

Rudolf Pfeiffer. A Catholic Classicist in the Age of Protestant
Altertumswissenschaft

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Abstract: The basic question this paper addresses is the way in which Catholic classicist in Germany's south and Catholics in general reacted to Wolf's *Altertumswissenschaft*, which was inspired by Prussia's 'Kulturprotestantismus', developed by Protestant scholars, and tied to the institutions of Protestant Prussia. It approaches the question through a case study of Rudolf Pfeiffer, who was one of very few Catholic classicists who flourished within the institutional framework of *Altertumswissenschaft*. It identifies unique features in Pfeiffer's scholarship in comparison to his Protestant colleagues and examines the extent to which they can be explained by his Catholic upbringing and the tradition of studying Classics it inspired.

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Rudolf Pfeiffer

A Catholic Classicist in the Age of Protestant *Altertumswissenschaft*¹

The institutional and intellectual redefinition of classical scholarship known as *Altertumswissenschaft* that Friedrich August Wolf and others accomplished in the second half of the eighteenth century was largely a Protestant project, started by Protestant scholars, and developing close intellectual and institutional ties to the state of Prussia and its secularized Protestantism. As Suzanne Marchand notes, it largely excluded Catholics in Germany's south and in Austria:²

“Catholic piety restrained attempts to link Bavaria (and also Austria) to Greece without the mediation of Rome; even Ludwig I., as Friedrich Thiersch confided to August Böckh, was torn between fierce loyalty to the Church and Prussian-style free scientific inquiry. German philhellenism partook so heavily of that peculiar form of secularized Lutheranism known as ‘secularized Protestantism’ (*Kulturprotestantismus*) that in 1862 the biographer of the philologist F. A. Wolf felt he had to correct the pervasive impression that Greek was exclusively the language of Protestantism. In addition, the basic institutions of neohumanism—the *Gymnasium* and the philological seminar—were borrowed from the north, and their integration into the Catholic lands occurred less as an abrupt shift in state policy than as a continuation of eighteenth-century classicism. Throughout the Second Empire and into the Weimar period, Berliners controlled central neohumanist institutions like the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut and the Royal Museums. Catholics rarely participated in their activities, sometimes by choice, sometimes by sociological coincidence (there were few Catholics in academia in comparison to their numbers in the general population), sometimes by deliberate exclusion.”

¹ I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Erwin Arnold, who was Pfeiffer's assistant in his last years and who communicated many personal impressions of Pfeiffer to me, and to Professor Wilfried Stroh, who established contact with Dr. Arnold. I am also grateful to P. &&&, who allowed me access to the estate

² S. Marchand, *Down from Olympus. Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970*, Princeton 1996, xxiii.

The intellectual and institutional innovations of German *Altertumswissenschaft*—the redefinition of Classics as a historical and objective discipline, the notion that this discipline affords its practitioners direct and unmediated access to the spirit of the classical Greeks (but not so much to the Romans), the idea that Classics’ various subfields must collaborate in an interdisciplinary way to achieve this purpose, and the invention of the *Seminar* as its institutional venue—are now well studied.³ However, to my knowledge no attention has been paid to the way Catholics in Germany’s south and Austria, whether classicists or not, responded to a model of studying the ancient world that was tied to a state and a religious denomination many of them resented. Even if, as Suzanne Marchand observes, they did not contribute to or were even excluded from the development of Protestant *Altertumswissenschaft*, Catholics did study the ancient world and presumably will have done so in their own way. And to the extent that they adopted the intellectual and institutional innovations of Prussian *Altertumswissenschaft*, it must be asked how a Protestant model of studying the ancient world gets transformed once it is exported into a different cultural context.

There is at least anecdotal evidence illustrating how profound a barrier existed in the Catholics’ perception between themselves and Protestant *Altertumswissenschaft*, and how hard they found it to accept it and its representatives. When in 1808 the Bavarian king Ludwig I. hired Friedrich Jacobs, a Protestant from Thuringia who had been recommended to him by F.A. Wolf, to organize classical studies in Munich and the Bavarian capital’s academic institutions in general on the Protestant model, Munich’s

³ See Marchand (above n.) for a synthesis. The bibliography is large; my understanding of *Altertumswissenschaft* in the present paper was especially influenced by Grafton (&&&), Most (&&&), Calder (&&&), Christ (&&&), Momigliano (&&&).

newspapers and magazines attacked him relentlessly, so that after three years he left disillusioned to return to Prussia. Friedrich Thiersch, who was hired as his successor, fared even worse, when a concerned Munich watched for him in front of his apartment and drove a dagger in his neck. The attack, which Thiersch alleged to have been inspired by members of Munich's very influential Aretin family, came within an inch of killing him.⁴

One reason why historians of classical scholarship have paid little attention to Catholic Classics in the age of Protestant *Altertumswissenschaft* is the nature of the available sources. Protestant classicists did not only invent the institutional framework that still today defines the academic study of the ancient world, they also collaborated on the institutional redefinition of academic scholarship in general that took place at the time⁵ and that continues to inform academic institutions today. Therefore, modern historians of Protestant *Altertumswissenschaft* deal with sources whose institutional context is very much like their own, and which can be accessed comparatively easily. The institutions where Catholics studied the ancient world, by contrast, were monasteries and the *Gymnasien* attached to many of them, where monks acted as teachers. Just as in Suzanne Marchand's account the influence of the Catholic Church was responsible for the Catholics' resistance to Protestant *Altertumswissenschaft*, so it also provided the venues for Catholic study of the ancient world. And while most modern students of the history of classical scholarship gain easy access to the Protestant world of professors,

⁴ For these anecdotes and in general for Munich's "ausgesprochene Widerstandsbewegung gegen die aus nördlichen Regionen Berufenen" see R. Pfeiffer, 'Klassische Philologen', in *Geist und Gestalt. Biographische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften vornehmlich im zweiten Jahrhundert ihres Bestehens*, 1. Band München 1959, 113-39, esp. 114-7.

⁵ See Grafton (&&&), Marchand (&&&).

departments, and academic journals, few have the expertise to study the Catholic world of monks, monasteries, and the hierarchy of the church that conditioned their scholarship.

I do not possess expertise in the institutions of the Catholic Church in Germany during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and a systematic history of Catholic Classics in Germany during the age of Protestant *Altertumswissenschaft* exceeds the limits of this paper anyway. What I intend to offer instead is as a preliminary study, which examines academic interests and scholarship of Rudolf Pfeiffer, one of very few German Catholics who joined the professional ranks of Prussian *Altertumswissenschaft*⁶, and whose scholarship is therefore more easily accessible than that of other Catholic classicists. Pfeiffer was born in the Bavarian town of Augsburg in 1889, grew up in a house situated opposite Augsburg's cathedral that was once owned by the humanist Conrad Peutinger, and received his first classical education at the *Gymnasium* attached the Benedictine abbey of St. Stephan in his hometown. That he was a devout Catholic who throughout his life retained a keen interest in the Catholic Church is a little known fact because in his academic writings he never draws attention to it; but those who knew him personally attest emphatically to his deep Catholicism.⁷ And when he started studying Classics at Munich's Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Pfeiffer became one of the most respected professional classicists of his generation. He obtained his first

⁶ Conventional histories of German classical scholarship do not regularly record or discuss faith except for Jewish professors, so that it is hard to present data on the percentage of German classicists who were Catholics. But since, as Marchand observes, there were few Catholics among German academics in general, it is likely that the same is true for classicists. As Professor Stroh confirms, even in Munich, the center of German Catholicism, except Pfeiffer no Catholic ever held a chair in the Seminar für Klassische Philologie.

