



What GN owes OMD

Citation

Nagy, Gregory. 2018. "What GN Owes OMD." Classical Inquiries. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:Classical_Inquiries.

Published Version

<https://classical-inquiries.chs.harvard.edu/what-gn-owes-omd/>

Permanent link

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:40936806>

Terms of Use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA>

Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#).

[Accessibility](#)

Classical Inquiries

Editors: Angelia Hanhardt and Keith Stone

Consultant for Images: Jill Curry Robbins

Online Consultant: Noel Spencer

About

Classical Inquiries (CI) is an online, rapid-publication project of Harvard's Center for Hellenic Studies, devoted to sharing some of the latest thinking on the ancient world with researchers and the general public.

While articles archived in DASH represent the original *Classical Inquiries* posts, CI is intended to be an evolving project, providing a platform for public dialogue between authors and readers. Please visit http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:Classical_Inquiries for the latest version of this article, which may include corrections, updates, or comments and author responses.

Additionally, many of the studies published in CI will be incorporated into future CHS publications. Please visit http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:CHS.Online_Publishing for a complete and continually expanding list of open access publications by CHS.

Classical Inquiries is published under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#). Every effort is made to use images that are in the public domain or shared under Creative Commons licenses. Copyright on some images may be owned by the Center for Hellenic Studies. Please refer to captions for information about copyright of individual images.

Citing Articles from *Classical Inquiries*

To cite an article from *Classical Inquiries*, use the author's name, the date, the title of the article, and the following persistent identifier:

http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:Classical_Inquiries.

For example:

Nagy, G. 2019.01.31. "Homo Ludens at Play with the Songs of Sappho: Experiments in Comparative Reception Theory, Part Four." *Classical Inquiries*. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:Classical_Inquiries.

[Home](#) » [By Gregory Nagy](#) » [What GN owes OMD](#)

What GN owes OMD

February 14, 2018 By Gregory Nagy listed under [By Gregory Nagy](#)

[1 Comment](#) [Edit This](#)

2018.02.14 (formally presented 2018.02.11) | By Gregory Nagy

This posting of 2018.02.14, on Valentine's Day, marks the third anniversary of Classical Inquiries, which began with a posting that dates from 2015.02.14, Valentine's Day three years ago. The author of the present posting has received permission from Niloofar Fotouhi, editor-in-chief of [TheHollyfest.org](#), to replicate his contribution to that online publication celebrating the 66th birthday of Olga M. Davidson. The title of that contribution, "What GN owes OMD," works perfectly for the present context as well, since "GN" owes a Valentine's Day card to "OMD." This posting, it is hoped, can serve as such a card, just as the same posting had served as a loving birthday card three days earlier.

[\[Essay continues here...\]](#)



Holly at Bellows Falls, Vermont, summer 2014; photograph by Charles Melville.

Share This



Classical Inquiries (CI) is an online, rapid-publication project of Harvard's Center for Hellenic Studies, devoted to sharing some of the latest thinking on the ancient world with researchers and the general public.

Editor

Keith Stone
kstone@chs.harvard.edu

Search for:

Subscribe Now!

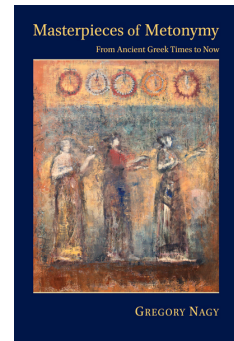
Subscribe to this site to receive email updates about the latest research—just one or two notices per week.

[EU/EEA Privacy Disclosures](#)

Now Online



Holly with our granddaughter, Adelia Aldrich, summer 2015.



Overture

0§1. For “TheHollyfest.org,” this festive collection of inspired projects celebrating the life and times of a singularly inspiring woman, I present an essay that starts off with a rather defamiliarizing title. Two questions: is this title overly formal? Or is it perhaps overly familiar? It depends on how we interpret the initials GN and OMD, standing respectively for the laudator and for his laudanda.

0§2. Let me respond to the second question first: is the title overly familiar? The answer is: maybe so—if we think of the juxtaposed initials GN and OMD as a coexistence framed forever inside some simpleminded sketch of a heart pierced by a dart shot by Cupid himself. Although such an image would be in fact a most sincere if somewhat childish declaration of my true love for Olga M. Davidson, to whom I have been so happily married for 42 years and counting, my use of initials as framed inside the title above, “What GN owes to OMD,” is meant to signal the academic aspects of my happy life with Holly, not only the personal aspects.

0§3. Just now, I referred to Holly by her familiar name. What I owe to her is not only a personal debt for all the happiness I have derived from her beautiful presence in my life. Part of that happiness comes from the academic debt I also owe her for sharing with me her intellectual engagement in a world of studies that go far beyond my own such world. In my efforts to repay that academic debt in this essay, I refer to her academic side by using the initials OMD.

0§4. This brings me back to my first question, which I now reformulate: is my use of the initials OMD overly formal? My answer is: no, not really—and I give here the reason. The thing is, I have grown accustomed to writing “OMD” as a prefix for labeling the titles of Holly’s publications, the electronic versions of which I store inside a folder sitting on my computer’s desktop. For example, a file labeled “OMD_Dolon&Rhesus_1979” inside such a folder would refer to the very first article that Holly ever published—it is listed as “Davidson, O. M. 1979” in the Bibliography that comes after this essay of mine. So, my bibliographical routine may be academic—but it is not meant to be formalistic.

0§5. I must pause here for a moment. I suspect that the term I am using here, academic, sounds overly, er, academic. Instead, I need to find a word that conveys for me more truly the beauty and the pleasure that comes from a kind of soulful as well as mental engagement with studies that center on verbal and visual arts. That is the kind of engagement that Holly is all about. And that is why, when I dedicated to her a book that I published in 1979—it is listed as “Nagy, G. 1979” in the Bibliography—I had described her as “the essence of εὐφροσύνη.” This word, to be transliterated as euphrosunē, conveys in ancient Greek poetry the kind of happiness you feel while enjoying the beauty of a given occasion that is celebrated in song. I thought then and continue to think now that the lighthearted Holly is a perfect personification of such happiness-and-beauty. This is why I will always think of her as the essence of euphrosunē.

0§6. That said, I am now ready to talk about my many happy years of participation in one woman’s beautiful life of involvement in studies centering on verbal and visual arts. I will take the liberty of compartmentalizing this life of hers, somewhat Platonically, into three academic phases: Early OMD, Middle OMD, Latest OMD. Once these three stories are told, I will be better able to say what I owe her.

Early OMD

1§1. In reading my so-called Overture above, even those who are well acquainted with the publications of OMD may have been somewhat surprised at my placement of equal emphasis on the visual as well as verbal arts in referring to her academic fields of interest. After all, her primary field is medieval Persian poetry. So, you would think that I would be speaking of verbal arts alone. But here I can reveal a fact that

Top Posts & Pages

[The Last Words of Socrates at the Place Where He Died](#)

[A Roll of the Dice for Ajax](#)

[Penelope’s great web: the violent interruption](#)

Most Common Tags

[Achilles](#) [Aphrodite](#) [apobatēs](#) [Ariadne](#)

[Aristotle](#) [Artemis](#) [Athena](#) [Athens](#)

[Catullus](#) [Chalcis](#) [chariot fighting](#)

Commentary [Delphi](#)

[Demodokos](#) [Dionysus](#) [etymology](#)

[Euripides](#) [Gregory Nagy](#) [H24H](#) [HAA](#)

[travel-study](#) [Helen](#) [Hera](#) [Herodotus](#)

[Hippolytus](#) [Homer](#)

Homeric epic Iliad

[Jean Bollack](#) [lament](#) [Lelantine War](#) [mimesis](#)

[Minoan Empire](#) [Mycenae](#) [Odysseus](#)

Odyssey Pausanias

[Phaedra](#) [Pindar](#) [Plato](#) [Poetics](#) [Posidippus](#)

Sappho [Theseus](#) [weaving](#) [Zeus](#)

Archives

may not be obvious even to some of her closest colleagues. The fact is, as I have learned from her own vivid first-person account, the lifelong love of OMD for medieval Persian literature grew out of an old-fashioned love affair, going all the way back to her youthful adventures as a precollegiate world-traveler, with medieval Persian miniature paintings.

1§2. More than that, the dynamic interaction of text and image in medieval Persian illustrated manuscripts has proved to be an ongoing research interest for Holly, and this interest is evidenced to this day in her publications. A shining example is Davidson 2013, listed in the Bibliography.

1§3. I am getting ahead of myself here, I know it: I should have postponed any further remarks about Holly's keen interest in text and image until I reached the phase that I label Latest OMD. But I need to bring up this interest of hers already here, with reference to Early OMD, because I myself have been so indebted to Holly's earlier insights into the interactivity of text and image in my own later comparative studies of comparable interactions as attested in early Greek verbal and visual art. An example is Nagy 2013 ("Hour 7: The sign of the hero in visual and verbal art"), as listed in the Bibliography.

