most university-age girls in Britain would not have had the opportunities that Conway and her Newnham contemporaries had; even those with the socio-economic background to afford them the time to study for entrance examinations. In the mid to late nineteenth century, most upper-middle class girls were taught privately by governesses, sometimes sent to select boarding schools, and then to finishing school, and for the majority formal education ended in the teenage years (Dyhouse 1981: 3, 41–42).

The quality of private schooling ranged widely (Dyhouse 1981: 56). Female education perpetuated ideas of femininity, and girls were given superficial understanding of academic subjects, enough for them to be successful as hostesses and as their husband's companion (see Dyhouse 1981: Ch 2; Tullberg 1998: 6). Most girls seeking entrance to Cambridge did not have the classical knowledge that would have prepared them for taking the same examinations as their male counterparts, as both Latin and Greek were requirements for the official entrance examination to Cambridge (see Breay 1999). Boys at public schools spent considerably more hours per week studying the classics than did girls (Breay 1999: 52). The broad curricula offered in girls' public day and boarding schools did not include lessons in Latin until students reached the age of twelve. Greek lessons, if offered, did not begin until the age of fifteen (Breay 1999: 51). However, some of these newly formed schools began to remedy the disparity between girls' and boys' education.

Rita McWilliams Tullberg's comprehensive study of the history of women's education at Cambridge (1998) discusses the foundations of the two oldest women's colleges and the differences in their founding philosophies. Emily Davies, founder of Girton, the first women's college associated with Cambridge, played a crucial role in enabling girls to sit the Local Examinations for entrance to Cambridge in the 1860s. By the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, due to Davies' efforts, girls' schools prepared their students for examinations that by then had become common. Girls public schools' curricula eventually matched the curricula in boys schools, preparing their charges for entrance to the universities (Tullberg 1998: 27).

Of the two women's colleges at Cambridge in the early twentieth century, Girton was considered more militant in its pursuit of equality in education. Under the leadership of Emily Davies, Girton's students followed the exact same curriculum as Cambridge (male) undergraduates (Tullberg 1998: 50). Emily Davies believed firmly that there should be no difference between the experience that men and women had at Cambridge, and 'considered [...] any requirements made from women different from

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<sup>18</sup> Although it is unclear whether Winifred Lamb was directly tutored by Jane Harrison, David Gill's *Dictionary of National Biography* entry on Lamb acknowledges Harrison's role in inspiring Lamb to study classical archaeology while Lamb was a student at Newnham during the First World War. Lamb was the honorary keeper of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the Fitzwilliam Museum from 1919 to 1958 and took part in, or led excavations in Lesbos in the 1920s to early 1930s (Gill 2004).

those demanded from men would certainly be lower' (Gardner 1921: 17). Henry Sidgwick, Newnham College's founder, had a different philosophy, drawn from his dissatisfaction with Cambridge's curriculum (Tullberg 1981). Anne Jemima Clough, principal of Newnham, wrote that Sidgwick:

[...] deplored the inconvenience and waste of time which might keep an adult woman who had not learned classics or much mathematics at school, studying the beginnings of subjects in school-boy fashion when her mind was more adapted to other studies (Gardner 1921: 17).

Thus from the beginning, Newnham's founders sought to allow their students intellectual freedom beyond the constraints of traditional Cambridge educational routes, and paved the way for Agnes Conway's studies in archaeology. Once women students began to enter Cambridge with the specific purpose of taking degree examinations the differences between the two became less striking, but this initial divergence in philosophy continued to impact the lives of the students (Tullberg 1998: 48).

Once students gained admission to the college and residence, regardless of the constraints placed on their behaviour, they experienced more freedom than they had ever had before. They could engage in intellectual exploration and in an active social life. Residence at Cambridge was deemed an instrumental part of the male undergraduate experience, a chance to learn how to interact with fellow students on both social and intellectual levels. The same was true for the women of Cambridge. Newnham provided an intimate, protected atmosphere for its students. The college had its own library and laboratories, and with these tools at hand Newnham students could make the most of their university years, despite not being able to put a degree title after their names at the end of it.

Paula Gould notes the importance of understanding the social, financial and intellectual background of women students, as part of interpreting their contributions to science. She argues that family support and nurturing may have played a large part in the successes of numerous women students at Cambridge (Gould 1996: 136–137). Only families with a substantial income could afford the cost of education there. Tuition in 1904 ranged from £30 to £35 pounds per term (the modern equivalent of about £1,700 to £2,000).<sup>19</sup> Scholarships were not readily available. Looking at the family backgrounds of Agnes Conway and her friends at Newnham, emphasises the similarities between them: they all came from relatively privileged middle-class backgrounds (see **Table 1**). Additionally, they remained in contact after leaving Newnham. They all held positions of authority in their chosen fields, and all but one of them had publications (see entries in Newnham College 1979).

Name	Name and Occupation of Father	Education on Entrance to Newnham	Subject Studied / Class Obtained
Agnes Conway	W. Martin Conway, Slade Professor of Art History, Cambridge	Baker Street High School King's College London	Historical Tripos (Pt. I, Cl. II 1905; Pt. II, Cl. II 1906)
Dorothy Ellis	Arthur Mackay Ellis, solicitor	Perse Girls School	Historical Tripos (Pt. I, Cl. II 1905; Pt. II, Cl. II 1906)
Dorothy Jebb	Arthur Trevor Jebb, land owner	Private school in Southboume; private tuition	At Newnham from 1901–04, no Tripos taken
Dina Portway	H. Harvey Portway, iron founder	Private school in Margate Bedford High School	Historical Tripos (Pt. I, Cl. II 1905; Pt. II, Cl. II 1906)
Katharine Radford	Sir George Haynes Radford, MP, JP, LLB, solicitor	St Felix School, Southwold	Classical Tripos (Pt. I, Cl. II.2 1906)