⁷ Dr. Erwin Arnold in a personal email to me dating Dec 12, 2008; Dr. Arnold also notes that Pfeiffer viewed with great skepticism the innovations of the Second Vatican Council.

university chair in Hamburg in 1923 at the age of 34, and in 1928 returned to his Bavarian home as professor of Greek at Munich's university. In 1937, he resigned that chair because his wife was Jewish and because his personal beliefs were incompatible with National Socialism,⁸ and went to Oxford; but in 1951 he accepted an invitation to return to his old chair in Munich. He died in 1979, having acquired many honors, academic and otherwise. In this paper I will examine whether there are any significant differences between Pfeiffer's academic interests and those of his largely Protestant colleagues, and then try to determine the extent to which his Catholic upbringing and the tradition of studying Classics it inspired serves to explain them.

In the course of his academic career Pfeiffer pursued two major scholarly interests: on the one hand the study of the classical tradition, and on the other the study of Hellenistic poetry. The former occupied him predominantly at the beginning of his academic career, when he obtained his PhD with a dissertation on Johannes Spreng, a sixteenth-century Augsburg Meistersinger who also translated Homer (1914), and at its end, when he published two volumes of his *History of Classical Scholarship* covering classical antiquity and the modern period (1968 and 1976; he had planned a third volume on the Middle Ages, but health reasons prevented him from completing it). In between, while continuing to publish on the classical tradition and especially on Erasmus, he

⁸ On the latter see H. Lloyd-Jones, *Blood for the Ghosts. Classical Influences in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, London 1982, 264-5.

turned his attention to Hellenistic poetry and especially the works of Callimachus, whose extant oeuvre had at the time just been enriched by numerous newly discovered papyri. He published a first edition of the new finds in 1921 and reissued an enhanced edition in 1923; and in 1922 he published a critical discussion of the new fragments in a pamphlet called *Kallimachosstudien*. His interest in Callimachus culminated in the publication of the two volumes of his Oxford edition of the poet's works (1949 and 1953), and he returned to Hellenistic poetry occasionally later in his life (especially in an article on the future of the study of Hellenistic poetry published in 1955 in *JHS*).

Of course, Pfeiffer shared both these interests with other, Protestant German classicists of his time. Chief among them was Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, the *spiritus rector* of German *Altertumswissenschaft* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, who published in both fields: on the one hand, he published a history of Hellenistic Poetry in two volumes (1924) and an edition of Callimachus' *Hymns* and *Epigrams*; and on the other a short but influential history of classical scholarship (1921). However, in Pfeiffer's oeuvre his interest in the classical tradition and his interest in Hellenistic Poetry assume a different status and significance than they do in the oeuvre of Wilamowitz and those of other scholars. Wilamowitz was a historicist scholar who accepted Leopold Ranke's famous proposition that every historical period is "unmittelbar zu Gott"⁹ and hence no more or less valuable than any other. As a classicist he translated this historicist relativism into the obligation to treat all historical periods and aspects of

⁹ The common English translation of this phrase "next to God" does not quite capture the notion of immediacy conveyed in the German.

the ancient world with equal respect and to study as many of them as he could.¹⁰ Hellenistic poetry and the history of classical scholarship happen to be two of them. Rudolf Pfeiffer, by contrast, studied Hellenistic poetry and the history of classical tradition not as two among many fields of interest, but devoted to those two almost exclusively an academic career that lasted longer than Wilamowitz' (Pfeiffer died at the age of 89, Wilamowitz at the age of 83). It is true that especially in his earlier years Pfeiffer published on a variety of Greek authors other than Callimachus, such as Greek lyric poetry, Aeschylus, and Sophocles. But out of sixty-six items that Pfeiffer had published before he left Germany for Oxford, only fourteen do not deal in one way or the other with Hellenistic poetry or the history of classical scholarship; and six out of those fourteen are short reviews. It is hardly possible to conclude that these other publications represent scholarly interests on their own. So Pfeiffer's near-exclusive focus on Hellenistic poetry and the classical tradition stands out in contrast to Wilamowitz, where these were two areas of interest among many others.

But one should compare Pfeiffer's academic interest not only to those of Wilamowitz and others like him, because not all of Wilamowitz' Protestant colleagues shared his radically historicist approach to the study of the ancient world. Many did believe that some periods and aspects of the ancient world, especially archaic and classical Greece, possess greater value than others. But the contrast between Pfeiffer and this group of scholars is even starker than the contrast between Pfeiffer and Wilamowitz. For while out of Romantic sentiments they liked the archaic and classical Greeks, they

¹⁰ He accepts this position at the beginning of his *Geschichte der Philologie*: "Die Philologie, die immer noch den Zusatz klassisch erhält, obwohl sie den Vorrang, der in dieser Bezeichnung liegt, nicht mehr beansprucht, wird durch ihr Objekt bestimmt, die griechisch-römische Kultur in ihrem Wesen und allen Äußerungen ihres Lebens."

generally treated with little respect the allegedly decadent and unoriginal Greeks of later periods—including Pfeiffer’s poets from the Hellenistic period. In a lecture Pfeiffer delivered late in his life on the future of the study of Hellenistic poetry, he commented on the persistence of these negative evaluations: “there are old, inveterate prejudices, and it may be very hard to overcome them.”¹¹ It is true of course that some German classicists studied Hellenistic poetry and the literature of other so-called postclassical periods despite their negative assessments of their value. Why they spent their time studying something they did not like will remain their secret; the reason is to be found in a clash characteristic of German *Altertumswissenschaft* of the time as a whole between, on the one hand, the historicist obligation to treat all periods of the ancient world equally, and on the other the Romantic notion that the culture of archaic and classical Greece far outweighs the value of any other epoch of the ancient world.¹² But however other German students of Hellenistic poetry reconciled historicist obligation with Romantic values, Pfeiffer did not face their problem: because as the lecture just mentioned shows, he did not share their values. He explicitly takes on Winckelmann, whose Romantic enthusiasm for the “edle Einfalt und stille Größe” of the classical Greeks was responsible for the negative assessment of the post-classical periods of Greek history by later German classicists; and he seeks to protect Hellenistic poetry not just from the Romantics’ attacks, but also from occasional failed attempts to make it agree with their values.¹³

Similarly, his interest in the history of classical scholarship collides with the Romantic values of his colleagues. A corollary of the Romantic belief in the preeminence

¹¹ *JHS* 1955, 69.

¹² See Grafton, ‘Polyhistor into Philolog’, &&&.

¹³ 70-71.

of the archaic and classical Greeks and in the decadence of all ensuing periods was the assumption that studying the latter contributes nothing to understanding the former. And why should it; if Hellenistic poetry or, say, the poetry of Christian Late Antiquity are only decadent and derivative imitations of classical models, it is more expedient to turn to the original right away. Moreover, some believed that out of a special spiritual or even racial kinship German classicists specifically could gain unmediated access to the culture of archaic and classical Greece.¹⁴ From this perspective, the study of the classical tradition by which the culture of archaic and classical Greece was passed on became pointless and unnecessary—if the archaic and classical Greeks can be accessed immediately, why take the detour via the classical tradition. Therefore, few German classicist of the time have studied the history of classical scholarship at all to any serious degree.¹⁵ With the exception of Wilamowitz' study, most contemporary treatments of the history of classical scholarship take the form of poorly reflected obituaries of late scholars to whom the writer had a personal connection.¹⁶ A three-volume history of classical scholarship as Pfeiffer had projected it, and in general an interest in the history of the classical tradition sustained throughout a career of more than sixty years, are as unparalleled in Germany at the time as is Pfeiffer's peculiar interest in Hellenistic poetry.