1§4. Shifting back to the early years and restarting from there, I will now track the trajectory of OMD as a college student at Boston University, where she was already studying Persian—and Arabic. Although these studies of hers were already at that time well underway, she actually "majored" in "Classics" back then, taking courses in ancient Greek and Latin taught by two charismatic professors at Boston University, Charles Beye and Carl Ruck. In fact, the honors thesis that she wrote for her baccalaureate degree in 1975 was "Classical" in the Greco-Roman sense of the term: her subject was the ancient Greek hero Herakles—which was later turned into an article, listed below in the Bibliography as Davidson 1980. In this work of hers, we see documented for the first time the academic encounters of OMD with the books and articles of Georges Dumézil (1898–1986), especially as reflected in his pathfinding volume on Indo-European mythology and epic traditions, *Mythe et épopée I* (1968). These early encounters, as we will soon see in more detail, led to even more important later encounters in the phase that I label Middle OMD.

1§5. Holly's earliest academic encounters with the works of Dumézil can be traced back to the summer of 1974. But that is a story in itself—and a story well worth telling. I ask for the reader's patience here. To explain why Dumézil matters in this context, I first have to tell my version of the story of summer 1974.

1§6. That summer, in 1974, Holly took a course in Harvard Summer School taught by Glen Bowersock on the Satyricon of Petronius. Another student in the same Latin course was her friend Sarah Morris, the history of whose adventures with Holly goes all the way back to their schoolgirl years at Chatham Hall, 1966–1970. You can read more about those earlier years in Sarah's own contribution to the present collection of projects honoring Holly. For the moment, though, I am concentrating on the summer of 1974. Most relevant here is the fact that Sarah took not only the Latin course on Petronius but also a Greek course that I was teaching in Harvard Summer School on the *Bacchae* of Euripides. Her friend Holly did not take my course, but I was fortunate enough to be introduced to her by Glen, and then, one thing led to another personally as well as academically. More on that in a minute. For now, however, it will suffice to say that Holly and I became friends, and, through her, I became friends with her friends—not only with Sarah but also with many others who, like Sarah, have remained friends for both Holly and me ever since.

1§7. I highlight here the names of only some of those friends, most of whom have been involved, one way or another, with the present project honoring Holly: Kurt Andersen, Alex Beam, Peter Quesada, Ned (Edward L.) Davis, Christopher Minkowski, Margaret Sears, Alessandra Stanley, and, last but hardly least, Isabel Swift, who is also Holly's dear cousin.

1§8. What did these friends of Holly have to do with her eventual interest in the works of Dumézil? Initially, nothing. Or, to put it a better way, nothing directly. But the network of friendships linking us all together extended beyond the summer of 1974 into the academic year 1974–1975, during which time this network kept on growing. And here is where the story of Holly's direct engagement with the works of Dumézil begins in earnest.

1§9. I now focus on the academic year 1974–1975. That was Holly's senior year at Boston University while I was spending my last year at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, having already accepted the offer of a professorship at Harvard, which was slated to commence in the academic year 1975–1976. In 1974–1975, then, I was still living in Baltimore, but I kept up my links with the network of new friends in Boston, especially with Holly. And, in the course of one of my visits from Baltimore to Boston, I introduced Holly to two of my own dearest friends, Douglas Frame and Leonard Muellner. My memory of the occasion remains most vivid. The three of us—Doug, Lenny, and myself—went to see a play at the Loeb Experimental Theater in Cambridge. It was "Calm Down, Mother," which was directed by another friend of Holly's, Amy Handelsman, and which featured, among others, two student actors who were none other than our own Holly together with her dear cousin Isabel. It was this occasion that led to Holly's lasting friendship with Doug Frame and Lenny Muellner. But this friendship, like the other friendships shared by Holly and me, had an intellectual dimension of its own, and here is where Dumézil comes into the picture more directly.

1§10. To clarify, I now need to give some background about my friendship with Doug and Lenny, which as you will see is most relevant to the story of Holly's encounters with the work of Dumézil. Before my stint at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, which lasted from fall 1973 through spring 1975, Doug and Lenny and I—who nowadays think of ourselves retrospectively as The Three Amigos—would meet for beer (mostly) and academic dialogue every Thursday evening at the Ha'Penny Pub in Cambridge (the venue was changeable, but in fact it hardly ever changed). Back then, we called ourselves simply the Thursday Group. (I must not leave out of the story the name of another original member of the Group, who after earning a PhD at Harvard in 1973 left Cambridge to take up an assistant professorship at the University of Michigan in Ann

Arbor: I am referring here to the late and so sorely missed Richard S. Shannon.) Others who would occasionally drop in on the Group's meetings included Ann Bergren, Deborah Boedeker, Sylvia Brown, and Richard Sacks.

1§11. I draw attention here to three main areas of academic interest that preoccupied Doug and Lenny and me, The Three Amigos, as founding members of the Thursday Group. These three areas were (1) the Greco-Roman "Classics," especially Homeric and other archaic poetry; (2) Indo-European linguistics, especially as exemplified by the work of the already-mentioned Georges Dumézil on Indo-European mythology as transmitted in the Italic (mostly Latin), Indic (mostly Vedic), Iranian (mostly Avestan), and Greek languages; and (3) oral traditions, the study of which was being perfected by Albert B. Lord (1912–1991), then Professor of Slavic and Comparative Literature at Harvard, who was a most supportive mentor to all three of us Amigos— and who had once been a student of the legendary Milman Parry (1902–1935) at the same university. For background on oral poetics (where the term poetics refers not only to poetry but also to prosimetrum and even to prose, I offer some relevant remarks in Nagy 2011 §§133–135).

1§12. The weekly meetings of our Thursday Group started—my memory is vague here—sometime in 1969 and continued regularly during my stint as a junior professor at Harvard. After I left Boston/Cambridge for Baltimore in the fall of 1973, Doug and Lenny kept the Thursday meetings going—and they invited Holly to join the Group when they were introduced to her on the happy occasion of "Calm Down, Mother" in the fall of 1974.

1§13. Starting in the fall of 1974, when Holly joined the Thursday Group, she was already drawn to all three of the areas of academic interest as I outlined them a minute ago. For now, however, I focus on only one of those interests, the second one, which is Indo-European linguistics, especially as exemplified by the work of Georges Dumézil on Indo-European mythology. Starting in 1974 already, Holly was reading Dumézil's aforementioned *Mythe et épopée I* (1968). She went on to read *Mythe et épopée II* (1971), and then there was *Mythe et épopée III* (1973).

1§14. How do I know? It is because I have such fond memories of the happy times when Holly and I would explore with each other this, starting already in 1974, the ramifications of Dumézil's work—even though I cannot exactly recall the when-s and the where-s of our discussing *Mythe et épopée I* and *II* and *III*. In any case, you can begin to see how the academic as well as personal lives of OMD and GN were converging rapidly—and how the thinking of Dumézil can even be viewed here as some kind of dart sent by Cupid himself. I will leave a bookmark here for Dumézil, the intellectual impact of whom on Holly will be explored further when I reach the next phase of her academic life, labeled Middle OMD. For now, however, I need to focus on something rather important that happened in the personal lives of OMD and GN in the course of transitioning from 1974 to 1975. Here is the thing: in the summer of 1975, Holly and Greg got married.

1§15. My personal happiness about being married to Holly had, already then, an academic side to it: she decided to spend the school year 1975–1976 studying at Harvard, which was by then and still remains even now my home base. All this was going on before she entered a Ph.D. program in Near Eastern Studies at Princeton, starting in the fall of 1976, where she went on to specialize in classical Persian and Arabic, receiving her Ph.D. in 1983. During Holly's years as a graduate student, while she and I were commuting back and forth between Princeton and Harvard, there were two other major points of convergence for both of us personally: our two genial children came into our lives. First there was László, who arrived in 1977, and then there was Antonia, in 1979. Holly and I have so many fond stories to tell about these two extraordinarily creative persons, including an anecdote that goes all the way back to January 1982, to be shared at a later point, but for now I stay on track with my ongoing story about Early OMD.

1§16. But here I must slow down the pace of this story in order to highlight the year of OMD at Harvard University, 1975–1976, which proved to be singularly relevant in many different ways to many later phases of her academic career. At Harvard, as later at Princeton, she was busy taking courses in Persian and Arabic. Among her classmates that year were Richard Anooshian, Jeri Cohen, and the already-mentioned dear friend Margaret Sears, all of whose own academic careers kept on interweaving with Holly's. I should add that Richard and Jeri, like Margaret, have remained close friends of Holly's and mine.

1§17. Especially influential for Holly's philological formation at the time was an intensive course in classical Persian that she took with Wheeler Thackston. Some other students who took the same course with Holly that year were the already-mentioned friend Richard Anooshian, as well as three other schoolmates who have also become good friends to both Holly and me—and whose own continuing careers in Persian studies have kept on interweaving with Holly's own career: they are Sheila Blair, Jonathan Bloom, and Marianna Shreve Simpson. I should add that all three of these friends are now world-class experts in the interaction of text and image in medieval Persian books—a topic so dear, as I already pointed out, to Holly's heart.