**Table 1. Newnham College Roll; Newnham College 1979.**

<sup>19</sup> Based on historic currency conversion for 1900 and 1905. (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/results.asp#mid>)

It is clear from alumnae entries in the *Newnham College Register* that the college was a place in which girls of like minds could develop their intellectual pursuits together (Newnham College 1979). *A Short History of Newnham College* (1921) includes a discussion of the importance of friendship in the development of scholarly ambitions:

In the early days the Tripos students were not the only ones who were capable of good intellectual work: Some [...] did not follow the lines then laid down for Triposes, and the variety was – socially and intellectually – an excellent thing for the students. Specialization in study is often bound to have a narrowing effect. But by student friendships, young people learn to care for things [...] that will never lie within their special province (Gardner 1921).

Part of this community feeling was the result of Newnham's founding philosophy: not to concentrate on an academic path which exactly replicated that of male undergraduates, but to work with the students to develop the best path for their individual needs (Robinson 2009: 47; Gardner 1921: 17, 30). It was in this environment that Agnes Conway was encouraged to explore her interest in archaeology. Living amongst friends with similar interests and backgrounds proved vital in maintaining and promoting this interest. Her friends provided support and companionship as together they stepped away from the domestic sphere of their childhood and into a semi-independent and much more grown up world – at least for the duration of their college years.

Informal intellectual activities at Newnham included societies and political debates. For formal instruction, resident lecturers in each subject acted as tutors to the students, advising them and organising the details of their coursework. The personal involvement of Newnham staff and tutors enabled Agnes Conway to pursue archaeology while completing both parts of a History Tripos, due to the influence of her History tutor, Alice Gardner (Newnham College 1979: 6), and the enthusiasm of Jane Harrison.<sup>20</sup>

Agnes Conway's first term at Newnham, Michaelmas Term 1903, plunged her straight into Greek History, an exciting prospect given her new fascination with classical Greece. She wrote: 'I know I am going to be enthralled with Greek History, and ... I feel such an ignoramus about not knowing any, in fact I am feeling more than ever an ignoramus here, because of my lack of Latin'.<sup>21</sup> Her insecurity reflects the difference in education between boys and girls schools, which an education at Newnham would help to alleviate. History students chose special periods for concentration. For Conway it was the First Crusade (A.D. 1095–1099), for which she would have to read Latin Chronicles, '[...] a tremendous amount of work for me, however, if I can learn Latin in the process it will be worth it'.<sup>22</sup>

She attended classical lectures during her first year, and two of her friends, Helen Verrall and Katharine Radford, were both also Classics students.<sup>23</sup> Helen Verrall's father, Arthur Woollgar Verrall, was one

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<sup>20</sup> Agnes Conway records a peculiar Tripos tradition – students about to embark on their Tripos examinations were given 'something old, something new/Something borrowed, something blue' for luck. In 1905, Jane Harrison brought back a Greek necklace which Helen Verrall wore for luck during her Tripos examinations in Classics. Conway describes Verrall at breakfast on the first day of her tripos 'looking absolutely gaudy with all the things people had leant her for luck ...' (Conway, A. 15 May 1905. Letter to Katrina Conway. MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R164).

<sup>21</sup> Conway, A. Diary Entry: 14 October 1903. Cambridge University Manuscript Collection MSS Add 7676/Z5.

<sup>22</sup> Conway, A. Diary Entry: 14 October 1903. Cambridge University Manuscript Collection MSS Add 7676/Z5.

<sup>23</sup> Helen Verrall (1883–1959) and Katherine Radford (1884–1949) co-authored their own Greek play at this time, a parody called 'A Tragedy of Chamberlain', complete with dialogue and choruses. The play was based in part on a poem by Radford. Both staff and students were involved in acting in the play, including the three Newnham Vice-Principals. Conway wrote that although acting was not officially allowed, permission was granted for the Verrall-Radford play to be performed (Letter from Agnes Conway to Katrina Conway. 5 May 1904. Cambridge

of Cambridge's most controversial classical scholars.<sup>24</sup> Her mother Margaret Verrall was a close friend of Jane Harrison's; they had both studied for the Classical Tripos at Newnham in the 1870s.<sup>25</sup> Conway attended one of A. W. Verrall's lectures on Aristophanes' play *The Birds*, performed shortly afterwards as Cambridge's 1903 Greek play. She wrote of the event that Verrall was:

[...] by far the most dramatic + vehement lecturer I have ever heard, + all his points were rolled out one after another to make a dramatic climax – He started a completely new theory about the Birds [...] a most superb lecture.<sup>26</sup>

Cambridge was still reeling from the lecture days afterwards. Conway recorded that:

Miss Harrison asked me to tea this afternoon, a great honour, + there were several people there who are going to act in the Birds + they talked Classics absolutely the whole afternoon [...] all about Dr Verralls new theory [...] which seems to be convulsing Cambridge at present. I am so glad to have heard it [...] it was a magnificently dramatic lecture[...].<sup>27</sup>

Harrison's invitation exposed Conway to some of the most radical lecturers in the Cambridge classical community, a highly influential factor in her later life. By the end of the term Conway had newfound confidence, a result of her experiences at Newnham. The sense of drama she found so appealing in Harrison's lectures is reflected in her comments on Verrall's lecture; Conway was moved by dramatic readings and the boundaries Verrall's new theories pushed.