¹⁴ See Marchand (above n. &&&), 44-8, as well as A. Schnapp, 'Archéologie et nazisme, II', *Quaderni di Storia* 6 (1980), 19-33 and B. Näf, *Von Perikles zu Hitler? Die athenische Demokratie und die deutsche Althistorie bis 1945*, Bern 1986, esp. 135-59.

¹⁵ See on the paucity of such studies C.O. Brink, 'Rudolf Pfeiffer's "History of Classical Scholarship"', in M. Lausberg (ed.), *Philologia perennis. Colloquium zu Ehren von Rudolf Pfeiffer*, Augsburg 1996, 46-56, esp. 46.

¹⁶ Momigliano, *Contributi* 3.708.

How can these unusual interests be explained? Previous historians of Pfeiffer's scholarship have pointed at Pfeiffer's professional training at Munich's Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in the years 1908-1913 and particularly to Otto Crusius, who held the university's chair of Greek philology at the time and was the supervisor of Pfeiffer's dissertation.¹⁷ Crusius indeed shared Pfeiffer's academic interests in Hellenistic poetry and in the history of the classical tradition. He edited the Hellenistic poet Herondas,¹⁸ whose works had just been rediscovered on papyri, motivated Pfeiffer to work with papyrological evidence, and trained him in the skills necessary to master it. Also, Crusius studied certain aspects of the classical tradition and the history of classical scholarship. He published a book in Erwin Rohde¹⁹ and an essay on the classical world in the nineteenth century,²⁰ and on the *Nachleben* of individual genres.²¹ Moreover, he firmly believed that that classical antiquity provides a model for a better life in the modern world.²²

¹⁷ See Grafton (&&& review of the second volume of Pfeiffer's *History of Classical Scholarship*) and Lloyd-Jones (above n. &&&), 262-3.

¹⁸ 1892 (ed.), 1893 (tr.); see too *Untersuchungen zu den Mimiamben des Herondas*, Leipzig 1892.

¹⁹ *Erwin Rohde. Ein biographischer Versuch*, Tübingen 1902.

²⁰ *Deutschtum und Altertum* (1916) ??? &&&.

²¹ Especially the fable; see below n. &&&.

²² 1910: "das Ideal des Neuhumanismus ist durch das Läuterungsfeuer der Geschichtswissenschaften gegangen und hat standgehalten" (cited in Lloyd-Jones (above n. &&&) 262); 1916: "Since the end of the eighteenth century the Greeks have been fellow combatants against the imposed dominion of French-Latin pedantry, and leaders of national autonomy and independence. This they are still; they, who like the Romans held the Orient for more than a millennium, set a magnificent example for a people [i.e. the Germans] that continually develops the form that was impressed on it at the hour of its birth, but never will renounce it" (cited in Marchand (above n. &&&), 242); *Altertum und Deutschtum* (1916) &&& ???.

However, on closer inspection the similarities between Crusius and his student Pfeiffer fade. First of all, for Crusius, like for most of his colleagues, Hellenistic poetry and the history of the classical tradition were only two out of many other scholarly interests. Crusius also published widely on ancient Greek lyric,²³ on ancient Greek music,²⁴ on the history of Greek religion,²⁵ and especially on ancient proverbs²⁶ and on ancient fables.²⁷ Many of his studies of the classical tradition too are concerned with the history of the fable.²⁸ Moreover, in addition to his academic writings Crusius published a volume of his own poetry²⁹ as well as a number of compositions.³⁰ So for Crusius, like for Wilamowitz, Hellenistic poetry and the history of the classical tradition were only two out of many interests.

Secondly and more importantly, Crusius' interest in these diverse fields was driven by a motivation that Pfeiffer did not share. What unites Crusius' academic output was, as

²³ His papyrological skills predestined him especially for editions: see his improved and augmented edition of Bergk's and Hiller's *Anthologia Lyrica* (Leipzig 1909).

²⁴ E.g. *Die delphischen Hymnen. Untersuchungen über Texte und Melodien*, Göttingen 1894.

²⁵ *Beiträge zur griechischen Religionsgeschichte*, &&& 1886

²⁶ Again, both editions and critical and cultural studies: *Analecta critica ad paroemiographos Graecos*, Leipzig 1883; *Paroemiographica*, München 1910; *Ad Plutarchi de proverbii Alexandrinorum libellum commentarius*, Tübingen 1887 and 1895; *Zur handschriftlichen Überlieferung der Paroemiographen*, Göttingen 1892;

²⁷ There is a plethora of items in his bibliography, both editions and critical and cultural studies: *De Babrii aetate*, *Leipziger Studien zur classischen Philologie* 2 (1879), 125-248; *Babrii Fabulae Aesopiae*, Leipzig 1897, *Sagenverschiebungen*, München 1906.

²⁸ See *Fragmente aus der Geschichte der Fabel*, Leipzig 1913; a larger project on the history of ancient fable and its *Nachleben* remained unfinished (Pfeiffer, *Geist und Gestalt* 1.129).

²⁹ *Heilige Not*, &&& 1916.

³⁰ Most of them are works for choir composed during World War I and have a nationalistic touch: e.g. *Ein Seemannslied* (Berlin, *Kriegsliederflugblatt* 7), *Reservistenlied* (Leipzig 1914), *Choral-Gebet*, *Mein Leutnant*, *Unsterblichkeit* (all Göttingen, ca. 1916), *Im hohen Gras*, *Himmelfahrt*, *Laßt uns die Bäume lieben*, *Stilles Reifen* (all Munich 1951).

Pfeiffer put it in his entry on Crusius in the *Deutsche Nationalbiographie*, an interest specifically in “den Äußerungen des griechischen Volkstums”³¹ and on a more general level the desire to identify “allgemeine Völkergedanken und naives Volkstum.”³² Crusius had become fascinated with these concepts while studying at the University of Leipzig under the direction of Rudolf Hildebrand,³³ and already earlier at the Gymnasium in his hometown Hannover Gymnasium, where he was taught by Heinrich Ludolf Ahrens, a student of Greek dialects who had absorbed the Romantic ideas of his teacher Otfried Müller. Crusius also was a lifelong admirer of the work of the Grimm brothers.³⁴

Most of Crusius’ academic interests tally with his desire to explore the spirit of the Greeks and in the spirit of a people in general. With the exception of Greek lyric poetry, Crusius was interested in the Greeks’ literary texts, where their *Volksgeist* was obscured by rhetoric and artificiality, but in popular productions that preserved a more original state of it and provided more immediate access: fables, proverbs, religious customs, music. Crusius’ interest in Herondas’ poetry too is driven by its popular content that he believed to open up a window onto the daily life of the Hellenistic Greeks; other Hellenistic poets, whose works lacked that quality, he did not study. His interest in the people’s spirit also motivated his studies of the classical tradition. At the beginning of his *Fragmente aus der Geschichte der griechischen Fabel* he writes that they represent “eine Elementarstufe geistiger Entwicklung” and emphasizes their similarity across cultures.³⁵

³¹ Pfeiffer, *Deutsche Nationalbiographie*, access through wikipedia &&&.

