



IN MEMORIAM

LYDIA BAUMBACH[†]

1924-1991

A PERSONAL REFLECTION

Born in Stellenbosch, Lydia Baumbach entered life against the background of a well-established German missionary family within the framework of the Rhenish Mission. And it is these two aspects that became and remained basic characteristics of her personality: a deep-rooted love for Stellenbosch and the countryside of the south-western Cape, coupled with a genuine commitment to Christian values in theory and practice.

This, however, did in no way imply a lack of courage to venture outside the geographical or intellectual boundaries of her earlier education and training, both of which were completed at Stellenbosch: her schooling at Rhenish Girls' High, from which she matriculated in 1942, in the first class, her studies at the University of Stellenbosch in 1946, with an M.A. in Latin with distinction, followed by an M.A. in Greek, also with distinction, in 1951, each earning her the award of an Abe Bailey Scholarship which in turn bore fruit in her subsequent close contact with British scholarship in her special field of research.

For it was during her study at Cambridge, from October 1955 - June 1957, as an Affiliated Student at Newnham College, leading to the M.A. degree in 1962, that she was supervised by Dr. J. Chadwick who had specialised in the study of Mycenaean texts. In particular the recently deciphered type known as Linear B became her fascination, to the extent that it remained her dominant research area for the whole of her academic career. I am much indebted to Dr. Chadwick himself for kindly consenting that his detailed survey of Lydia's work in this field be published on the pages following hereafter.

Lydia started her career in 1947, as a Junior Lecturer at Stellenbosch, followed, on her return from Cambridge, by a lectureship (1957) and senior lectureship (1959) at Rhodes, and, after a brief spell at the University of

Pretoria, a senior lectureship at the University of Cape Town in 1965, being appointed to the Chair of Classics in 1976, a position she held until her retirement in 1988.

Her lecturing programme at U.C.T. included both Greek and Latin languages and literature, with, on the Greek side, a Mycenaean-inspired predilection for Homer, while Latin provided a convenient starting point for initiation into philology and historical linguistics. Inevitably, Linear B, too, found its way into the senior Greek courses, and on the other end of the scale, Roman meals in period dress and meticulously based on Apicius' own recipes, brought her students into tangible contact with 'daily life in ancient Rome' — *ab ovo usque ad mala*.

As a sought-after tour lecturer on Swan's Hellenic Cruises, too, Lydia made every effort to bring antiquity to life to the widest possible audiences, visiting the Aegean islands, Crete, and the coasts of Asia Minor, combining academic knowledge with effective communication.

As a colleague and Head, Lydia's rôle in the Department of Classics at U.C.T. was marked by her unfailing readiness to be of assistance whenever called upon — or, quite often, spontaneously — whether it be stepping into the breach in the case of a fellow member's unavoidable absence or listening to and advising a student faced with a problem of an academic or personal nature. Because of her particular suitability in the latter respect, the Faculty of Arts appointed her for several successive years as one of its student counsellors.

The headship of the Department, requiring her to face the occasional, though in exceptional cases personally trying, problems that occur in an academic community, gave her the opportunity to practise the honesty, integrity and tolerance that were so much part of her nature. Self-interest or ambition were foreign to her, selflessness the only approach she knew.

In line with her desire to keep alive and promote awareness of the classical tradition in South Africa, she took an active part in the work of the Classical Association, serving as its chairman in 1983 and 1984, as well as delivering several public illustrated lectures on Mycenaean and classical civilisation, each in its geographical setting.

But she saw her responsibility to the community in which she lived also in a wider perspective and was actively involved in the life of the Presbyterian Church in Stellenbosch, where on 4th June, 1972, she was ordained to the Eldership, often preaching from its pulpit, using even those occasions to bring the people of Antiquity to life.

Her close connection with Rhenish ran a full circle when, in 1967, she succeeded her mother as a member of its Committee, a function she held until 1974.

Her retirement was short, but just long enough to enable her to return to the countryside she loved, intending to divide her time between further

work in the Mycenaean field and farming the fruits and vegetables she was to take to town.

And now, Lydia, vale iterumque vale.

Requiem aeternam dona ei, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat ei.

Anton Paap

Professor Emeritus, University of Cape Town

LYDIA BAUMBACH'S CONTRIBUTION TO MYCENAEAN STUDIES

I first met Lydia when she came to Newnham College, Cambridge in 1955 as an Affiliated Student from Stellenbosch. As such, she was able to take a Cambridge degree after only two instead of the normal three years, taking only the examination for Part II of the Classical Tripos. But during her first year she covered most of the ground of Part I, and I was invited to supervise her on a part of this. In Part II she chose my own special subject, the philology option, and successfully passed the examination in the summer of 1957. Since these were the years when the study of Mycenaean texts was taking shape, she was attracted to the new subject and went on to pursue her studies at post-graduate level. When she returned to a teaching post in South Africa, she used her study leave to return to Cambridge and so keep up to date with the latest developments.

It was in this way that I came to invite her to assist me with a project which was becoming too heavy for me to complete alone. The decipherment of Linear B had produced a great deal of earlier evidence for known Greek words, and in many cases this added to our etymological knowledge. The Mycenaean form often confirmed previous guesses, as for instance that ἄνθρωπος contained a labio-velar. But in some cases, such as the absence of a labio-velar from πᾶς, this entailed a revision of accepted ideas about etymology. I therefore set about compiling an index of all the Greek words now attested for Mycenaean, showing how reliable were their identifications. Although the idea was my own, it was Lydia who did much of the hard work, and the publication appeared under our joint names (*Glotta* 41 [1963] 157–271). A few years later it was possible to add a supplement based on new discoveries, and I had no hesitation in leaving Lydia to handle this alone (*Glotta* 49 [1971] 151–190). These two articles have been accepted as a standard work of reference and are regularly quoted, e.g. by Chantraine in *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*. In 1964 Lydia also published in *Acta Classica* (7, 1–8) a discussion of some of

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