As can be seen, the community at Newnham provided ample room for intellectual engagement, actively encouraged by the staff. Residence at Cambridge yielded fruitful connections that, in Conway's case,

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University Library. MSS Add 7676/R1-122/R75). The play's prologue is a clever exposition on the political climate of the day paralleling the Parliamentary debates on free-trade versus protectionism. It opens with the lines: 'We used to live in Hades in a peaceful sort of way/and very little happened here, or changed from day to day .../For all the shades have taken up this foolish fiscal fad/They pestered poor Tiresias and nearly drove him mad' (Agnes Conway Diary 1904). Katherine Radford would become secretary to Eugenie Sellars Strong, the Assistant Director of the British School at Rome (Newnham College 1979: 176).

<sup>24</sup> Arthur Woollgar Verrall (1851–1912) lectured in classics at Trinity College Cambridge from 1877 to 1911. Known for his dramatic lecture style, he incorporated modern literature into the study of ancient poetry and championed Greek plays as dramas rather than texts. He published mainly on Greek tragedy, focusing especially on Euripides, and he edited plays of Aeschylus and Euripides. He was appointed to the newly created Edward VII Chair of English Literature at Cambridge in 1911 (Smail 2004).

<sup>25</sup> Margaret de Gaudrion Verrall née Merrifield (1857–1916) was eventually awarded a lectureship in Classics in 1880 over her friend, and remained involved in the life of the college throughout her life. She married the classicist Arthur Verrall and settled in Cambridge. When Harrison returned to Newnham after an absence of nearly 20 years she continued her friendship with the Verralls, and introduced her favourite students to the couple. Margaret Verrall and her daughter Helen were also part of the intellectual interest in Spiritualism that abounded at Newnham during that period; both the Principal, Eleanor Sidgwick, and her husband Henry Sidgwick were involved in the Society of Psychical Research. Eleanor Sidgwick was a founder-member of the society in 1882, served as both its Secretary and then President, and edited its journal, to which she contributed articles (Newnham College 1979: 1–2). Margaret Verrall also contributed articles to the *Journal of Psychical Research*. She conducted experiments in thought transference with her daughter Helen, then aged five, and herself produced hundreds of scripts of 'automatic writing' – a method of communication from spirits of known people who had died (McWilliams-Tullberg, R. 2007. Verrall, Margaret de Gaudrion (1857–1916). *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition. Helen Verrall, having been involved in psychical experiments from an early age, eventually became a member of the SPR and in 1915 a Research Officer. She was Editor of the SPR's *Proceedings* from 1921–1953 (Newnham College 1979: 172).

<sup>26</sup> Conway, A. Diary Entry: Friday 13 November 1903. Cambridge University Manuscript Collection MSS Add 7676/Z5.

<sup>27</sup> Conway, A. Diary Entry: Sunday 15 November 1903. Cambridge University Manuscript Collection MSS Add 7676/Z5.

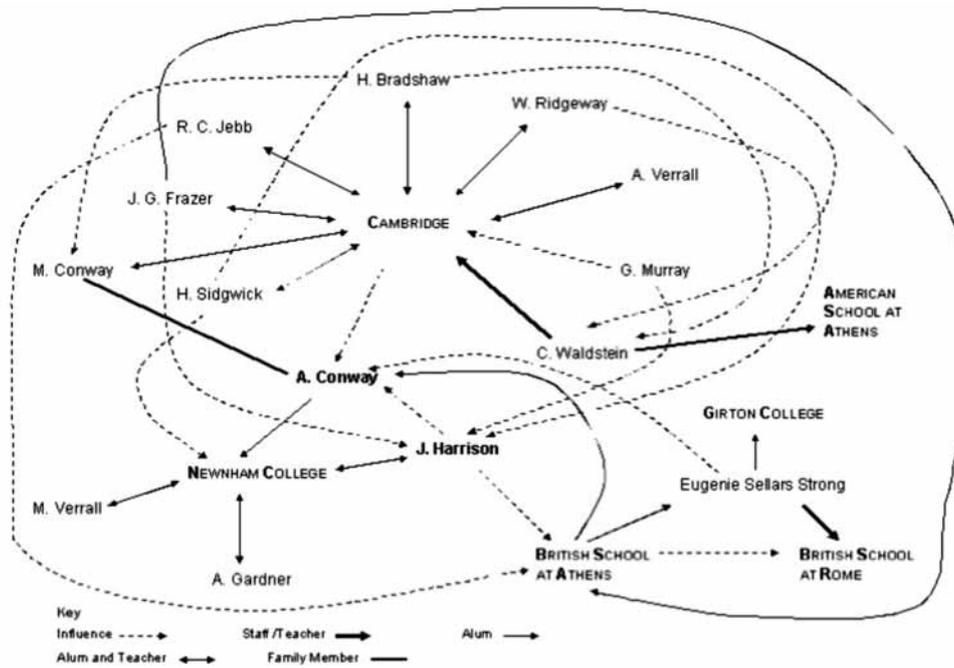


Figure 1. Network of Classical and Archaeological Connections at Cambridge.

would be useful for the rest of her life. As Conway entered her second term, it is clear that her initial fascination with Jane Harrison had not faded. There are several reasons for this continued enchantment. Harrison was one of the staff members attached to Clough Hall, Conway's hall of residence, and so Conway and her friends had a great deal of contact with Harrison. Through Harrison, Agnes Conway had contact with classical scholars engaged in active and dramatic reinterpretations of texts and archaeological settings. The Verralls were an important connection for Conway; they opened their home to her on several occasions and formed part of the classical/archaeological network that she built up during her time at Cambridge, due in part Harrison's influence.

### Teaching 'Archaeology': the Classical and Archaeological Network at Cambridge

Provision for regular instruction in 'archaeology' (now known as classical archaeology) at Cambridge began with the introduction of Part II of the Classical Tripos in 1879, which consisted of five sections, including philosophy (B), history (C), archaeology (D), and language (E) (Beard 1999: 103)<sup>28</sup>. Mary Beard notes that topics included in the New Classical Tripos (Part II): D were:

not only 'Art and Archaeology' in our terms ('The History of Art', 'Special Sites', 'Numismatics', 'Inscriptions') but also, 'Mythology', 'Religion' and '(Domestic) Antiquities' (which might include anything from food and clothing to ancient sport and education) (Beard 1999: 103).