³² Pfeiffer, *Geist und Gestalt* (above n. &&&)130.

³³ On Hildebrand’s impact on Crusius see Rehm, A. Nekrolog, bayerische akademie der wissenschaften, 9 &&&.

³⁴ See in general on Crusius’ academic training K. Preisendanz, *O. Crusius*, Karlsruhe 1920, 6-13.

³⁵ 2-3.

The Greeks may have been particularly competent in structuring that material (p. 5); but the ideas fables express are the same everywhere and at all times. It is therefore almost misleading to say that Crusius was interested in the history of the fable; rather his purpose was to identify elements in the fable that transcend history and are common to all people. Several of Crusius' many friends among Munich's intelligentsia³⁶ shared these interests, for instance the composer Hans Pfitzner, whose opera *Palestrina* concerns the composer's struggle to compose truly and originally German music.³⁷ A different motivation drives only Crusius' studies of Greek lyric, where he tried to capture the personal genius of the lyric poets,³⁸ and his biography of Erwin Rohde, whom he likewise treated as 'Ausnahmepersönlichkeit'³⁹. The motivation for the latter approach was his belief that the modern classicist can learn such exceptional characters and that the spirit of their research transcends time: as he put it in his essay 'Wie studiert man Klassische Philologie', one should "just read the studies of Bentley ... or take up Lessing, whom we are proud to call one of us... Individual results can be superseded, but the spirit of the research and the form of its presentation remain exemplary."⁴⁰

But Rudolf Pfeiffer's concern was not with the Greek *Volksgeist* or the transhistorical spirit of individual great scholars. As a student of classical antiquity, he was never interested in Greek proverbs or fables, the two genres that sparked his

³⁶ On his personal acquaintances amongst Munich's intellectuals see *Geistiges und künstlerisches München*, ed. Fils. München 1913 &&&.

³⁷ On this aspect of Pfitzner's *Palestrina* see &&&.

³⁸ Pfeiffer, *Geist und Gestalt* 1.130.

³⁹ *Erwin Rohde* (above n. &&&), iv.

⁴⁰ &&&.

teacher's Romantic imagination most.⁴¹ Neither did he study Greek religion, which is the more remarkable given that he edited Callimachus' *Aitia*, a poem whose description of archaic Greek rituals could have sparked an interest in the Greeks' religious practices. Moreover, Pfeiffer in general does not treat Hellenistic poetry as evidence for the daily life the Greek people. On Herondas, his teacher's hero, Pfeiffer never published at all; and Theocritus' urban mimes, which are similar in character to Herondas' poems, did not attract his interest either. Instead, the focus of Pfeiffer's interest was Callimachus, and both his edition of his poems and the discussion of his work as a poet and scholar in the *History of Scholarship* show that Pfeiffer valued him because he transmitted and adapted the *literary* tradition of the Greeks.⁴² This is precisely the area of Greek literature in which Crusius showed no interest at all.

Similarly, Pfeiffer's studies of classical scholarship are driven by a different motivation than his teacher's. There is no evidence that he ever pursued the history of the classical tradition in order to reduce the ancient and the moderns to a set of shared ideas, as Crusius had done in his work on the *Nachleben* of Greek fables; and he was not interested only in 'Ausnahmepersönlichkeiten' either. To be sure, Pfeiffer had his heroes in the classical tradition, especially Erasmus, who might even have been a personal

⁴¹ Significantly, he passed on to his student Winfried Bühler the task of completing Otto Crusius' unfinished work on paroemiography: Lloyd-Jones 262.

⁴² E.g. *History of Classical Scholarship* 1.125: "Callimachus' poems, in spite of their novelty, were informed by an exact and wide knowledge of the earlier poetry from which he drew his models"; p. 133: "for the first time in history the *Pinakes* of Callimachus made the greatest treasures of literature accessible by dividing poetry and prose books into appropriate classes and by listing the authors in alphabetical order"; p. 134: "Now for the first time we find wide literary knowledge being acquired for the sake of the literary tradition itself, that is, for the works to be written in the present age and for the preservation and understanding of the works written in past ages."

model for Pfeiffer.⁴³ But while Crusius and others had focused on individual outstanding scholars only, Pfeiffer's *History of Classical Scholarship* is distinctive because it assigns each scholar a place in the tradition of classical scholarship as a whole. It is true that his approach by and large is biographical, and that he treats each scholar as a great man,⁴⁴ but each great scholar is part of a long chain of other scholars, which begins long before him and ends long after him, and in whose context the significance of his scholarship emerges. As he remarks in the preface to the first volume, "it was in the course of time and the succession of peoples and generations that the full nature and the many forms of scholarship were revealed. The history of classical scholarship, therefore, is classical scholarship in the making."⁴⁵

Of course, in order to explain Pfeiffer's unique academic interests one should not underestimate Crusius' impact. Pfeiffer certainly learned from his Munich teacher the papyrological skills he needed to pursue his studies of Callimachus. Also, the example of Crusius probably convinced Pfeiffer that at a time when the Greeks of the archaic and classical periods were held in highest esteem among German professional classicists, it was possible to build an academic career in Germany on the study of non-classical material. It is therefore not surprising that in the preface to his dissertation Pfeiffer thanks

⁴³ Dr. Arnold, personal email (see above n. &&&).

⁴⁴ Grafton (review &&&).

⁴⁵ 1.vii.

his teacher and supervisor profusely.⁴⁶ But Crusius' influence cannot explain why Pfeiffer pursued his academic interests, even though he shared them with his academic teacher, in his very unique way. In the following the hypothesis will be tested that the uniqueness of his scholarship is a result of his Catholic education and upbringing, and reflects Catholic positions and notions that set Pfeiffer apart from his Protestant colleagues.

Before entering Munich's Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Pfeiffer received his first classical training at the Gymnasium St. Stephan in his hometown Augsburg, a school run by Benedictine monks. One should be careful here not to identify 'first' with 'initial', because by all standards Pfeiffer's classical training at St. Stephan was profound and thorough. In order to graduate from the school its students had to prove, as old curricula reveal, full passive and active knowledge of Latin and Greek; and they had read selections from the major Greek and Latin authors, familiarity with whose ideas was tested in long scholarly essays.⁴⁷ As Pfeiffer graduated best of his class,⁴⁸ he must have

⁴⁶ *Der Augsburger Meistersinger und Homerübersetzer Johannes Spreng*, Augsburg 1914, 63: "Zu ganz besonderem Danke fühle ich mich an dieser Stelle Herrn Geheimrat Crusius verpflichtet, von dem ich vielfältigste und tiefste wissenschaftliche Anregung erfahren habe."

⁴⁷ According to the Jahresbericht, instruction in classical languages at St. Stephan included selections (often substantial) from the following authors and texts: in Latin Ovid (elegies and *Metamorphoses*), Tibullus, Vergil's *Aeneid*, Horace (epodes, odes, satires, and epistles), Phaedrus, Caesar, Livy, Tacitus, and Cicero (philosophical works and speeches); and in Greek Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, the New Testament, Xenophon, Lysias, Demosthenes, Lucian and Plato. In addition, students were required to produce *Stilübungen* (translations of modern texts from German into Greek and Latin) up to their senior years. Topics of critical were, e.g., 'Mäcenas als Freund des Horatius', 'Der weinende Odysseus im Kreise der Phäaken, ein ergreifendes Stimmungsbild', 'Rede des Themistokles vor der Schlacht bei Salamis (nach den Andeutungen bei Herodot)', 'Welche Szenen aus der Schilderung der Eroberung von Troja gefallen am meisten (Aeneis II).'