1§18. Besides Wheeler, who eventually became for both of us a lifelong friend, there were other professors with whom Holly studied during her year at Harvard in 1975–1976. There was for example John Finley (1904–1995), who taught her in a course on Greek literature read in the original. And then there was the already-mentioned Albert B. Lord, in a course on oral poetics.

1§19. The intellectual influence of Albert Lord on OMD, starting then and there in 1975–1976, proved to be most decisive—and permanent. Reading over and over again Lord's *Singer of Tales* (first published in 1960), Holly most thoroughly absorbed the methodology that her teacher had perfected for the study of oral poetics, and, during her subsequent years as a graduate student in Princeton, she started to apply this highly refined methodology to her own evolving research on the epic *Shahnama* of Ferdowsi, a Persian classic completed around 1010 CE.

1§20. At Princeton, this research of Holly's culminated in a dissertation that earned her a Ph.D. there in 1983, "The Crown-Bestower and the Iranian Book of Kings," which was soon thereafter awarded the T. Cuyler Young Prize by the Near Eastern Studies Department of Princeton. Clearly reflected in this pioneering work of OMD is the all-pervasive influence of her old teacher at Harvard, Albert Lord. But you can find in the same work various other major influences as well, which I propose to explore further as we now turn to the second phase of her story.

Middle OMD

2§1. Although Holly picked up her Ph.D. diploma from Princeton at commencement ceremonies in the spring of 1983, she had defended her dissertation already in the autumn of 1982, thus keeping a promise she had made to herself even earlier on. I know how she had formulated that promise: earn a Ph.D. and have two children by age 30. So, I mark 1982 as the year that commenced the phase labeled Middle OMD. But this phase of her story needs to commence not in the fall but earlier, in the middle of winter.

2§2. It is January 1982. Holly and I, together with László and Toni, are living short-term in an apartment at the edge of Paris—more precisely, in Neuilly. During this month, both Holly and I are getting to know many new francophone friends—and renewing many old friendships.

2§3. I interrupt this present-tense story with a flashback to a story dating from earlier years. Inside this earlier story, narrated in the past tense, I will indulge myself in some undiluted nostalgia. The old friendships to which I referred a moment ago in my present-tense story can be dated back to the mid-to-late 1970s, when Holly and I were making friends with, among others, Jean and Mayotte Bollack, Jeannie Carlier, Marcel Detienne, Pierre Judet de La Combe, André Laks, Nicole Loraux, Patrice Loraux, Philippe Rousseau, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Heinz Wismann. Why all these names of francophone friends here? It is because there are so many fond memories that light up in my mind even now with each new thought of each old friendship. And my nostalgia here is relevant to the title of my whole essay about what I owe in general to Holly, since it was all along her spontaneous intellectual interactivity that had so consistently, in every phase of our life together, transformed our mutual academic acquaintances into deep friendships that could readily translate into the most creative kinds of academic teamwork.

2§4. I have in mind here one such friendship in particular. Fond memories of Jean-Pierre Vernant (1914–2007) now bring me back to the present-tense story that I interrupted in my preceding past-tense flashback. Leaving that flashback behind, I can now move forward, fast-forward, to 1982. It is January again. By now, Holly and I must have known our friend "Jipé" for more than seven years. And, one fine day in January, she and I encounter him at a festive occasion in Paris, at the Collège de France. As luck will have it, he introduces Holly and me to... George Dumézil. Also present at the moment of introduction is another friend of Holly's and mine, Pierre Vidal-Naquet (1930–2006). More about Pierre later. Needless to say, OMD and GN are thrilled to meet Dumézil. I don't remember exactly what happens next, but I have just now compared notes with Holly, and we both recall at least this much: the conversation between Dumézil and Holly now turns to Indo-European mythology. At this point, good friend that he is, Jipé picks up on the thread of conversation, and he spontaneously suggests to Holly that she should follow up with Dumézil. The next day, sure enough, Holly writes to Dumézil a formal letter—that's the way things were done then—telling him all about her research interests. Then, just a few days after that, Holly gets a telephone call from Dumézil, inviting her to visit him at his residence, 82 rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs. There are two visits: for the first occasion, Holly brings to Dumézil a draft of her Princeton dissertation, and, by the time of the second occasion, just a few more days thereafter, he has already read the draft, and he expresses to her his admiration.

2§5. There is still more to it, and I will tell the rest of story by reverting to the historical past tense. Another prominent professor now entered the picture. He was Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin (1910–2012), a most admired doyen of Iranian studies. Dumézil had suggested to Holly that she send the draft of her Princeton dissertation to this most venerable Iranist and, by a stroke of good fortune for our young Iranist, Duchesne-Guillemin liked what he was reading. More than that, he actually encouraged Holly to submit her work for inclusion in a planned book that he was then editing along with three other editors. Holly's draft was vetted by the four of them, and it got published in 1985. This publication of OMD, stemming from her Princeton Ph.D. dissertation of 1983, took the form of a lengthy article—I just now counted the pages, and they add up to eighty-seven—appearing in volume I of a two-volume *Festschrift* published in honor of Mary Boyce (1920–2006), then doyen of Iranian studies in her own right. The four editors of this 1985 *Festschrift* for Boyce, including Duchesne-Guillemin, are listed in the Bibliography below, under the entry Davidson 1985.

2§6. As I now re-read in the first footnote of this OMD article, Davidson 1985:61n1, Holly offers special thanks to Georges Dumézil "for his careful reading and sound advice." She also thanks, in the same footnote, her old teacher Albert B. Lord for his support. In an article that he published one year after Holly's, Lord endorses the article of Davidson 1985 for demonstrating the oral traditional background of classical Persian epic:

A recent long article on "The Crown-Bestower in the Iranian Book of Kings" by Olga M. Davidson (1985) brings to our attention one of the great epic traditions from the past, which still has importance today, namely, that of Persia, especially as represented by Ferdowsi's *Shahnama*, "The Book of the Kings." [In a footnote here, Lord cross-refers to "a forthcoming study" by Davidson, which actually appeared in 1988.] In the first part of her study Dr. Davidson traces the elements of the Rostam narrative to Indo-European roots, and in the second she analyzes the traditional formulaic structure of parts of the epic.

2§7. A rewritten and augmented version of the article labeled Davidson 1985 appeared later as a book, labeled here as Davidson 1994, which was then further rewritten as a second edition, Davidson 2006, and then further rewritten as a third edition, Davidson 2013. The facts of publication for these three new versions are all documented in the Bibliography below. A major change in all three versions of the book is that the original sequence of Parts I and II in the 1985 article as described by Lord was reversed. In the book, Part I is about the oral poetic heritage of Ferdowsi, poet of the *Shahnama*, while Part II is about the Indo-European mythological heritage of Rostam, the premier hero of the *Shahnama*. The new title that OMD gave to her book is most fitting: *Poet and Hero in the Persian Book of Kings*.

2§8. But the symmetry extends further. The intellectual debt of OMD to Albert Lord and to Georges Dumézil remains symmetrically framed in the two parts of her magnum opus writ large: one part relies on the study of oral poetics as pioneered by Lord, while the other part relies on the study of Indo-European mythology as pioneered by Dumézil.

2§9. I must add here something about the new title that proves to be particularly relevant to the work of Albert Lord. In the title of Holly's book, the word "oral" is absent, but the word "Book" is very much present. The question arises: do we see here a contradiction of the methodology pioneered by Albert Lord? As I will show when we get to the next phase of Holly's academic story, labeled Latest OMD, there is in fact no contradiction.

2§10. For now, however, I pursue the ongoing story as I move on to trace some of the additions that Holly made during the lengthy evolution of her article, published in 1985, into the first edition of her book, published in 1994. I start by highlighting three important publications of hers that appeared in the interim. I give here the dates for these articles as well as the titles, together with brief descriptions of the venues (the rest of the relevant information can be found in the Bibliography further below):

Davidson 1987. "Aspects of Dioscurism in the Iranian Epic Tradition," in the first volume of the new series for *Edebiyāt*.

Davidson 1988. "Formulaic Analysis of Samples taken from the *Shahnama* of Ferdowsi," in the third volume of *Oral Tradition* (in the first volume of this journal, Lord as quoted above had already mentioned this article as forthcoming).

Davidson 1990. "The Haft Khwān Tradition as an Intertextual Phenomenon in Ferdowsi's *Shahnama*," in a *Festschrift* honoring a most admired Iranist who will be highlighted in the phase of Holly's academic life labeled Latest OMD.

2§11. The articles published in 1987 and 1990 were transformed respectively into Chapters 8 and 9 of the book *Poet and Hero*, while the article published in 1988, mentioned as forthcoming in Lord's article of 1986, became the Appendix of the same book. The methodology that we see at work in the two chapters and in the appendix is strongly influenced respectively by Dumézil and by Lord, but there are also other influences visible.