The wide range of issues covered in Part II brought to Cambridge classics some new faculty members, from whom Agnes Conway would learn in her quest to 'do archaeology'. **Figure 1** above demonstrates the network of classical and archaeological connections that existed at Cambridge in the late nineteenth century, that had an impact on the life of the students and the training they received in archaeology, and shows the influence of both classical and art historical approaches to archaeological material. The network is especially significant in understanding the backgrounds of women archaeologists. As

<sup>28</sup> Beard's essay is a detailed discussion of the history of the New Classical Tripos. Christopher Stray has written extensively on the history of education in the classics in the 19th and 20th centuries; for example see *Classics Transformed: Schools, Universities and Society 1830–1960* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), *Teaching and Learning in 19th Century Cambridge* (Boydell & Brewer, 2001) and numerous articles and chapters in edited books.

demonstrated earlier, six of the fourteen women students at the British School at Athens (BSA) were Newnham College graduates, and ten of the fourteen came from either Girton or Newnham colleges. All but one of them became students after Harrison joined the staff of the college in 1898, and this one student was Eugenie Sellers, a contemporary of Harrison's and later Assistant Director of the British School at Rome, established in 1901.<sup>29</sup>

Charles Waldstein was the first Reader in Classical Archaeology appointed in 1883, having lectured in classics at Cambridge for three years.<sup>30</sup> As Reader, he promoted studies in classical sculpture, painting and topography. He continued in this post as Reader until 1907. As part of her training in archaeology Agnes Conway went to Waldstein's lectures on Classical Sculpture. Beard presents evidence that Waldstein's appointment in 1883 was probably the work of Henry Sidgwick (founder of Newnham College) and Henry Bradshaw, the University Librarian, hence the dotted lines of influence on **Figure 1** (Beard 1999: 120–122).<sup>31</sup> Bradshaw had a keen interest in art history, and he influenced the career of Agnes Conway's father, Martin Conway, in the subject (see Evans 1966).<sup>32</sup> Martin Conway served as Slade Professor of Fine Art from 1901–1903, and his influence on his daughter played an important part in both her studies in archaeology and her later career as an archaeologist. It was with his permission that she began studying Greek and art under Harrison. He supported his daughter financially during these studies, which took her into a fourth year at Newnham College.

A number of lecturers enabled students to engage with archaeological materials and topics during the late nineteenth century. Jane Harrison joined the faculty at Newnham College in 1898, and the next year was appointed the college's Lecturer in Classical Archaeology (Breay 1999: 61–62). Richard Claverhouse Jebb, who had, in a letter to *The Times* in the 1870s, proclaimed the need for British Schools in Athens and Rome to study the art and history of the classical world, joined the Cambridge faculty in 1899 (Waterhouse 1986: 6; Beard 1999: 116).<sup>33</sup> Arthur Verrall had been lecturing in classics since 1877 and Margaret Verrall from 1880 (Tullberg 2007; Smail 2004). William Ridgeway and James George Frazer also lectured on archaeological topics.<sup>34</sup> Ridgeway was elected to the Disney Chair in Archaeology at Cambridge in 1892, and then became Brereton Reader in Classics at Cambridge in 1907 (Conway and Snodgrass 2008). Frazer is perhaps best known for his book *The Golden Bough* (first published in 1890) in which he analysed ritual and myth in the ancient world by comparing it to the

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<sup>29</sup> Beard's biography of Harrison, *The Invention of Jane Harrison* (2000) explores the relationship between Harrison and Sellers as two pioneering women archaeologists at the turn of the century. Beard's study reveals their close relationship at the beginning of their careers, and argues that Harrison's remembered persona and closely guarded reputation, in addition to her own self-censorship through burning her correspondence, has diverted attention from and thrown shadows over her early life.

<sup>30</sup> The Readership in Archaeology was not the first archaeological post at Cambridge. The Professorship in Archaeology was established in 1852, the first postholder being Rev. John Howard Marsden (Dyson 2006: 125). Marsden lectured only once a year in his role. (Cooper, T. 2004. Marsden, John Howard (1803–1891). rev. H. C. G. Matthew *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18100>, accessed 30 Aug 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Henry Bradshaw (1831–1886) was, from 1867, the University Librarian at Cambridge. (McKitterick, D. 2004: Bradshaw, Henry (1831–1886), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press. (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3198>, accessed 30 Aug 2009).

<sup>32</sup> William Martin Conway (1856–1937) served as Slade Professor of Fine Art in between Charles Waldstein's two appointments to the post. For more on Martin Conway's life and career, see Evans 1966.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Claverhouse Jebb (1841–1905) was Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge from 1889–1905). He had been Professor of Greek at Glasgow University in the 1870s when, after visiting Greece, he wrote a letter to *The Times* calling for British schools to be set up in Athens and Rome, and outlining schemes for their organisation. His niece, Dorothy Jebb, was a friend of Agnes Conway's at Newnham (Who Was Who. Dec 2007. 'JEBB, Sir Richard Claverhouse. A & C Black, 1920–2008; online edn, Oxford University Press, Dec 2007 [<http://www.ukwhoswho.com/view/article/oupww/whowaswho/U187560>, accessed 29 Aug 2009]).

<sup>34</sup> See Beard 2005 on Ridgeway's career and personality.