⁴⁸ Weidenhiller in Lausberg (above n. &&&), 23-4.

mastered the curriculum's requirements exceptionally well. Moreover, in addition to class lessons, Pfeiffer also had permanent access to the cell of his Greek teacher Dom Beda Grundl for private lessons, during which he recalls reading all of Homer, most of Plato, and a variety of other Greek authors.⁴⁹ According to Pfeiffer, nobody ever, not even his academic teachers in Munich, taught him more about Greek literature than St. Stephan's Dom Grundl.⁵⁰

Dom Grundl was a remarkable man. From the perspective of his student Pfeiffer he stood out for his admiration of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff—this was “wohl ein Unicum an einem bayerischen Gymnasium am Anfang des Jahrhunderts.”⁵¹ Indeed: a few decades after the Prussian chancellor Bismarck's ferocious attacks against the church, which in Germany's South were considered to be directed specifically against the Catholic church, a Benedictine monk in Bavaria had little reason to admire the scholarship of a Protestant Prussian aristocrat. But from today's perspective Dom Grundl stands out because, in spite of his admiration for Wilamowitz, he bears so little resemblance to him and the tradition of scholarship Wilamowitz represents. The development of Prussian *Altertumswissenschaft* coincided historically with the development of Prussia's ‘Kulturprotestantismus’, which accepted Protestantism and its values as a cultural tradition, but distinguished sharply between the state and the church. And just as the Prussian state had become secular, so had Prussian *Altertumswissenschaft* become a secular discipline. Most remarkably, since the early nineteenth century Hebrew and the Hebrew Bible, in which classicists had been trained for centuries as a matter of

⁴⁹ Pfeiffer, *Gymnasium* 1964, 197.

⁵⁰ Bühler, 403, *Gnomon* 1980.

⁵¹ Pfeiffer, *Gymnasium* 1964, 197.

course, disappeared from Classics curricula.⁵² The New Testament, which once was the first Greek text students of Greek read in German secondary education,⁵³ and Christian literature from Late Antiquity, were similarly sidelined. In Wilamowitz' oeuvre for instance, despite his ambition to pay equal attention to every aspect of the ancient world, there are only very few—I counted six—articles dealing primarily with Christian topics. And most of Wilamowitz' students and contemporaries did not discuss ancient Christianity and its literature at all. Apparently the Christian church and its tradition had been expelled from the realm of *Altertumswissenschaften* just as it had been exiled from the Prussian state.

Dom Grundl, by contrast, was both a student of pagan classical antiquity and interested in the Christian church both from a theoretical and from a practical perspective. On the one hand, as a teacher at St. Stephan he taught classical languages and the canonical pagan authors of ancient Greece and Rome.⁵⁴ He also translated Euripides' *Orestes*.⁵⁵ But on the other hand, the majority of his scholarly publications concerned patristic topics and the history of the ancient church. He wrote his PhD dissertation on Justin Martyr in which he applied the methodology of historical textual criticism to a Christian text.⁵⁶ He also published several articles on related areas.⁵⁷ These studies pinnacled when on the request of pope Pius XII. he served on a commission charged with

⁵² Grafton (&&&).

⁵³ See Christian Wolf on the education of Johann Sebastian Bach, &&&.

⁵⁴ See above n. &&& for the authors taught at St. Stephan.

⁵⁵ *Festgabe für Martin von Schanz zur 70. Geburtstagsfeier*, Würzburg 1912, 1-57.

⁵⁶ *De interpolationibus ex Sancti Iustini martyris et philosophi Apologia secunda expungendis*, Würzburg 1891.

⁵⁷ E.g. 'Ueber den Conflictus Arnobii catholici cum Serapione Aegyptio', *Theologische Quartalsschrift* 79 (1897), 529-68; 'Die Christenverfolgung unter Nero nach Tacitus', *Theologische Quartalsschrift* 86, 1-10.

reconstructing the original text of the *Vulgate* and was charged with the collation of relevant manuscripts held in Bavarian libraries. Moreover, Dom Grundl was not just a scholar of the church's canonical texts; he was also interested in homiletics. He published translations of parts of the scripture that turned out to be very popular,⁵⁸ as well as a beautifully decorated popular commentary on the psalms intended to aid prayer.⁵⁹ He also edited and translated into German parts of Catholic liturgy.⁶⁰

Also, Dom Grundl's academic and practical work in the service of the Catholic Church was not disconnected from his studies of pagan antiquity; rather, the former provided the conceptual framework and personal justification of the latter. As he explains in a lecture he delivered at the seminary in Eichstätt, "Christ ist das Ideal der Wissenschaft, und demnach mit mehr Recht als der Weise von Stagira der Wissenden Meister."⁶¹

The same is true on a general level for the school at which he taught. At St. Stephan, the school's institutionalized Catholicism defined instruction in the classical languages. In the listings of the subject curricula in the annual *Jahresberichte*, the first subject mentioned is always Religion, ahead of German and the classical languages. While normally one would expect a school's headmaster to teach Latin and Greek, St. Stephan's headmasters normally taught, or cared especially for the instruction in,

⁵⁸ *Das Buch der Psalmen*, three editions from 1898 to 1908, and *Das Neue Testament*, ten editions since 1900.

⁵⁹ *Morgen- und Abendklänge aus den Psalmen*, Augsburg 1912.

⁶⁰ *Die Abtweihe* (Augsburg 1902), *Die Kirchweihe* (Augsburg 1903), *Tagzeiten zu Ehren Unserer Lieben Frau* (Augsburg 1904), *Tagzeiten für die Verstorbenen* (Augsburg 1905), *Die Abtweihe* (Augsburg 1916).

⁶¹ A manuscript copy of the lecture text survives in Dom Grundl's estate at St. Stephan in Augsburg.

religion.⁶² In the *Festschrift* published on the occasion of the school's hundredth anniversary the *Festpredigt* of a Catholic dignitary precedes anybody else's *Grußworte*,⁶³ and the committees that organized the anniversary are predominantly staffed by Catholic clerics.⁶⁴ The journal *Stephania*, which functioned as the school's chronicle, prints photographs of *Priesterweihen* and *Concelebrationes* as well as students' art works.⁶⁵ Instruction at St. Stephan was for the most part carried out by Benedictine monks, and their personal dedication to their faith, and the way it informed their teaching is reported in every obituary published in the school's annual journal *Stephania*.⁶⁶ The poet Richard

⁶² See e.g. *Stephania* 13-22 (1940-50), 14-6.

⁶³ See *Festbericht über die Jahrhundertfeier der katholischen Studienanstalt St. Stephan in Augsburg*, Augsburg 1928, 54-92. The order of the speaker on this occasion was: Generalvikar Prälat Dr. Franz Xaver Eberle (representing the church), Kommerzienrat Stadtrat Georg Haindl (representing the city of Augsburg), Rektor Dr. P. Gregor Lang (for the school), Oberbürgermeister Kaspar Deutschenbauer (for the city of Augsburg), Reichsminister a.D. Dr. Eduard Hamm-Berlin (representing Germany), Justizrat Dr. Fritz Thoma, Abt Dr. Plazidus Glogger O.S.B., RA Alois Aubele, and Amtsgerichtsdirektor Albert Frank.