2§12. In the case of the Appendix, derived from the already-mentioned article that Holly originally published in *Oral Tradition*, we see the strong influence of Laurence Paul Elwell-Sutton (1912–1984). To illustrate, I start by quoting from OMD 1994:29, where she reports: "Elwell-Sutton (1976:172–173) argues convincingly that Ferdowsi's *mutaqārib* meter, as well as other meters related to it, is not derived from the corresponding Arabic meter, one that is unattested in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, extremely rare in the Umayyad period (661–750 CE), and relatively frequent only in 'Abbāsīd times (750–1258 CE); rather it is the Arabic *mutaqārib* that seems to be modeled on the Persian." Taking this argument further, Holly shows that this meter can be explained in terms of Indo-European metrics. I will return to this part of her argument when I reach the final part of my essay (4§5). For now, however, I will focus on yet another aspect of Holly's argumentation in the same Appendix: she can actually show that the phraseology contained by the *mutaqārib* meter as used by poets like Ferdowsi is formulaic—if we apply the term formula as defined by Parry and Lord. In the Appendix, she set up an experiment where she compared systematically the phraseology of one particular passage in the *Shahnama* with other comparable passages while taking into account all the attested textual variants that she could find, and the results of this exercise in comparison turned out to be most revealing (Davidson 1994:205):

What I hope to have illustrated with this exercise in the formulaic analysis of one passage is that every word in this given passage can be generated on the basis of parallel phraseology expressing parallel themes. This limited experiment in formulaic analysis illustrates the principle of compositional variation as reflected by textual variation.

2§13. This experiment of Holly's, focusing as it does on the interaction of phraseology and meter in the poetry of Ferdowsi, is for me a most welcome confirmation, from a comparative perspective, of arguments I have made concerning the formulaic language of Homeric poetry (as summarized, for example, in Nagy 1990b Chapter 2).

2§14. Holly's analysis of formulaic and metrical patterns in the *Shahnama* has been singled out for praise by the Iranist Dick Davis in the *Times Literary Supplement* (1995:11), who writes: "her appendix demonstrating the oral formulaic nature of the diction of much of the *Shāhnāme* presents such an overwhelmingly strong case that it would have to convince even the most skeptical audience."

2§15. Besides Lord and Elwell-Sutton, another model for Holly's engagement with oral traditions has been the honorand of the *Festschrift* in which she published her original 1985 article, Mary Boyce herself. Holly expresses most clearly in her first footnote at Davidson 1985:61 her indebtedness to Boyce, whose pervasive influence is made evident in Holly's many references, one page after the next, to Boyce's pathfinding 1957 article "The Parthian Gōsān and the Iranian Minstrel Tradition," listed in the Bibliography.

2§16. Next, I turn to Holly's Chapters 8 and 9, viewed here in the larger context of Part II in her 1994 book, which as I already noted had once been Part I in her original 1985 article. In these chapters, as also more generally in Part I (1985) / Part II (1994), we can see that her work on the mythological narratives of the *Shahnama* was strongly influenced not only by the comparative research published by Dumézil but also by the relevant publications of Pierre Vidal-Naquet, whose friendship with Holly and myself has already been mentioned. Already in her 1985 article, as also later in her 1994 book, Holly accentuates the relevance of arguments developed by Vidal-Naquet in analyzing Greek mythological narratives about hunting and warfare in his 1968 article "Le chasseur noir et l'origine de l'éphébie athénienne," the full reference for which is given in the Bibliography. Almost twenty years after the original 1968 publication of his "Chasseur noir" / "Black Hunter," Vidal-Naquet formulated a most illuminating retrospective on his earlier arguments in a public lecture that he delivered in English, 2 May 1986, at the University of Cambridge. The English text of this lecture, "The Black Hunter Revisited," was then published as an article in the *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* (Vidal-Naquet 1986). The French version appeared only later (Vidal-Naquet 1989). In his retrospective lecture/article of 1986, Vidal-Naquet supports Holly's application of Dumézil's comparative methodology in reconstructing three "functions" of society in Indo-European mythology. With specific reference to the usefulness of applying comparative methods in analyzing warfare as described in Homeric poetry, here is what he says (Vidal-Naquet 1986:138):

There are many types of comparison and one is free to use sociological and ethnological methods, but I am thinking of the specific mode of comparative studies created by Georges Dumézil in his Indo-European studies. | As early as 1940 in the first edition of *Mitra-Varuna*, Dumézil discovered the bipartition of the first of his three functions, the function of sovereignty. Mitra is order, Varuna disorder, violence, and the same is true in the early history of Rome, of Numa and Romulus. The question I raise is: is there not also such a bipartition in the second function, the war function? In some of Dumézil's major works we can find many hints of this hypothesis in relation to the Indian world as well as to Scandinavia [Vidal-Naquet n111 here refers to Dumézil 1968:63-65 and 1985:140, 161-168], but there is no systematic treatment of Rome [Vidal-Naquet n112 gives references here]. Quite recently, Olga M. Davidson discovered exactly the same two models of war in the Iranian *Book of Kings of Ferdowsi* [Vidal-Naquet 113 refers here to Davidson 1985:61-148, especially pp. 81-87], the Iranians being, of course, on the side of order and the Turanians, on the side of disorder.

2§17. Here is the French version (Vidal-Naquet 1989, as reprinted in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet 1992:250-251):

On peut faire ici appel à la comparaison. Il en est bien des formes, et la sociologie aussi bien que l'ethnologie pourraient nous instruire. Mais je pense à ce mode spécifique de comparatisme que nous devons à Georges Dumézil et à ses études indo-européennes. | Dès 1940, dans la première édition de *Mitra-Varuna*, Dumézil découvrit la bipartition de la première de ses trois fonctions, la fonction de souveraineté. Mitra est ordre, Varuna désordre, violence, et la même opposition fonctionne, transposée dans l'histoire, à Rome, entre les deux premiers rois: Romulus (du côté de <<Varuna>>) et Numa (du côté de <<Mitra>>). La question que je pose est celle-ci: n'y a-t-il pas aussi une bipartition parallèle à l'intérieur de la seconde fonction, la fonction guerrière? Dans quelques-unes des œuvres majeures de Georges Dumézil on peut rencontrer des indications qui vont tout à fait dans cette direction, aussi bien à propos de l'Inde que dans la Scandinavie [Vidal-Naquet n137 here refers to Dumézil 1968:63-65 and 1985:140, 161-168]. Mais, à ma connaissance, il n'a pas soumis le guerrier romain à une analyse systématique de ce type [Vidal-Naquet n138 gives references here]. | Or les travaux de deux savants très différents, un iranologue et un médiéviste, tous deux disciples de G. Dumézil, et qui m'ont fait l'un et l'autre l'honneur de s'appuyer sur le <<Chasseur noir>>, me donnent à penser qu'une généralisation ne serait pas absurde. Ces deux formes de guerre, Olga M. Davidson les découvre dans *Le Livre des Rois de Ferdousi*, non pas entre jeunes et adultes mais entre les Iraniens et leurs ennemis touraniens, les premiers étant, bien évidemment, du côté de l'ordre, de la tákis, dirait-on en grec. [Vidal-Naquet n139 refers here to Davidson 1985:61-148, especially pp. 81-87].

2§18. After mentioning the work of OMD as we have just seen in this French version (Vidal-Naquet 1989, as reprinted 1992, p. 251), the author adds a comment that is missing in the English version (Vidal-Naquet 1986): it has to do with the complementary findings of the "médiéviste" J. H. Grisward (1981).

2§19. I pause for a moment to reminisce here in general about the academic support that Pierre Vidal-Naquet always gave to Holly, and how very much she appreciated it. When we arrive at the next phase of her career, labeled Latest OMD, I will mention a specific example. For now, however, I simply cannot resist prolonging this pause here for just a minute longer by dwelling on a happy personal memory that involves Holly's and my friendship with Vidal-Naquet. It is January 1982 again, and, this time, Holly has organized an intimate little dinner party: attending is Pierre; also, Geneviève (Railhac); also, Jean and Mayotte Bollack. No one else, except for Holly and me. Oh, actually, two other people suddenly interrupt, for a

moment, the lively dinner that is already in full swing. It is László and Toni, then ages 5 and 2. Holly and I had assumed that they were already in bed, but here they are, making a surprise appearance. They are both wearing Pink Panther masks, nothing else. And, to match the color of the masks, they had persuaded the genial live-in baby-sitter Merin Wexler to make for them a very warm bath that would turn their skin bright pink. The color coordination worked perfectly.

2§20. I conclude the narrative about this phase of Holly's academic life by mentioning briefly the reception for the first edition of her first book, published in 1994. The book was well received by most. Positive mentions of the book include the remark of Dick Davis (1995:11), already noted, about the Appendix, in which Holly had argued that the variants found in the textual transmission of the *Shahnama* can be seen as an indication of the formulaic system underlying the composition of this monumental poem. I highlight again this example of a positive mention because I still remember how happy it made Holly: she just loves that Appendix, and so do I. Other such highpoints of happiness came with positive mentions from others as well, whom I will mention in the next phase of her story. For now, however, the date for the first edition of Holly's book, 1994, is a good place to mark a conclusion of the story for Middle OMD.