'primitive' traditions of 'modern savages', a method that incorporated contemporary anthropological techniques. He had come to Cambridge in the 1870s to study classics, and attended the British School at Athens for the 1899-90 session for research. He was elected a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and remained in that post for the rest of his life (BSA 1894/1895: 46; Ackerman 2004).<sup>35</sup>

Thus, at Cambridge there were a number of faculty members who used and promoted archaeological material as part of their teaching. Those interested in archaeology, like Agnes Conway, could attend the lectures of a number of Cambridge faculty: Jebb, Ridgeway and Waldstein all permitted female students<sup>36</sup>; the dotted arrow of influence extending between Cambridge and Newnham College demonstrates this connection, which was unofficial as Newnham students were not technically undergraduates (Newnham College 1904: 23). Both Arthur and Margaret Verrall provided lectures in classics at Newnham itself (Newnham College 1904: 24). Harrison, Frazer and Ridgeway all incorporated archaeological evidence into their own research. Robinson and Ackerman have shown that Ridgeway and Frazer's work influenced Harrison's research and interpretations, shown with dotted lines of influence pointing from Frazer and Ridgeway to Harrison in **Figure 1** (Robinson 2002: 141; Ackerman 1991).<sup>37</sup> Harrison's review of Ridgeway's *The Early Age of Greece* (1901) elegantly sums up her case for including archaeology in classical studies:

[...] it has, it may be hoped, become abundantly evident that the access [sic] of the material, and the adoption of scientific method necessitated by this material, have given to classical studies a momentous impulse [...] we renounce perforce that academic phantom, the insulated and 'ideal' Greek, and find in his place the actual man, the outcome of a long past, the Greek of anthropology and archaeology[...]. For the literary and linguistic scholar there will always remain the garden enclosed[...] Is he in any way the poorer because in the wider horizons around him the broad fields of archaeology are outspread, white to the harvest? (Harrison quoted in Robinson 2002:140-141).

Harrison has been credited with an influential role in archaeological instruction, which through her combination of myth, ritual and the visual arts, added a new layer to the Classical Tripos (Beard 1999: 123, Brey 1999: 67).<sup>38</sup> Harrison, Gilbert Murray and Francis Cornford, another classicist, became known as the 'Cambridge ritualists', dedicated to exploring ancient rituals interpreted from Greek drama (see Ackerman 1991, 2009; Beard 2000: 127-128).<sup>39</sup> This enthusiasm for embracing new ways in which to understand the ancient world was passed on by Harrison to his students. Ten students at

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<sup>35</sup> Frazer was elected to the first chair in Social Anthropology in Britain, at Liverpool University, in 1908 (Ackerman 2004).

<sup>36</sup> Beard examines Ridgeway's stance on female students at the university, Ridgeway's opposition to female students being admitted as fully fledged members of the university was widely acknowledged (2005: 126-130).

<sup>37</sup> Beard (2005) and Arlen (1996) note that the relationship between Harrison and Ridgeway was not always amicable; Beard chronicles his antagonistic reactions towards 'radical' scholarship, in particular that of Harrison and the ritualists, while Arlen relates Ridgeway's reaction to Harrison's theories through a gender historical perspective.

<sup>38</sup> Brey has discovered that the Part II: D paper on mythology from 1903 contained five questions based on Harrison's book, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (1902) (1999: 70).

<sup>39</sup> The ritualists thought that ancient beliefs could be illuminated using the work of modern ethnographic and linguistic comparisons to 'primitive' people in far-away corners of the world, areas which were being bombarded by explorers, colonial administrators and scientists of one brand or another in increasing numbers over this period (Ackerman 2009). Interesting parallels can be made with the work of the Society for Psychical Research, to which some of Harrison's closest friends belonged. As shown in note 26, Margaret Verrall was an active member of the SPR, as was Gilbert Murray (see below); the contribution of Verrall and Murray to the SPR is discussed in Lowe's article on A. W. Verrall (2005: 144-146). There are references to Mrs Verrall and Helen Verrall's attachment to psychical research in Agnes Conway's archives. Further research is needed on the network of psychical researchers and classical scholars at Cambridge, which I believe affected Agnes Conway's intellectual interests in Petra religion and the rituals that took place at the site in ancient times. Conway sent a packet of sand from Petra to be psychometrically 'read' by a medium in 1929 as a potential part of her analysis

Newnham College between 1885 and 1914 were awarded Firsts in Part II, Section D (Archaeology) of the Classical Tripos; a fact that Breay attributes to Jane Harrison's influence. She also notes that classics students were encouraged to take Part II: D because of its emphasis on non-textual material, which would be easier for those who had not had as thorough a grounding in the classics as most male undergraduates (Breay 1999: 67).

There were opportunities to experience archaeological interpretations outside of the lecture hall. Conway longed to go to a performance of Gilbert Murray's translation of Euripides' *Hippolytus* at the Lyric Theatre in London, after Harrison gave her a prospectus of the play.<sup>40</sup> Gilbert Murray was also a close friend of Jane Harrison and the Verralls, who introduced Harrison to Murray (Robinson 2002: 127).<sup>41</sup> Although not officially linked to Cambridge, Gilbert Murray appears regularly in Agnes Conway's diaries; unsurprising considering that many of his close friends lectured at Cambridge. Gilbert Murray brought his dramatic reading to Cambridge, in a 1904 lecture on Euripides' *Troades* (The Trojan Women), Agnes Conway wrote to her mother that it:

[...] was a most poetic + exquisite lecture [...] something just to dream about [...] it was for unclassical people + he read a great deal of his own translation [...] some of the poetry of his own translation was so beautiful that there were bursts of applause [...] Each thing of the kind to which I go makes me more on fire to learn Greek [...] <sup>42</sup>

Although Agnes was a history student, it is clear that the charisma of Harrison, Verrall and Murray played a large part in maintaining her interest in studying Greek and archaeology. Newnham College provided her with the opportunities to listen to some of the most exciting and controversial classical scholarship the university had to offer. Such an education promoted a varied approach to the past – one that merged understanding texts with an appreciation for drama and the analysis of visuals.