⁶⁴ See *Festbericht* (above n. &&&), 118: the Ehrenpräsidium consisted of Dr. Maximilian Ritter von Lingg, Bischof von Augsburg; Carl Ritter von Braun, Oberlandesgerichts-Präsident a.D.; Kaspar Deutschenbauer, Oberbürgermeister von Augsburg (note that the order in which they appear is not alphabetical; it was intended that Bischof Ritter von Lingg was mentioned first). The actual organizational committee was presided over by two clerics and one layman.

⁶⁵ See *Stephania* 28 (1955/6), 5-6 and *Stephania* 29 (1956/7), 2-4.

⁶⁶ See e.g. *Stephania* 25 (1953), 40-46 in a tribute to P. Dr. Narciß Liebert and Abt Dr. Eugen Gebele, who both died in 1903 (and might have been among Pfeiffer's teachers). For Dr. Liebele the tribute recalls that "Lieber war in erster Linie Altphilolog" (40), but that "sein ganzes Berufswirken als Lehrer und Erzieher dem Buchstaben und Geiste der Ordensregel und Ordensüberlieferung entsprechend ohne auffälliges Zurschautragen von religiöser Weihe durchweht war und sich der Arbeit für Gott organisch einfügte" (42). For Abt Dr. Gebele it records how his appearance united traits of a scholar with those of a cleric (43-4): "Sein damals schon ergrautes Harr trug er nicht kurz nach der Art der Mönche, sondern lang, wie es früher allgemein üblich war bei alten Professoren und Prälaten... Auch im heißen Sommer trug er über seinem Ordenskleid einen leichten Mantel, der beim raschen Gehen oder bei heftigem Wind dem Flattern des Skapuliers Einhalt gebot. Bei seinem Erscheinen im Kolleg begrüßten wir ehrfurchtsvoll in ihm

Euringer, who graduated two years after Rudolf Pfeiffer in 1910, commented on the spirit of the Benedictine community that penetrated teaching at the school as follows:⁶⁷

Vordem sammelten in echt benediktinischem Eifer ehrfürchtige Geister alles Gut, was es zu vererben galt. ... denn das war immer das an St. Stephan, was mich am meisten ergriff, wie da die einzelne Gestalt immer nur und immer neu ihr Leben dem Geist des einen Vorbilds leiht, das immer wieder sich verkörpert. Nur der Bauer, nur der Adel und der ehrfurchtsvolle Soldat kannte etwas dem Verwandtes. Im Mönchtum aber erscheint es rein, schon verklärt, ganz selbstlos, erst recht in markanten Gestalten von unvergeßlichem Gepräge. Welch ein Erlebnis für junge Menschen, dies Aufgehen ganzer Geschlechterreihen im Dienste an der Idee so beispielhaft vor sich zu sehen! Sie begreifen es vielleicht noch nicht. Aber dies Vorleben bis ins Vorsterben hinein verwächst mit ihrer Vorstellungswelt. Wie da die Leihgabe Mensch, berufen, dienend sich zu läutern, zur Persönlichkeit sich ausprägt, indem sie, sich aufopfernd, den Bestand mehrt, das predigt ohne ein einziges Wort eine Auffassung vom Leben, die hinreißt wie jedes echte Beispiel. Ich halte dieses Miterleben für die kostbarste Mitgift, die wir Stephaner dem Mönchtum unserer Erzieher verdanken.

Pfeiffer would not have agreed with all parts of Euringer's assessment of the Benedictine spirit of instruction at St. Stephan. For once, Euringer, after moving to the city of Essen in Germany's North, became a fanatic Nazi,⁶⁸ but according to Pfeiffer fanaticism of any kind was alien to the Benedictine order. As he said in a public lecture delivered in 1953 on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the foundation of St. Stephan: "Benediktinisches Mönchtum hat zu allen Zeiten ... eine richtige via media, einen mittleren Weg einzuhalten versucht. Wir finden keine überspannte Askese, keinen spirituellen Fanatismus, keinen alles Fremde ablehnenden Rigorismus, sondern eine eigentümliche Offenheit, eine Aufgeschlossenheit... Damit hängt zusammen die Buch-

nicht nur den Professor, sondern zugleich den Abt, der als sichtbares Amtszeichen um den Hals die zart schimmernde Kette trug."

⁶⁷ *Stephania* 24 (1951-2), 15.

⁶⁸ See J. Hillesheim, "*Heil dir Führer! Führ uns an!... Der Augsburger Dichter Richard Euringer*, Würzburg 1995, &&&-&&&.

und Welttreudigkeit und jene modesta hilaritas, eine Heiterkeit mit Maß, die gewissermaßen schon in der regula zugestanden wird.”⁶⁹ Moreover, Pfeiffer would have rejected Euringer’s comparison of the Benedictine monks with soldiers. As he says in the same lecture, the first accomplishment of the Benedictine order was to preserve the cultural values and the tradition of classical antiquity world in the face of the wars that touselled the Mediterranean at the time and threatened to eliminate its accomplishments: “Aber eben damals, im Laufe des 6. Jahrhunderts, wurde Italien und ein großer Teil der übrigen westlichen Welt durch die heftigste Krise erschüttert, die sogenannten Gotenkriege, Ostroms Kampf um das alte Rom, die Langobardeninvasion usw. Wo fanden nun die bisher bewahrten literarischen Schätze, die antiken Autoren und die Einführungsschriften in die sogenannten sieben freien Künste, sowohl in die grammatischen wie die mathematischen, ihre Zuflucht? Um das Jahr 529 hatte, wie Sie alle wissen, Benedictus auf dem Monte Cassino in den Ruinen eines alten Apollontempels, wie uns erzählt wird, sein Kloster gegründet.”⁷⁰ Finally, Pfeiffer would also have rejected Euringer’s description of the Benedictine monks as ‘verklärt’ and the somewhat embarrassingly lofty rhetoric Euringer uses in the paragraph to celebrate that notion; in his account of the foundation of the Benedictine order in the lecture he instead emphasizes its humility and devotion to work and order: “Die weltflüchtige Panik, zu der das östliche Mönchtum neigte, ist hier einer festen Ordnung gewichen, in der sicherlich etwas vom alten römischen Geist lebt. Neben dem Gebet ist die Arbeit, Handarbeit vor allem, aber auch Geistesarbeit, geregelt.”⁷¹

⁶⁹ *Stephania* 25 (1953), 28-9.

⁷⁰ *Stephania* 25 (1953), 22.

⁷¹ *Stephania* 25 (1953), 22.