Latest OMD

3§1. For this latest phase, which takes us from 1994 to the present, there is much less for me to say about the academic achievements of OMD. That is because Holly's publications since 1994 have consolidated most effectively the work she did before then, and, in any case, what she is saying in these later publications speaks for itself even more forcefully than before. So, I need much less space for an overview of this phase in Holly's academic life, though I think it will be useful for me to offer here an outline of the general directions in which her ongoing work is headed. I start by highlighting two landmarks for this phase labeled Latest OMD: one is the publication of a second book and the other is the founding of an organization named Ilex.

3§2. First, about the book... The title is *Comparative Literature and Classical Persian Poetics*, and it was published in 2000 by Mazda Press (Costa Mesa CA) as volume 4 of the *Intellectual Traditions Series of Bibliotheca Iranica*, edited by Hossein Ziai (1944–2011), to whom Holly is forever grateful, I know full well, for all his support and encouragement. (About this book, Davidson 2000, I take note here of an encouraging mention by the distinguished Iranist Charles-Henri de Fouchécour 2000.) Also published, in 2006, as volume 12 of the same *Intellectual Traditions Series of Bibliotheca Iranica*, was a second edition of Holly's first book, *Poet and Hero in the Persian Book of Kings*.

3§3. Second, about the foundation named Ilex, which is of course the scientific Latin word for holly... For the history of the Ilex Foundation (ilexfoundation.org), there are three names besides Holly's that need to be highlighted. Mohsen Ashtiany, Niloofar Fotouhi, and Mohammad Mahallati. From 1999 onward, all three of these colleagues of Holly's were instrumental in helping her establish and shape the Ilex Foundation, <http://www.ilexfoundation.org/>.

Also, Niloo was instrumental in generating the impetus for establishing the Ilex Series of books distributed by Harvard University Press, <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/collection.php?cpk=1222>.

3§4. I should add that the Ilex Series is relevant to the latest phase of Holly's own publications, since this series included in 2013 a second edition of the OMD book *Comparative Literature and Classical Persian Poetics* and a third edition of the OMD book *Poet and Hero in the Persian Book of Kings*. In the Bibliography below, I refer to these current versions of Holly's books in this way:

Davidson 2013a = PHPBK

Davidson 2013b = CLCPL.

3§5. As I continue my brief outline of the general directions in which Holly's ongoing work is headed, I find it most relevant to list here, in alphabetical order, at least some of the new names that she mentions in her cumulative acknowledgments of advice and other forms of help leading up to these two books, Davidson 2013a and 2013b, and I merge into this list also other new names mentioned already in her footnote of acknowledgments for Davidson 1985 as also in other acknowledgments for later publications of hers. Here, then, are new names: Margaret Alexiou, Farhad Ata'i, Houchang Chehabi, Christopher Dadian, Richard N. Frye, Louise Marlow, Richard P. Martin, John McDonald, Stephen Mitchell, Sarah Morrell, Leonard Muellner, Joseph Nagy, Ramyar Rossoukh, Martin Schwartz, Rahim Shayegan, Sunil Sharma, Prods Oktor Skjærvø, Laura Slatkin, Brent Vine. This list has not included the names of Mohsen Ashtiany, Niloofar Fotouhi, and Mohammad Mahallati, since all three have already been highlighted at 3§3.

3§6. Among all the new names, pride of place must go to Richard N. Frye (1920–2014), who became in this phase of Holly's life an important model for her ongoing formation as an Iranist. She pays due tribute to Frye in an article of hers that was published in his *Festschrift*, Davidson 1990. Holly audited many of Dick Frye's courses at Harvard, and she respected him as both a mentor and a friend. Then there is Frye's brilliant successor as Aga Khan Professor of Iranian Studies at Harvard, Prods Oktor Skjærvø, who is an equally stellar figure in Holly's personal constellation of Iranist role-models. The genealogy continues: there is Rahim Shayegan, who was once a star student of Oktor's at Harvard and who has since become a superstar professor of Iranian studies in his own right at UCLA. And, in addition to the fact that Holly and I have closely collaborated with Rahim on a variety of projects, she and I both consider him to be one of our dearest friends.

3§7. While I stay on the subject of these three Iranist friends of Holly's, I should add that I still remember vividly the delight it gave her to read favorable mentions of her work in the publications of Frye (1995:129), Skjærvø (1994:205–207, 240), and Shayegan (2011:297n855 and 2012:139).

3§8. I should also add here some other positive reactions by other Iranists much admired by Holly: Mahmud Kianush (1996:1), Ulrich Marzolph (2002:281–282), Marta Simidchieva (1994:329, 331), and G. Michael Wickens (1995:528–529).

3§8. Special mention should go here also to three towering figures whose stellar accomplishments in correlating the social sciences with the humanities in Iranian studies have been a sustaining inspiration to Holly: they are Richard Bulliet, Houchang Chehabi, and Sunil Sharma. In the case of Houchang and Sunil, their collegial closeness with Holly extends also to myself and to two other mutual friends, Sassan Tabatabai and James Uden, since the five of us have been working closely together for many years now on a grand project for developing an online course on Comparative Epic.

3§9. Special recognition should go also to Iranist art historians, whose pioneering work on text and image, signaled already in my narration about Early OMD, has influenced Holly so powerfully throughout her academic life. I repeat here from that earlier part of my narrative some of the relevant names, but I now include some further names as well: Firouza Abdulaeva, Sheila Blair, Jonathan Bloom, Sheila Canby, Robert Hillenbrand, Charles Melville, and Marianna Shreve Simpson. I provide in the Bibliography below some publications of theirs that number among Holly's favorite readings.

3§10. At this point, I make note also of some negative reactions to Holly's work during the phase labeled Latest OMD. But I will hold off on details, since Holly has tracked these reactions in her own publications, especially in the book listed as Davidson 2013b in the Bibliography. The deft arguments and counter-arguments deployed by Holly in that book obviously required a great deal of patience and composure on her part. I say this because the negative reactions, as I described them euphemistically a moment ago, have been so provocative in some cases. And, in other cases, there is even more to it. It is one thing for some critics to engage in wildly intemperate outbursts. Such behavior is not all that unusual in academic discourse. But it is quite another thing to defame. Although Holly was not a direct victim of defamation, one critic did attempt to discredit a mentor of hers, the already-mentioned Georges Dumézil, by alleging that the old man's political past was supposedly tainted. In Essay 5 of Davidson 2013b, Holly addressed this attempt head-on, after having personally consulted a most respected authority on the history of France in the horrific era of the Holocaust and before, Pierre Vidal-Naquet. In her Essay 5, citing among other authoritative sources the public defense of Dumézil by Vidal Naquet himself (1992), Holly went on to vindicate the moral as well as academic reputation of Dumézil.

3§11. Moving beyond such a dead-serious moment in Holly's publications, I turn to lighter moments. I confess I enjoy reading her occasionally lighthearted ripostes aimed at various heavy-handed diatribes. For me a favorite example is where Holly adds, without further comment, a "sic" within square brackets next to a quoted "c.f." as written by a notoriously pompous critic. To my own way of thinking, this particular case of inflicted "gotcha" is fully deserved. Academics like the critic I have in mind here, who seems to make a blood sport out of hunting down errors in the work of colleagues, deserve at times to contemplate some of their own gaffes, and here was one of those rare occasions where Holly allowed herself to point out such a gaffe. To avoid personal acrimony, though, I will not cite here the "chapter and verse" of the publication in which Holly had drawn that ever so small droplet of blood from the puncturing of an ever so huge ego.

3§12. Moving beyond such rare occasions where Holly has dealt with the kinds of negativity that I have just now been describing, I must get back on track here and resume the ongoing story of Holly's consistently positive outlook on academic life. Accordingly, I now focus on all the intellectual and personal support that Holly has received from Iranists and non-Iranists alike throughout her academic career, especially during the phase that I label here as Latest OMD. The many names I listed a minute ago, which I have collected by way of reading through her lists of acknowledgments in Davidson 1985 and 2013a/b, each bring back in my mind, one by one, a story within the overall story of Holly's wide-ranging interactivity.

3§13. And, if I added other names mentioned in lists of further acknowledgments made by Holly in further publications, most of which I have tracked in the Bibliography below, there would be many more names for me to highlight in my inventory of stories about Holly's many and varied academic interactions. For the moment, I offer merely a sampling of further names, each one of which leads to fond memories of further stories within the overarching story. Among the many others who have not yet been mentioned by me in my survey of Holly's intellectual encounters are Nicholas Allen, Thomas Barfield, Dominic Parviz Brookshaw, Juan Cole, Michael Cooperson, Touraj Daryaee, David Elmer, Massoud Farivar, Leila Fawaz, Luis Girón Negrón, William Granara, Beatrice Gründler, Shahla Haeri, Nadia Hashimi, Maisie Houghton, Jill Hutchings, Şükrü İlicak, Pierre-Yves Jacopin, Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, Alan Khazai, Zoie Lafis, Quill Lawrence, Shaul Magid, Maureen N. McLane, Sharmin Mossavar-Rahmani, Eden Naby, Blaise Nagy, Desirée Aphrodite Navab, Elaine Papoulias, Trita Parsi, John B. Petropoulos, Stephen Phillips, Michael Pregill, Robert Rabil, Ginan Rauf, Shula Reinharz, Khodadad Rezakhani, Noel Spencer, Keith Stone, Ruth Taylor, Peter Thomson, Negin Yavari.