The classical/archaeological network embodied by Harrison and her connections in the Cambridge faculty and beyond would play an important part in enabling Agnes Conway to study archaeology. At the end of her first term, Agnes Conway recorded the lectures she had attended at Cambridge. Beyond the weekly lectures she had in history, she attended lectures by Jebb and Verrall on Aristophanes' *Birds*, 'Recent Excavations at Delphi', 'The Herder' by eminent French prehistorian Henri Breuil<sup>43</sup>, and 'Greek Theatre'.<sup>44</sup> Harrison gave a series of lectures on 'The Art and Topography of Athens', which were an excellent introduction to archaeology. Conway wrote that Harrison:

... took us for a journey all round the Acropolis giving me a much better idea than I ever had.

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of rituals at Petra, correspondence relating to the psychometric analysis of the sand is held by the UCL Institute of Archaeology.

<sup>40</sup> Gilbert Murray (1866–1957) produced verse translations of Euripides and Aristophanes' plays, and his scripts were performed numerous times by both professional and amateur acting groups during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Stray, C. 'Murray, (George) Gilbert Aimée (1866–1957)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35159>, accessed 4 Sept 2009]). Harrison produced designs for the set of *Hippolytus*, modelling the design for 'archaic' statues on examples in the Louvre Museum in Paris (Robinson 2002: 173). Beard (2000: 42–50) shows that Harrison herself took part in theatrical productions: *The Tale of Troy*, shown in a private theatre in 1883 and an Oxford University Dramatic Society staging of a Euripides play in 1887.

<sup>41</sup> Murray and Verrall, Robinson notes, shared a great interest in Euripides, whom they promoted vigorously to their fellow scholars (2002: 127). Robinson also sheds light on the nature of the relationship between Murray and Harrison, chronicled, from 1900, in the letters Harrison wrote to Murray from that date (2002: 127–133; 145–160).

<sup>42</sup> Agnes Conway to Katrina Conway 21 November 1904. Cambridge University Library MSS Add7676/R1-122/R115.

<sup>43</sup> Smith (2009) discusses Breuil's impact on another Newnham student, Dorothy Garrod, later the first female Disney Professor of Archaeology.

<sup>44</sup> Agnes Conway Diary 1903. Cambridge University Papers: MSS Add 7676/Z5.

There were historical plans, + discussions over the Pelasgikon, Agora, Thesion [sic] etc. I was so sorry when it was over [...]<sup>45</sup>

Early in 1905, Harrison's lecture on the origins of the God Hermes' provided Conway with additional fuel for her fire of passion for archaeology:

... [it was] all a new theory + so thrilling [...] the whole thing was so closely argued + print came upon print illustrated by those old vases. I was in the Fitzwilliam – the place was packed [...]<sup>46</sup>

Harrison appreciated Agnes Conway's enthusiasm, and held regular conversations with Agnes at mealtimes and invited her for discussions in her rooms. As Robinson has noted, Harrison treated her students as equals in learning rather than receptacles for her (greater) knowledge (Robinson 2002: 190). Students could stretch their own intellectual wings, given this kind of encouragement and support. Conway and her friend Dina Portway<sup>47</sup> spent an evening in Harrison's rooms discussing the Phoenicians, which was:

[...] really very good of her, for she just happened to be talking about Mr [Victor] Berard's new book at dinner the other night + of course we knew nothing about it [...] Well I had no idea she would take so much trouble over it – but she had stacks of books all marked at the right places + lists of notes + references and everything + she was so interesting that I am longing to go away quietly and think over everything she said.<sup>48</sup>

Agnes later incorporated what she had learned into an essay on the Phoenicians. 'It will give Miss Gardner a fit, she wrote, 'especially if she imagines I know the rest of my Ancient History like that!'.<sup>49</sup> The college also allowed Conway and Portway, both history students, to attend a series of lectures on magic by J. G. Frazer, notoriously reclusive, even though they 'don't really bear on our tripos'.<sup>50</sup> The favour came 'from having cheek + asking'.<sup>51</sup> The college's indulgence allowed both students to explore topics outside their Tripos studies, demonstrating the continuation of Newnham's founding philosophy, encouraging students to expand their intellectual horizons without adhering to a rigid route through university.

The pupil-teacher bond between Harrison and Conway became much stronger over the next few terms. Agnes Conway wanted to make studies in archaeology a more significant part of her schedule, proposing to Harrison that she do a fourth year at Cambridge in archaeology. Harrison discussed the situation with Conway's history tutor, Alice Gardner, and between them they came up with a solution.<sup>52</sup> Conway wrote to her father asking for his permission and blessing. Gardner suggested that she begin learning Greek immediately 'if I am to get the good I ought to get out of doing archaeology

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<sup>45</sup> Conway A. Friday 13 November 1903. Cambridge University Papers: MSS Add 7676/Z5.

<sup>46</sup> Conway, A. 9 February 1905. Letter to Katrina and Martin Conway. Cambridge University Papers: MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R133.

<sup>47</sup> Dina Portway Dobson-Hinton (1885–1968) also maintained an interest in archaeology throughout her life. She was Lecturer in Prehistory and Archaeology to Somerset and Wiltshire Schools, part of the Bristol University Spelaeological Society, and wrote several books on archaeology, including *Archaeology of Somerset* (1931) and *A Book of Prehistory* (1933). (Newnham College Register Vol 1 1871–1971: 176).

<sup>48</sup> Agnes Conway to Katrina Conway. 17 May 1905. Cambridge University Library. Add 7676/R123-260/R168.