But Pfeiffer would have agreed with Euringer that the preservation of the tradition and the cultural values enshrined in it—“Gut das es zu vererben galt” in the Euringer’s words—was a central concern of Benedictine instruction at his school and its most remarkable achievement. At the end of his lecture, he defines that concern as “Benedictine Humanism” and emphasizes how it itself continues an ancient tradition.⁷²

Es ist also doch nicht so ganz verwunderlich ... daß dieser Orden [i.e. the Benedictine order] wie kein anderer gerade das aufnahm, was schon den Alten, etwa Cicero, als der Weg zur echten menschlichen Gesittung, zum *humanum* galt, nämlich literarische Bildung und gelehrtes Studium. War es nicht vielleicht eine ganz natürliche Entwicklung, daß die ursprüngliche Handarbeit, vor allem die *agri cultura* der ersten Familie des heiligen Benedictus in eine *cultura animi* überging? Die antike *humanitas* war allem Überspannten und Maßlosen abgeneigt, sie neigte zur Milde, zur inneren Gelassenheit, zur maßvollen Heiterkeit; zu ihren Pflichten, ihren *officia*, hatte es immer gehört, den errungenen geistigen Besitz mitzuteilen, die *cultura animi* auf andere zu übertragen. Es ist also kein Paradoxon ... vom benediktinischen Humanismus zu sprechen. Der Blick in die Jahrhunderte der Vergangenheit hat ihn als ein historisches Faktum gezeigt, und die allgemeinen Erwägungen als etwas durchaus Verständliches und Sinnvolles. Vor allem aber: die *cultura animi* zu übertragen, die menschliche Seele zu pflegen, diese Pflicht hat die benediktinische Schule erfüllt, von der spätantiken über die mittelalterliche Klosterschule bis zum heutigen Tag.

It is hard to imagine that a Protestant trained in the tradition of Wolfian *Altertumswissenschaft* would have uttered these words. To begin with, no Protestant would have cited Cicero as crown witness for the value of the classical world. Not everybody would have fully agreed with the hateful tirade Theodor Mommsen, next to Wilamowitz Prussian *Altertumswissenschaft*’s most famous representative, launches against Cicero in the third volume of his *Römische Geschichte*. But for most contemporary classicists Cicero and his explicitly and overtly rhetorical writings

⁷² *Stephania* 25 (1953), 29.

represented what was bad about the classical world and not what was good; and they would rather have agreed with Mommsen's assertion that "der Ciceroniasmus ist ein Problem"⁷³ than with Pfeiffer's praise of the man and the tradition for which he stands.⁷⁴ Similarly but more generally, it is unusual that Pfeiffer in this passage and elsewhere in the lecture mentions Rome and Romans approvingly, while there is not a singly reference to the greatness of the archaic and classical Greeks that others would have emphasized.⁷⁵

Finally and most importantly, few Protestant classicists would have highlighted the role of the classical tradition in the way Pfeiffer does. To be sure, the fact that there is a tradition through which knowledge of the ancient world has come down to the present is too evident to be totally neglected. But in general there were two reasons why classicists avoided emphasizing the role of that tradition. On the one hand, inasmuch they regarded themselves as historicist scholars like Wilamowitz, the notion that their understanding of the ancient world was conditioned by the tradition through which it had been transmitted clashed with their intention to be as objective as possible.⁷⁶ And inasmuch as they

⁷³ *Römische Geschichte* 3.620.

⁷⁴ Still in 1970 Karl Büchner remarked at the end of a volume that assembled several recent articles on Cicero under the title *Das neue Cicerobild* (Darmstadt 1971) and that was intended to take issue with the view of Mommsen and similar assessments: "Ein Positivismus, der sich nur auf das Faktische beschränkt, wird dieses Bandes nicht ansichtig... Die Zeit ist gekommen, Ciceros philosophische Gedankenwelt als ein großes *exemplum humanitatis* zu verstehen. Das meiste ist noch zu tun" (p. xxv).

⁷⁵ In fact, the only reference to the greatness of the Greeks in general (not just those of the archaic and classical periods) is in conjunction with the Romans: "Im 4. bis 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr. hat wiederum die Nobilität, der Senatsadel, das größte Verdienst auf dem gleichen Gebiete: es ging um die Erhaltung der eigenen römischen Klassiker und um die Übersetzung und Verbreitung der unentbehrlichen griechischen Literatur, vor allem der Philosophie. Dem Philhellenismus Roms also, das zeigen schon die zwei Beispiele, ist die Rettung des hellenischen Erbes und damit die Kontinuität der geistigen Kultur zu danken" (p. 22).

⁷⁶ See H.-G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, 5th edition Tübingen 1986, 214-6.

accepted the proposition of the preeminence of the Greeks of the archaic and classical periods, the tradition through which these authors had been transmitted was a necessary evil at best. In fact, to many the study of that tradition was a void task because of their belief in a special spiritual or even racial kinship between the Germans and the Greeks through which they could acquire immediate access to the archaic and classical Greeks. It is as if Prussian *Altertumswissenschaft* had transformed the general Protestant notion that the faithful can gain immediate access to Jesus without the intercession of a church and its hierarchy into the scholarly assumption that the German classicist can gain immediate access to the classical Greeks without the intercession of the classical tradition and especially its Roman and rhetorical elements or the Christian church.⁷⁷ Prussian classicists of course knew that the ancient texts had been passed through the rhetorical schools of Late Antiquity and through medieval monasteries; but from their perspective they were not reasons for praise and pride as they are for Pfeiffer at the end of his remarks, but breeding grounds for rhetorical decadence and scribal mistakes both of which must be eliminated if a classicist wants to restore true text and spirit of the original classical texts.⁷⁸

But Pfeiffer's academic interests betray the impact of the Benedictine idea conveyed to him at St. Stephan that cultural value and truth resides in the classical tradition as much as (or even more so than) in the original works.

⁷⁷ Gadamer (above n. &&&), 214 points out that Ranke, who invented the notion of the "Unmittelbarkeit zu Gott", was a Protestant, and discusses the parallel between his historical philosophy and the Protestant belief in one's immediate access to god. That belief may in a similar way have influenced the development of the idea of immediate access to the Greeks in Prussian *Altertumswissenschaften*.

⁷⁸ It was only outside of Classics that the role of the tradition was emphasized; see especially E.R. Curtius, *Europäisches Abendland und lateinisches Mittelalter*, Bern 1948. But Curtius' interests too were somewhat unique: see Gumbrecht &&&.

First of all, his education at St. Stephan explains the uniqueness of Pfeiffer's academic interests. Of the two interests he pursued throughout his life, the history of the classical tradition is most evidently a result of the Benedictine monks' emphasis on that tradition. But it is also true for his edition of Callimachus. For most classicists Callimachus was a latecomer ('Spätling') whose poetry lacks the originality of his predecessors and was inferior in rank to them. But for Pfeiffer Callimachus and his colleagues in Alexandria's famous library were preservers and protectors of the classical tradition similar to the way in which the Benedictines would be a few centuries later. In the first volume of his *History of Classical Scholarship* he describes Callimachus and his colleagues as scholar-poets who, facing the cultural disintegration of the Greek world as well as political turmoil and wars,⁷⁹ set out on the one hand to preserve the cultural values of the past through critical scholarship and on the other hand to continue the tradition of the past in their own works. Pfeiffer does not emphasize their lack of originality—in his view Callimachus at least possessed it⁸⁰—but concentrates on their role as the founding fathers of the classical tradition whose canonizations, editions, and commentaries inform the way the ancient world is approached ever since.

Secondly, it explains why Pfeiffer never studied extensively what his Protestant colleagues valued most, the literature of archaic and classical Greece. Most students of Greek literature tried to gain immediate access to the spirit of the archaic and classical Greeks; but Pfeiffer was interested much more in the tradition by which their works had been handed down. In this respect he was even more Benedictine than the Benedictine

⁷⁹ *History* 1.87. See on the importance of this assessment J. Latacz, 'Rudolf Pfeiffers Bedeuting innerhalb der klassischen Philologie', in M. Lausberg (ed.), *Philologia perennis. Colloquium zu Ehren von Rudolf Pfeiffer*, Augsburg 1996, 57-74, esp. 66-7.