3§14. I should add that all these admired people as listed here have participated, one way or another, in the shaping of this festive collection of projects celebrating the life and times of OMD. Also, special honorable mention goes to the six editors: Richard Bulliet, Christopher Dadian, Niloofar Fotouhi, Michael Pregill, Sunil Sharma, and Marianna Shreve Simpson.

3§15. This last list shows repetitions of some names that have already been prominently mentioned in earlier parts of the story. In the next-to-last list, by contrast, some names have gone missing because they

have already been mentioned in those earlier parts.

3§16. In two cases, however, I do need to repeat names here for another reason. I am referring to Holly's and my beloved son and daughter, László and Antonia. In earlier phases of the overall story, I referred lovingly to their childhood. But they are now long past childhood, and I can refer to them as lovable adults. They can speak for themselves far better than I ever could, and so all I need to do here is to record my deep admiration for the projects that they present for the Holly Fest as well as for all the projects that they undertake in their creative lives.

So, what does GN owe OMD?

4§1. It remains for me to answer the initial question of my essay: what do I owe Holly? I divide this question into two parts, following the two-way syntax of the verb "owe":

1. A) I owe her a debt for what?
2. B) What is the debt that I owe her in return for this "what"?

4§2. The general answers to the two questions are simple:

1. A) I owe her an eternal debt for the beautiful life that we have lived together.
2. B) I owe her my eternal love.

4§3. Specific answers are not so simple. In terms of the Holly Fest that this essay is celebrating, you could say that the essay I am presenting here is a way for me to show my love for Holly. Fine. As a sign of that love, I have presented an essay about things academic that I admire about her. Again, fine. But there is also another thing. I also owe Holly an institutional commitment of sorts. I am committed to the idea that her publications should be available not only in print but also online, by way of open access. And I commit to following through on this idea by helping her consolidate her intellectual genealogy—and legacy—in the form of open access to an online repertoire.

4§4. So, part of what I owe is a commitment. And such a commitment is of course a debt that has not yet been paid. As for the part I owe that has in fact been delivered in the form of this essay here, it is a debt that has not yet been fully paid either. I must admit that I have narrated in this essay only some aspects of our beautiful life together. In my narration, I concentrated mostly on Holly's intellectual legacy, which is interwoven with my own. As I approach the conclusion of this essay, I illustrate the point I just made by citing one of my recent publications where such interweaving leads to new insights into Greek as well as Iranian verbal arts:

Nagy 2017.02.02, "Orality and literacy revisited," *Classical Inquiries*, <https://classical-inquiries.chs.harvard.edu/orality-and-literacy-revisited/>, with reference to Holly's demonstration that oral and written traditions are not necessarily incompatible with each other—and that oral tradition can even be metaphorized by oral tradition as if it were a book (Davidson 2016, http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hinc.essay:DavidsonO.The_Written_Text_as_a_Metaphor.2016, via 1994:29–53 [3rd ed. 2013a])

4§5. There has always been such interweaving for Holly's thinking and mine. But I think I now have a better way of saying it: we have consistently managed to connect the dots for each other. One of my all-time favorite points of connectivity between Holly's work and mine can be found in a recent work of hers, Davidson 2018a, where she shows that various patterns in the meter of Persian *mutaqārib* are cognate with comparable patterns in Greek lyric meters as analyzed by me in Nagy 1974 (more about this topic already at 2§12 above).

4§6. But here is where the incompleteness of my whole story becomes more and more evident. Yes, there are so many ways in which the lives of OMD and GN have been interconnected. But the personal aspects of these interconnections have been left out of my overall story for the most part. Further, even the academic aspects of my life with Holly have been narrated only in bits and pieces. Here are three examples of omitted narrations:

—Holly's work as a Ph.D. student at Princeton University, 1976–1983, has not been part of my narrative, even though I was very much part of her life during all that time.

—Similarly, I have not narrated anything about the experiences shared by Holly and myself as dual "Masters" of Currier House at Harvard University, 1986–1991. Here is one retrospective thought, however, that I cannot resist mentioning about that dioscuric stint of ours: I am so glad that Harvard has recently changed the title of "Masters" to "Academic Deans." A much more attractive title, no? And, by the way, that is why Holly, as a Dean Emerita, has a lifelong Harvard e-mail address. Not a bad souvenir.

—Yet another missing piece in my overall narrative about Holly's academic life and times has to do with all the work she did as Chair of the Concentration in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at Brandeis University, 1992–1997.

4§7. For the second of these three narrative lacunae, maybe some former student from Currier House could fill in with stories of their own. You could ask Maureen McLane, for example, who I think was there when Holly decided to costume herself as Mother Superior for a day, wimple and all, as she sang "Climb Every Mountain" for graduating Currier seniors at their Commencement celebration.

4§8. I remember so many other such anecdotes about my years with the lighthearted Holly, as I already described her at the beginning of this essay. Here is just one of them. For the life of me, I cannot remember when it happened, but it must have been in the late 1970s. I had arranged a "getting to know each other" lunch at the august Harvard Faculty Club for three distinguished visitors who by sheer accident had converged on Harvard at the same time. They were Jean Bollack, Thomas Gelzer, Arnaldo Momigliano. But a big problem came up. Somehow I had inadvertently double booked myself and, here I was, unable to get out of whatever other commitment it was. So, I implored Holly to host the lunch for the Big Three in my place. She cheerfully did it, and, as I learned from the old men later, they had the time of their life.

4§9. In Greek, such lightheartedness would be the essence of *euphrosunē*, which is the kind of happiness you feel at a party that you hope will never end (Nagy 1994). I started this essay by describing Holly as the essence of *euphrosunē*. In that spirit, I bring this essay to a close by quoting from a passage in the *Odyssey* where the disguised Odysseus expresses the same kind of lightheartedness. I give here the Greek text and my translation of it:

κέκλυθι νῦν, Εὔμαιε καὶ ἄλλοι πάντες ἑταῖροι,
εὐξάμενός τι ἔπος ἐρέω· οἶνος γὰρ ἀνώγει,
ἦλεός, ὅς τ' ἐφέηκε πολύφρονά περ μάλ' ἀεῖσαι
καὶ θ' ἀπαλὸν γελᾶσαι καὶ τ' ὀρχήσασθαι ἀνήκε,
καὶ τι ἔπος προέηκεν, ὃ πέρ τ' ἄρρητον ἄμεινον.
ἄλλ' ἐπεὶ οὖν τὸ πρῶτον ἀνέκραγον, οὐκ ἐπικεύσω.

Listen to me now, Eumaios and all you other companions! | Speaking proudly, I will tell
you a thing-that-is-said [epos]. The wine commands me, | and it makes me feel not like
my old self. It gets even a thinking man to sing | and to laugh softly. And it pushes him to
get up and dance. | It makes whatever thing-that-is-said [epos] come out—something that
may even be better left unsaid. | But now that I have shouted it out loud, I will not bring it
down and hide it.

Odyssey xiv 462–467

Bibliography

- Bayley, H. W., Bivar, A. D. H., Duchesne-Guillemin, J., and Hinnells, J. R., eds. 1985. *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce*, volumes I/II. *Acta Iranica* 24/25, pp. i–xxvi, 1–363 / 365–745. Leiden.
- Blair, S. S. 2004. "Rewriting the History of the Great Mongol Shahnama." Chapter 4 of *Shahnama: The Visual Language of the Persian Book of Kings* (ed. R. Hillenbrand) 35–50.
- Bloom, J. M. 2004. "The Great Mongol Shahnama in the Qajar Period." Chapter 3 of *Shahnama: The Visual Language of the Persian Book of Kings* (ed. R. Hillenbrand) 25–34.
- Boyce, M. 1957. "The Parthian Gōsān and the Iranian Minstrel Tradition." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 18:10–45.
- Canby Sheila R. 2014. *The Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp, The Persian Book of Kings*. New York.
- Davidson, O. M. 1979. "Dolon and Rhesus in the *Iliad*," *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 30 (1979) 61–66.
- Davidson, O. M. 1980. "Indo-European Dimensions of Herakles in *Iliad* 19.95–133," *Arethusa* 13 (1980) 197–202.
- Davidson, O. M. 1985. "The Crown-Bestower and the Iranian Book of Kings," *Acta Iranica* 10: *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce* (1985) 61–148.
- Davidson, O. M. 1987. "Aspects of Dioscurism in the Iranian Epic Tradition," *Edebiyât N.S.1* (1987) 103–115.
- Davidson, O. M. 1988. "Formulaic Analysis of Samples taken from the *Shâhnâma* of Ferdowsi," *Oral Tradition* 3 (1988) 88–105.
- Davidson, O. M. 1990. "The Haft Khwân Tradition as an Intertextual Phenomenon in Ferdowsi's *Shâhnâma*." In *Honor of Richard N. Frye: Aspects of Iranian Culture* (ed. C. A. Bromberg, Bernard Goldman, P.O. Skjærvnø, A. S. Shahbazi), *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 4 (1990) 209–215.
- Davidson, O. M. 1994. See Davidson 2013a.
- Davidson, O. M. 1998. "Epic as a Frame for Speech-Acts: Ritual Boasting in the *Shâhnâma* of Ferdowsi," a chapter in a book edited by Hildegard L.C. Tristram, *Neue Methoden der Epenforschung*, vol. 59 of *ScriptOralia* (1998) 271–285.