<sup>49</sup> Agnes Conway to Katrina Conway. n.d. Cambridge University Library. Add 7676/R123-260/R168.

<sup>50</sup> Agnes Conway to Katrina Conway. 30 January 1905. MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R125.

<sup>51</sup> Agnes Conway to Katrina Conway. 30 January 1905. MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R125.

<sup>52</sup> Alice Gardner (1854–1927) had attended Newnham in the 1870s and served as the History lecturer there from 1884–1914. She became a Vice-President of the Historical Association and served on the Council of the Royal Historical Society. She coordinated submissions for the Cambridge Creighton Memorial Prize, an annual essay competition for the best historical essay written by a Newnham student or recent 'graduate' (*Records of*

for a 4th year'.<sup>53</sup> Because Conway did not want to abandon her History Tripos, Gardner advised that she concentrate on an ancient history period for the Part II.<sup>54</sup> Agnes would need regular coaching in Greek and Latin to be able to get the most out of original source material.<sup>55</sup> She noted that:

I think it is so nice of them to devise plans by which I can do what I like in an amateurish way, without bothering over too much scholarship, especially in a place like this which goes in for taking everything seriously + deeply – they both quite realize that I want a readable knowledge of Greek + not to waste my time over proses + things. I have wanted to learn Greek for so long, + yet I don't want to interfere with my history tripos + this seems to combine them both.<sup>56</sup>

Gardner and Harrison's attention to Agnes's zeal for archaeology again demonstrates the benefit of Newnham College's small and flexible attitudes, negotiating a plan to suit Conway's interests and capabilities.

Harrison used a method she created and promoted herself to coach Conway, who wrote to her father that it was intended 'to teach ... Greek on a method as nearly as possible approaching your ideal one of teaching languages, so as to waste no time,'<sup>57</sup> (Robinson 2002: 188–189). Directed by Harrison, she would:

do archaeology [...] entirely from an untrijos point of view, so as to give me a most general introduction to the whole study of Art [...] I am so happy about it, if only I didn't prove an absolute fool over the Greek. I am never to do any exercise + only the very minimum of grammar.<sup>58</sup>

For Agnes's purposes – to learn enough Greek to enable her to undertake Classical Archaeology – the intricacies of Greek translation, required for further classical scholarship, were unnecessary. Encouraged by her father, Conway's goal was to understand the art of the period; it was the interpretation and classification of art that she was especially interested in. Waldstein's lectures on classical sculpture, and Harrison's use of vase paintings in her interpretations of ritual and myth, all demonstrated the detailed use of visual material in teaching archaeology at Cambridge, and emphasise the importance of art to the study of classical archaeology during this period.

Martin Conway had for some time been collecting photographs of art, including classical works. As a Lecturer in Art History they were an essential part of his knowledge of the subject, and he later donated the bulk of this collection to the Courtauld Institute, and in the 1930s Conway strongly advocated the foundation of the Courtauld Institute (Evans 1966: 245.) Evans suggests that Martin Conway

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*Newnham College* 1904: 20). Agnes Conway was awarded the Creighton Memorial Prize in 1911. Gardner wrote a history of the College, published in 1924 as *A Short History of Newnham College, Cambridge*. (London: Macmillan & Co.), and was the sister of classical archaeologists Ernest and Percy Gardner. (Sutherland, G. 2004, Gardner, Alice 1854–1927. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48491>, accessed 11 Aug 2000]).

<sup>53</sup> Agnes Conway to Martin Conway. 2 June 1905. Cambridge University Library. MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R172a+b.

<sup>54</sup> Agnes Conway to Martin Conway. 2 June 1905. Cambridge University Library. MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R172a+b.

<sup>55</sup> For the period Agnes Conway would study for her Part II, she would be using 'Plutarch's Life of Pompey, Suetonius's Life of Caesar, an oration of Cicero + lots of Cicero's correspondence'. (Agnes Conway to Martin Conway. 2 June 1905. Cambridge University Library. MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R172a+b).

<sup>56</sup> Agnes Conway to Martin Conway. 2 June 1905. Cambridge University Library. MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R172a+b.

<sup>57</sup> Agnes Conway to Martin Conway. 7 June 1905. Cambridge University Library. MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R174.

<sup>58</sup> Agnes Conway to Martin Conway. 7 June 1905. Cambridge University Library. MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R174.

wanted his daughter to begin arranging the classical portion of his collection of images (Evans 1966: 200).<sup>59</sup> She worked with visual material during her lessons with Harrison, that were occasionally held in the Archaeological Museum where Conway read inscriptions directly from excavated material and vase paintings.<sup>60</sup> Rather than depending solely on lectures and texts for her instruction Harrison used this hands-on method to elucidate art and archaeology. Harrison's tutorials allowed Conway to gain valuable experience which she would use later on in her own archaeological work, although they came at a price – Conway requested £8 from her parents to pay for the extra lessons.<sup>61</sup> Conway learned research skills and independence, and, crucially, was supported by both her parents and the college in continuing her education in the subject that interested her the most. Harrison had the contacts in the archaeological and classical fields to enable Agnes Conway to move in the right circles, and to enhance her study of archaeology.

When Michaelmas term 1906 began, lectures augmented Agnes' tutorials: two a week each on architecture and religion with Ridgeway; two a week on sculpture with Waldstein; three a week on the *Eumenides* with (A. W.) Verrall.<sup>62</sup> Harrison lectured once a week on vases. The lectures Conway took reveal the considerable emphasis on three-dimensional (archaeological) material, and on anthropological approaches, rather than just on textual scholarship and the concentration on art and architecture that classical archaeology embodied.