⁸⁰ *History* 1.124-5.

monks who had taught him. With the exception of Lucian and the New Testament St. Stephan's Greek curriculum prescribed only texts of the archaic and classical periods of ancient Greece. Later periods, and especially the vast body of Greek patristic literature, are surprisingly absent from the school's Greek and Latin curricula.⁸¹ But patristic authors were taught extensively in the school's religion classes (which were, of course, compulsory).⁸² It is likely that from this source Pfeiffer acquired his great knowledge of Greek patristic texts on which Eduard Fraenkel remarks in a letter of recommendation he wrote for Pfeiffer when he tried to find employment in Oxford.⁸³

Thirdly, Pfeiffer's focus on the classical tradition and the cultural values enshrined in it explains why, unlike Otto Crusius, he was never interested *Volkgeist* and the spirit of the ordinary people.⁸⁴ As Pfeiffer emphasized in the lecture he delivered on the occasion of St. Stephan's 125th anniversary, access to these values requires education and learning. To such learning most ordinary people either have no access; or in case they do the values they acquire render their individual experiences unimportant. For instance, one does not learn from Pfeiffer's *History of Classical Scholarship* that the father of Beatus Rhenanus was a butcher in the small Alsatian village of Rheindorf, nor does Pfeiffer

⁸¹ A reason for this might be that while instruction at St. Stephan was carried out by monks, its curriculum was set by the Department for Education in Munich, where there were fierce fights between bureaucrats influenced by Prussian education and lobbyists for the church concerning Bavarian high school curricula that the bureaucrats tended to win: see Schleuns, K.A., *Schooling and Society. The Politics of Education in Prussia and Bavaria 1750-1900*, Oxford 1989, esp. &&&-&&&.

⁸² This much emerges at least from Dom Grundl's lecture notes on religious subjects that survive in his estate at St. Stephan.

⁸³ &&&.

⁸⁴ Lloyd Jones (above n. &&&), 270 similarly connects this aspect of Pfeiffer's work with his Catholicism, claiming that it saved him from "the element of Lutheran rusticity and provincialism that is present in the work even of some of the greatest German scholars."

speculate about the extent to which his scholarship was informed by this background, which after all is reflected in the scholar's Latin name. However, Pfeiffer attributes to Rhenanus a view of the role of classical education in German history that could be his own, namely that "early Germany had been without culture until civilization was introduced, together with Christianity, as a legacy of the peoples of the ancient world."⁸⁵

Fourthly, Pfeiffer's work as a textual critic reflects his belief in the value of the tradition and in the need to preserve it. One might expect that at least during his stay in Oxford he might have developed an appreciation for the editorial approach of scholars like Richard Bentley and E.A. Housman, which is characterized by the editor's radical interventions in the transmitted text. But in his edition of Callimachus' *Hymns* and *Epigrams* (in the fragmentary works any editor would be expected to suggest conjectures of the transmitted text with extreme caution) Pfeiffer treats editorial interventions with great skepticism. He reports the conjectures of others only very sparingly,⁸⁶ admits them into the text even more sparingly,⁸⁷ and only suggests one conjecture of his own (which he does not admit into the text: *Ep.* 46.7). In cases of doubt, he prefers obelizing a passage to printing an emendation, and most of the improvements in Pfeiffer's text are due to newly discovered papyri. In accordance with his editorial approach Pfeiffer also emphasized in his *History of Classical Scholarship* allegiance with the tradition in the case of philologists like Bentley that are otherwise famous for their

⁸⁵ *History* 2.84.

⁸⁶ E.A. Barber found this a reason for complaint in a review that is otherwise full of praise: *CR* 4 (1954), 228-9; see too the review of Hans Herter, *Gnomon* 1954, 76.

⁸⁷ See the review of

radicalism.⁸⁸ Not every conservative textual critic of course was a student of Benedictine monks; but in the light of everything else that has been said it is likely that in Pfeiffer's case the motivation for his editorial restraint was the belief in the need to preserve the tradition that was conveyed to him at St. Stephan.

And finally, Pfeiffer's *History of Classical Scholarship* is a testimony to his belief that it is the task of any classicist to preserve, as the Benedictines had always done, the tradition that has been handed down to him. As the remark already cited from the preface to the project indicates, the history of classical scholarship for Pfeiffer was a history of "a succession of people and generations", which resembles the 'Geschlechterreihen' of Benedictine monks that had fascinated Richard Euringer at St. Stephan. It is as if Pfeiffer's *History of Classical Scholarship* presents an apostolic succession of classicists, each of whom hands down the baton of its value to his successors.

It would be interesting to know if Pfeiffer appreciated the irony of the fact that his academic commitment to more than 2,000 years of classical tradition made him the odd bird among his professional colleagues. This irony at any rate displays the extent to which Wolf's conception of *Altertumswissenschaft* and its institutional and intellectual innovations have revolutionized the study of the ancient world, despite Wolf's own

⁸⁸ In the case of Bentley Pfeiffer makes two points: first, the Vatican manuscript after the famous statement; second metrical reasons: *History* 2.154-5.

obvious indebtedness to previous approaches.⁸⁹ But there is evidence that Pfeiffer discouraged faith in such revolutions in general. At the end of his remarks for St. Stephan's 125th anniversary he warns his audience that "gerade dieser Zeit, gerade diesem Volke [i.e. the Germans], das so oft Altes zerstört und sich stürmisch bloßen Zukunftshoffnungen entgegenwirft, tut das alte Wahre, das Beharrende, das der Zeit trotzt, das Beste und Schönste der geistigen Überlieferung, bitter not."⁹⁰ These words can be applied to various revolutions in which Germans destroyed old orders. In the context of the history of classical studies that Pfeiffer discusses in the speech it certainly refers to Wolf's *Altertumswissenschaften*. In the context of a community of Benedictine monks and their current and former students that Pfeiffer addresses it certainly also refers to Luther's Protestantism. And in the historical context of the year 1953 when Pfeiffer delivers his lecture, eight years after the end of World War II, it also refers to Hitler's Nazism. That they apply to all these things at once is perhaps the most remarkable feature of Pfeiffer's word for the contemporary classicist: for it is apparent to everyone that Wolf's conceptualization of *Altertumswissenschaften* continues to inform in a variety of ways teaching and institutional organization of Classics up to the present day at least in the United States and Germany—from the reading lists of American survey courses, which usually focus on the archaic and classical Greeks, to the fact that in both Germany and America the study of ancient Christianity and the Jews has been relegated from Classics to Religion and Theology departments respectively. In American graduate education textual criticism, where classicists experience most directly the fact that the study of the ancient world is conditioned by the tradition that handed down its texts, gets

⁸⁹ Wolf, for instance, knew Hebrew: see Grafton &&&.

⁹⁰ *Stephania* 25 (1953), 29.

barely taught at all. Inevitably, this neglect of the tradition encourages belief in novelty, and the rhetoric of new approaches and of originality continues to be used in professional studies of the ancient world at least in America. Contemporary classicist should consider the vicinity into which Pfeiffer has placed this neglect of the classical tradition.