- Davidson, O. M. 1998. "The Text of Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāma* and the Burden of the Past." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118 (1998) 63–68.
- Davidson, O. M. 1998. "The Text of Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāma* and the Burden of the Past." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118:63–68.
- Davidson, O. M. 1998. "Women's Lament as Protest in the Persian Book of Kings," *Women in the Medieval Islamic World* (Gavin R. G. Hambly, ed.), volume 6 in the series *The New Middle Ages* (Bonnie Wheeler, series ed.; St. Martin's Press, New York, 1998) 131–146.
- Davidson, O. M. 2000. *Adabiyât-e tatbiqî-yo shâ'er-e kelâsiki-ye fârsi* (Tehran, 2002); Persian translation, by Farhad Ata'i, of *Comparative Literature and Classical Persian Poetry*, *Bibliotheca Iranica: Intellectual Traditions Series* (Mazda Press: Los Angeles, CA, 2000).
- Davidson, O. M. 2000. *Comparative Literature and Classical Persian Poetry*, *Bibliotheca Iranica: Intellectual Traditions Series* (Mazda Press: Los Angeles, CA, 2000; 2nd ed. Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 2013). See the report of de Fouchécour, Charles-Henri de. 2000. *Abstracta Iranica* 23:128.
- Davidson, O. M. 2000. See Davidson 2013b.
- Davidson, O. M. 2000. *Shâ'er-o Pahlavân dar Shâhnâma*. Tehran; Persian translation, by F. Ata'i, of Davidson 1994 = *Poet and Hero in the Persian Book of Kings* (Cornell University Press 1994).
- Davidson, O. M. 2001. "La 'publication' des textes arabes sous forme de lectures publiques dans les mosquées." *Des Alexandries I: Du livre au texte* (eds. L. Giard and Ch. Jacob; Paris 2001) 401–410.
- Davidson, O. M. 2001. "Some Iranian poetic tropes as reflected in the 'Life of Ferdowsi' traditions." *Philologica et Linguistica: Festschrift für Helmut Humbach* (ed. M. G. Schmidt and W. Bisang; Trier 2001) supplement pp. 1–12.
- Davidson, O. M. 2001. "Some Iranian poetic tropes as reflected in the 'Life of Ferdowsi' traditions." *Philologica et Linguistica: Festschrift für Helmut Humbach*, ed. M. G. Schmidt and W. Bisang, supplement, 1–12. Trier.
- Davidson, O. M. 2002. "Haft Khwân," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol XI (Ehsan Yarshater, ed.), *Bibliotheca Persica Press*, New York, 2002.
- Davidson, O. M. 2002. "Haft *Kvân*." *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 11:516–519.
- Davidson, O. M. 2003. "Une 'publication' non canonique dans le monde perse classique: Un poème de Rûdakî," *Des Alexandries II: Les métamorphoses du lecteur* (ed. Ch. Jacob) 401–410. Paris.
- Davidson, O. M. 2004a. "Myth and Sacred Narrative: Iran," *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide* (ed. S. I. Johnson) 589–590. Cambridge, MA.
- Davidson, O. M. 2004b. "Genre and Occasion in the *Ruba'iyât* of 'Umar Khayyâm," *Writers and Rulers: Perspectives on Their Relationship from Abbasid to Safavid Times* (ed. B. Gruendler and L. Marlow) 133–147. Cambridge, MA
- Davidson, O. M. 2005. "Persian/Iranian Epic," *A Companion to Ancient Epic*, (ed. J. M. Foley) 264–276. Malden and Oxford.
- Davidson, O. M. 2005. "Popular Literature," and "Folk Literature: Persian," *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia* (ed. J. W. Meri and J. L. Bacharach). Routledge.
- Davidson, O. M. 2008. "The dream as a narrative device in the *Shāhnāma*," *Dreaming Across Boundaries: The Interpretation of Dreams in Islamic Land* (ed. L. Marlow) 131–141. Cambridge, MA.
- Davidson, O. M. 2008a. Review of Yamamoto 2003. *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 103:3:305–316.
- Davidson, O. M. 2008b. "The Testing of the *Shāhnāma* in the "Life of Ferdowsi" Narratives." *The Rhetoric of Biography: Narrating Lives in Persianate Societies* (ed. L. Marlow) 11–20. Cambridge, MA.
- Davidson, O. M. 2010. "The Burden of Mortality: Alexander and the Dead in Persian Epic and Beyond." *Epic and History* (ed. D. Konstan and K. Raaflaub) 212–222. Malden and Oxford.
- Davidson, O. M. 2012. "Bawdy Anecdotes in Religious Settings: Examples from Mediaeval Persian Literature," *Ruse and Wit: The Humorous in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish Narrative* (ed. D. P. Brookshaw) 70–83. Cambridge, MA,
- Davidson, O. M. 2013a. *Poet and Hero in the Persian Book of Kings*. 3rd ed. *Ilex Foundation Series* 11. Cambridge, MA (2nd ed. 2006, Costa Mesa, CA; 1st ed. 1994, Ithaca, NY).
- Davidson, O. M. 2013b. *Comparative Literature and Classical Persian Poetics*. 2nd ed. *Ilex Foundation Series* 12. Cambridge, MA (1st ed. 2000, Costa Mesa CA).
- Davidson, O. M. 2013c. "A pictorial aetiology of Ferdowsi as a transcendent poet." *Ferdowsi, the Mongols and the History of Iran: Art, Literature and Culture from Early Islam to Qajar Persia*, (ed. R. Hillenbrand, A.C.S. Peacock, F. Abdullaeva) 245–248, plates 9–10. London / New York.