She began going through her father's photograph collection, which she felt 'would be of the most enormous use to me when I begin working on sculpture + vases ...'.<sup>63</sup> Harrison noted their worth as a teaching tool, and suggested to Agnes Conway that the undergraduates taking Part II of the Classical Tripos should be invited to tea to view the photographs.<sup>64</sup> This same collection Conway took with her to Rome in 1912, where she worked on organising and classifying them with Eugenie Sellers Strong (an expert in classical art<sup>65</sup>), at the British School at Rome. In addition, Conway augmented the collection, organising it, and spending money in the city's numerous photographic studios obtaining duplicates of images.<sup>66</sup> Eugenie Sellers Strong represents another link in the chain of Cambridge women who gained professional standing among scholars in the field of archaeology. Conway spent the year before the outbreak of war travelling through Greece and the Balkans as an admitted student of the British School in Athens (BSA 1913/1914: 295).

After the outbreak of war in 1914 she began historical research and work on the Women's Collection at the Imperial War Museum, her father being the Museum's first Director (see Evans 1966). In 1927 she

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<sup>59</sup> Agnes Conway to Katrina Conway. 5 July 1905. Cambridge University Library. MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R178. Agnes Conway's work on her father's photograph collection was to pay off in her later career as an archaeologist; she systematically catalogued finds from the excavations that she and her husband George Horsfield conducted at Petra, Jordan in the 1930s. The results were published under both their names in the *Quarterly for the Department of Antiquities of Palestine*.

<sup>60</sup> Agnes Conway to Katrina Conway. 8 July 1905. Cambridge University Library. MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R179, R181.

<sup>61</sup> Conway, A. Letter to Katrina Conway. 6 December 1905. Cambridge University Library MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R202.

<sup>62</sup> Conway, A. Letter to Katrina Conway. 14 October 1906. Cambridge University Library MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R234.

<sup>63</sup> Agnes Conway to Martin Conway. 1906. Cambridge University Library. MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R235.

<sup>64</sup> Agnes Conway to Martin Conway. 22 November 1906. Cambridge University Library. MSS Add 7676/R123-260/R245.

<sup>65</sup> For a biography of Strong, see Dyson 2004. Strong obtained a 3rd class Classical Tripos standing from Girton College. She became the Assistant Director of the British School at Rome in 1905, a position she held until 1925, when she and the Director Thomas Ashby were encouraged to retire.

<sup>66</sup> Conway, A. 14 May 1912. Letter to Martin Conway. Cambridge University Library. MSS Add 7676/R261-638/R329.

took an extensive trip to the Middle East, travelling to Petra for the first time. She became entranced by the possibilities for its further exploration, and went back to speak to Harrison, then in retirement in London, but still keen on supporting new research. She saw Harrison a few days before the latter's death in 1928, at tea where they discussed a book on 'Magic + Religion', written by one of Harrison's latest protégés, who belonged to 'a new school of young men that [Harrison] was backing up with enthusiasm'.<sup>67</sup> A few days later Conway wrote in her diary

[...] when I got home there was a message to say that beloved Jane Harrison had died at 1.30 – and I wrote her a long letter after tea with my theories about Petra Religion – always too late. But my last talk with her was the best I could ever have had + I ought to be thankful to have ended with her on such a note.<sup>68</sup>

## Conclusion

Agnes Conway's life reveals one of the routes into archaeology for British women during the early twentieth century, and the part that the supportive environment at Newnham College played in providing women students with access to the British School at Athens. Archaeologists such as Dorothy Garrod and Gertrude Caton-Thompson regularly appear in histories of women in archaeology, and are often isolated by their own achievements in the field. It is essential to remember that they, as a Newnham College alumna, and fellow respectively, both women came from a tradition of Newnham College women in archaeology. The educational background and experience of archaeologists yields valuable insight into their interpretive framework, and elucidates the development of archaeology during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During this period the classical/archaeological network at Cambridge helped to introduce archaeological material into the curriculum, and promoted archaeological studies to students, both men and women. The dramatic and engaging personalities of Harrison, Verrall, and Murray, in making classical texts come alive, the use of anthropological material by Harrison, Ridgeway and Frazer, and the fine art expertise of Waldstein and Harrison, promoted the uses and value of archaeological material, and introduced a new generation of students to archaeology. And the intellectual context of Newnham College provided an atmosphere where scholarly and intellectual engagement could flourish across disciplinary boundaries.

One of the valuable lessons that the history of archaeology can learn from the history of science is to look beyond the traditional or accepted definitions of practitioners of a discipline. This encouragement to look beyond the boundaries is applicable to women in archaeology, whose work in the early part of the twentieth century, with few exceptions, was not excavation but museum and library related. It also applies to those professionals in the classics, and in what would become art history, who embraced, collected and assessed archaeological material, and in so doing made a new branch of the study of the past accessible to students.

Newnham College in turn encouraged women, whose paths to higher education were often difficult, to explore new ways of viewing and studying the past, often outside Britain. Agnes Conway's detailed diaries and correspondence from the period help illuminate this milieu, shedding light not only on the early age of taught archaeology at Cambridge, but also on the experience of women students at Newnham College at the turn of the century. They highlight Jane Harrison's instrumental inspirational role in archaeological training, and the value of Harrison's personal network, for bringing the latest theories to a younger generation of students. By setting the world of archaeology firmly in an historical context, detailing the developments in education and society, and the individuals who influenced the teaching of archaeology at university level, we can better understand the way in which archaeologists make their own conclusions about the material they study.

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<sup>67</sup> Conway, A. Thursday 5 April. 1928 Diary. Cambridge University Library MSS Add 7676/Z30.

<sup>68</sup> Conway, A. Sunday 15 April. 1928 Diary. Cambridge University Library MSS Add 7676/Z30.

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