- Davidson, O. M. 2013d. "Interweavings of book and performance in the making of the Shahnama of Ferdowsi: Extrapolations from the narrative of the Preface to the Bāysoṅhor manuscript," *Ferdowsi's Shāhnāma: Millennial Perspectives* (ed. O. M. Davidson and M. S. Simpson) 1–11. Cambridge, MA.
- Davidson, O. M. 2013e. "Women and Social Protest: Historical." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Women* (ed. N. J. DeLong-Bas) II 448–454. Oxford
- Davidson, O. M. 2014a. "Why the Bāysoṅhori Recension is a Recension." *No Tapping Around Philology: A Festschrift in Honor of Wheeler McIntosh Thackston Jr.'s 70th Birthday* (ed. A. Korangy and D. J. Sheffield) 127–130. Wiesbaden.
- Davidson, O. M. 2014b. "Shāhnāma: um Épico Persa sobre Reis e Heróis." *Grandes Epopéias de Antiguidade e do Medievo* (ed. D. Santos) 179–195. Blumenau.
- Davidson, O. M. 2015a. "Aetiologies of the Kalīla wa Dimna as a Mirror for Princes." *Global Medieval: Mirrors for Princes Reconsidered* (ed. R. Forster and N. Yavari) 42–57. Cambridge, MA.
- Davidson, O. M. 2015b. "Parallel Heroic Themes in the Medieval Irish Cattle Raid of Cooley and the Medieval Persian Book of Kings," *Erin and Iran: Cultural Encounters between the Irish and the Iranians* (ed. H. E. Chehabi and G. Neville) 36–44. Cambridge, MA.
- Davidson, O. M. 2016. "The Written Text as a Metaphor for the Integrity of Oral Composition in Classical Persian Traditions and Beyond." *Singers and Tales in the 21st Century: The Legacies of Milman Parry and Albert Lord* (ed. D. F. Elmer and P. McMurray). *Classics@ Issue 14*. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hinc.essay:DavidsonO.The_Written_Text_as_a_Metaphor.2016.
- Davidson, O. M. 2018a. "Monroe's methodology in analyzing Andalusī meters and its relevance to a comparative analysis of a classical Persian meter, the mutaṣārib." *The Study of al-Andalus: The Scholarship and Legacy of James T. Monroe* (ed. M. M. Hamilton and D. A. Wacks) 88–97. Cambridge, MA. 2018.
- Davidson, O. M. 2018b. "Text and Image in Persianate Books Destined for Istanbul and Beyond: Introduction to the Volume." In: *The Arts of Iran in Istanbul and Anatolia* (ed. O. M. Davidson and M. S. Simpson). Forthcoming. Cambridge, MA.
- Davis, D. 1996. "The Problem of Ferdowsi's Sources." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116:48–57.
- Davis, D. 1995. Review of Davidson 1994. *Times Literary Supplement* February 3, Middle East: "Orientalism Revisited," p. 11.
- Dumézil, G. 1940. *Mitra-Varuna: Essai sur deux représentations indo-européennes de la Souveraineté*. Paris. As cited by Vidal-Naquet 1986:138.
- Dumézil, G. 1968, 2nd ed. 1986. *Mythe et épopée I. L'idéologie des trois fonctions dans les épopées des peuples indo-européennes*. Paris.
- Dumézil, G. 1971, 2nd ed. 1986. *Mythe et épopée II. Types épiques indo-européens: un héros, un sorcier, un roi*. Paris.
- Dumézil, G. 1973a, 2nd ed. 1978, 3rd ed. 1981. *Mythe et épopée III. Histoires romaines*. Paris.
- Dumézil, G. 1973b. *The Destiny of a King*. Translated by A. Hildebeitel. = Part 3 of *Mythe et épopée II* = Dumézil 1971.
- Dumézil, G. 1975. *Fêtes romaines d'été et d'automne, suivi de dix questions romaines*. Paris.
- Dumézil, G. 1980. *Camillus: A Study of Indo-European Religion as Roman History*. Translated by A. Aranowicz and J. Bryson. Edited and with introduction by U. Strutynski. Berkeley and Los Angeles. = Part 2 of *Mythe et épopée III* = Dumézil 1973, plus Appendices 1 and 2 of Dumézil 1973, plus Appendices 3 and 4 of Dumézil 1975.
- Dumézil, G. 1983. *The Stakes of the Warrior*. Translated by D. Weeks. Edited and with introduction by J. Puhvel. Berkeley and Los Angeles. = Part 1 of *Mythe et épopée II* = Dumézil 1971.
- Dumézil, G. 1985. *Heur et malheur du guerrier: Aspects mythiques de la fonction guerrière chez les Indo-Européens*. 3rd ed. Paris. As cited by Vidal-Naquet 1986:138n111.
- Dumézil, G. 1986. *The Plight of the Sorcerer*. Translated by D. Weeks and others. Edited by J. Puhvel and D. Weeks. Introduction by D. Weeks. = Part 2 of *Mythe et épopée II* = Dumézil 1971.
- Dumézil, G. 1995. *Mythe et épopée I, II, III*. New combined and corrected edition of the original three volumes, with original paginations retained in the inner margins. Preface by J. Grisward, pp. 7–30. Paris.
- Elmer, D. F., and McMurray, P., eds. 2016. *Singers and Tales in the 21st Century: The Legacies of Milman Parry and Albert Lord*. *Classics@ Issue 14*. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hinc.jissue:ClassicsAt.Issue14.Singers_and_Tales_in_the_21st_Century.2016.
- Elwell-Sutton, L. P. 1976. *The Persian Metres*. Cambridge.
- Eribon, D. 1992. *Faut-il brûler Dumézil? Mythologie, science et politique*. Paris.

- Foley, J. M. 1985. *Oral-Formulaic Theory and Research: An Introduction and Annotated Bibliography*. New York.
- Foley, J. M., ed., 1986. *Oral Tradition in Literature: Interpretation in Context*. Columbia, MO.
- Forster, R., and Yavari, N., eds. 2015. *Global Medieval: Mirrors for Princes Reconsidered*. Ilex Foundation Series 15. Cambridge, MA.
- Fouchécour, Ch.-H. de. 2000. Report on Davidson 2000. *Abstracta Iranica* 23:128.
- Grisward, J. H. 1981. *Archéologie de l'épopée médiévale*. Paris.
- Hillenbrand, R. 2010. "Exploring a Neglected Masterpiece: The Gulistan Shāhnāma of Bāysunghur." *Iranian Studies* 43:97–126.
- Hillenbrand, R., ed. 2004. *Shahnama: The Visual Language of the Persian Book of Kings*. Varie, Occasional Papers 2. Burlington, VT.
- Kianush, M. 1996. Review of Davidson 1994. *Asian Affairs* October 2:1.
- Lord, A. B. 1960/(2000). *The Singer of Tales*. Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature 24. Cambridge MA. 2nd ed. 2000, with new Introduction, by S. A. Mitchell and G. Nagy. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.ebook:CHS_LordA.The_Singer_of_Tales.2000.
- Lord, A. B. 1986. "Perspectives on Recent Work on the Oral Traditional Formula." *Oral Tradition* 1:467–503.
- Lord, A. B. 1991. *Epic Singers and Oral Tradition*. Ithaca. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.ebook:CHS_LordA.Epic_Singers_and_Oral_Tradition.1991.
- Lord, A. B. 1995. *The Singer Resumes the Tale* (ed. M. L. Lord). Ithaca. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.ebook:CHS_LordA.The_Singer_Resumes_the_Tale.1995.
- Marzolph, U. 2002. "The Persian National Epic in between Tradition and Ideology." *The Kalevala and the World's Traditional Epics*, *Studia Fennica Folkloristica* 12 (ed. L. Honko) 276–293. Helsinki.
- Nagy, G. 1979/1999. *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry*. Baltimore. Revised ed. with new introduction 1999. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.ebook:CHS_Nagy.Best_of_the_Achaeans.1999.
- Nagy, G. 1994. "Genre and Occasion." *Mètis: Anthropologie des mondes grecs anciens* 9–10:11–25. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hinc.essay:Nagy.Genre_and_Occasion.1994.
- Nagy, G. 1996a. *Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond*. Cambridge. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.ebook:CHS_Nagy.Poetry_as_Performance.1996.
- Nagy, G. 1996b. *Homeric Questions*. Austin. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.ebook:CHS_Nagy.Homeric_Questions.1996.
- Nagy, G. 1999. See Nagy 1979.
- Nagy, G. 2001. "Orality and Literacy." *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* (ed. T. O. Sloane) 532–538. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hinc.essay:Nagy.Orality_and_Literacy.2001.
- Nagy, G. 2005. "The Epic Hero." *A Companion to Ancient Epic* (ed. J. M. Foley) 71–89. Malden and Oxford. For an expanded version, see Nagy 2006.
- Nagy, G. 2006. "The Epic Hero." Expanded version of Nagy 2005. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hinc.essay:Nagy.The_Epic_Hero.2005.
- Nagy, G. 2011. "Diachrony and the Case of Aesop." *Classics@*. Issue 9: Defense Mechanisms in Interdisciplinary Approaches to Classical Studies and Beyond. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hinc.essay:Nagy.Diachrony_and_the_Case_of_Aesop.2011.
- Nagy, G. 2013. *The Ancient Greek Hero in 24 Hours*. Cambridge, MA. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.ebook:CHS_NagyG.The_Ancient_Greek_Hero_in_24_Hours.2013.
- Nagy, G. 2017.02.02, "Orality and literacy revisited," *Classical Inquiries*. <https://classical-inquiries.chs.harvard.edu/orality-and-literacy-revisited/>.
- Nagy, J. F. 1986. "Orality in Medieval Irish Narrative." *Oral Tradition* 1:272–301.
- Nagy, J. F. 1997. "How the Táin Was Lost." *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 49–50:603–609.
- Parry, M. [1971]. *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry* (ed. A. Parry). Oxford.
- Simidchieva, M. 1994. Review of Davidson 1994. *Al-Masāq: Studia Arabo-Islamica Mediterranea* 7:327–331.
- Simpson, M. S. 2004. "Shahnama as Text and Shahnama as Image" *Shāhnāma: The Visual Language of the Persian Book of Kings* (ed. R. Hillenbrand), 9–23.
- Skjærvø, P. O. 1994. "Hymnic Composition in the Avesta." *Die Sprache* 36:199–243.

Vernant, J.-P., and Vidal-Naquet, P. 1992. *La Grèce ancienne 3: Rites de passage et transgressions*. Paris.

Vidal-Naquet, P. 1968a. "Le chasseur noir et l'origine de l'éphébie athénienne." *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 946–964. = chapter 2 in Vidal-Naquet 1981.

Vidal-Naquet, P. 1968b. "The Black Hunter and the Origin of the Athenian Ephebia." *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 194:49–64.

Vidal-Naquet, P. 1981. *Le chasseur noir: Formes de pensée et formes de société dans le monde grec*. Paris. English version 1986. *The Black Hunter: Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World*. Trans. by A. Szegedy-Maszak. Baltimore

Vidal-Naquet, P. 1986. "The Black Hunter Revisited." *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 212:126–144.

Vidal-Naquet, P. 1989. "Retour au chasseur noir." *Mélanges Pierre Lévêque* (ed. M. M. Mactoux and E. Geny) II 387–411. Paris. Reprinted in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet 1992:215–221.

Vidal-Naquet, P. 1992. Review of Eribon 1992. *Le Nouvel Observateur* 1456:114–116.

Wickens, G. M. 1995. Review of Davidson 1994. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27:528–530.

Yamamoto, K. 2003. *The Oral Background of Persian Epics: Storytelling and Poetry*. Brill Studies in Middle Eastern Literatures 26. Leiden.