Eva Sachs on Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff

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I. Introduction

Theodor Klauser in his exemplary life of Henri Leclerq (1869–1945) remarks at its beginning the rapidity with which the details of a scholar's life are scattered and forgotten soon after his decease:¹


Only three women of great age are alive today who knew Eva Sachs (1882–1936). The one who could say most will say nothing. Eva Sachs' name has been forgotten by all except the most specialized of Platonists and historians of ancient mathematics. Even for them, it is but a name on a title-page. She wrote her dissertation with the greatest Hellenist of modern times. Her work was praised by the highest authority and its contribution to knowledge is agreed to be a permanent one. Her unselfish aid eased the publication of one of the three or four most influential books on Plato of this century. Of classical philologists of the golden age who were women she has only one rival—the editor of Suidas, the Danish Jewess, Ada Adler.²

The discovery of two new documents that cast light on the brief and unhappy life of this brilliant woman, one of which reveals much about her great teacher, have caused me to gather what can be known still and seek to restore contours to the pale shadow.

² For Ada Adler (1878–1946) see Per Kranup and Hans Raeder, Dansk Biografisk Leksikon 1 (Copenhagen 1979) 55, a reference I owe Dr. J. Mejer (Copenhagen). Her letters to Wilamowitz survive.
II. A Forgotten Life

Two published documents survive concerning the life of Eva Sachs (1882–1936). The first is a brief Latin autobiography that ends her dissertation. Because of its importance, brevity, and the difficulty in obtaining it, I republish it here rather than paraphrasing it.¹

Nata sum Eva Henrica Sachs Id. Apr. a. 1882, Berolini patre Emanuelo, matre Minna e gente Lachmann, quos praematura morte mihi abreptos esse doleo. Fidei addicta sum iudaicae. Inde ab anno 1889 usque ad annum 1898 ludum puellarum frequentavi, cui nomen est “Charlottenschule” et qui tui regente Carolo Goldbeck+ florebat. Litterarum elementis imbutam Carolus Goldbeck, vir humanissimus, summo antiquorum litterarum amore inflammatus, a recentiorum temporum studio ad antiquorum revocavit. Qui vir summus non solum magister venerandus sed etiam amicus carus mihi meisque exitit.

Proximis annis in instituto, quod diecibatur “Victoria Lyceum” historicis studiis me dedi. Inde ab anno 1902 privatis curis instructa gymnasium puellarum, cui praefuit J. Wychgramm, frequentavi, ubi mihi contigit, ut scholis Guilelmi Moeller interessem, viri vere philologi.

Vere 1904 maturitatis testimonium adopta universitatem Berolinensem adii, ut studiis historicis et philologis, imprimisque Platonis me darem.


Sodalis fui prosemnarii philologici per tria, seminarii per tria, seminarii historici regente Ottone Hirschfeld per unum, moderante Eudoardo Meyer per sex semestria.

Ad exercitationes historicas me admisit C. Lehmann-Haupt, ad epigraphicas Winnefeld, ad philosophicas Cassirer.

Quibus omnibus viris gratiam habeo quam maximam, praeter ceteros Hermanno Diels, Eduardus Mayer, Eduard Norden, e quibus Diesiesius etiam in hac dissertatione perploienda liberalissime me adiviit.

Udalrico de Wilamowitz-Moellendorff gratis non ago: eorum quae ab eo dona accepi, —τούτων θεοίσι χρή πολύμνηστον χάριν τίνειν.²³

¹ I cite the copy in the Classical Library of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I am grateful to Professor David Sansone, who aided me in tracking it down.
² Eva Sachs, De Theaeteto Atheniensis Mathematico: Dissertatio inauguralis quam ad summos in philosophia honores rite capessendos consensus et auctoritate amplissimi philosophorum ordinis in alma litterarum universitate Friderica Guilelma Berolinensi (Diss. Berlin 1914) 71.
³ A. Ag. 821–22, long a favorite play of Wilamowitz, who had edited it with translation in 1885 and published a famous revised translation in 1900. He translates these verses:
She was early orphaned and avoided the easy way of Protestant baptism, taken by so many assimilated Jews of the period. 1898–1902 she attended the famous Victoria-Lyzeum, the leading girls-school in Berlin. There she may have met Adelheid Mommsen, who with her father's permission was studying to become a school-teacher.6 Perhaps she would have heard Wilamowitz, who had lectured there regularly since his appointment to the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in 1897.7 In 1904, already determined to study Plato, she matriculated at that university. She received the finest classical education available in the history of the discipline. One should note that she did not confine herself to philology in the narrow sense. The breadth of her interests was extraordinary; and she took her time. She defended her dissertation 29th April 1914. During ten years at the university she heard besides the great classical scholars: the young philosopher Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945);8 the church historian Adolf Harnack (1851–1930); the Roman historian Otto Hirschfeld (1843–1922);9 the universal historian Eduard Meyer (1855–1930); the historian of higher education Friedrich Paulsen (1846–1908); the neo-Kantian Georg Simmel; the linguist Wilhelm Schulze (1863–1935); the psychologist and musicologist Carl Stumpf (1848–1936) and the art-historian Heinrich Wölflin (1864–1945).10

The great mentor was always Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848–1931). The courses he offered during her time at Berlin are known.11 He was particularly interested in Plato at this period. His Platon would have appeared sooner had it not been for the war. Between 1904 and 1914...
he offered the following lectures and seminars on Plato: Cursory Readings in Plato's Laws (WS 1905/06); Plato, Critias (SS 1906); Plato, Euthydemus (WS 1908/09); Plato and Plato Laws VI (SS 1909); Plato, Symposium (WS 1911/12); Plato, Republic (SS 1913). He inspired her to write her dissertation under his direction with Hermann Diels as second reader. The dissertation proved that Theaetetus the son of Euphranius from Sounion was both the mathematician and the friend and student of Plato, one of whose dialogues bears his name. That the Souda, whom Bentley called "a sheep with golden fleece," makes the one man into two (Θ 93, 94 Adler) is an error. She further cogently argued that the battle of Corinth (Tht. 142a) after which Theaetetus died was that of 369 B.C. and not 394 B.C. These conclusions have been accepted by the highest authorities. Her first book was dedicated "to the memory of her dearest parents."

The expanded German version of the dissertation, "The Five Platonic Solids: On the History of Mathematics and the Theory of Elements in Plato and the Pythagoreans," has remained authoritative in its field. The book was already finished in summer 1913 and was submitted along with her Latin dissertation. In summer 1914 several details were added and Chapter II. 2 ("Das Werk des Theaetet"), translated into German from the Latin. The book had been accepted by the press (Weidmann) to appear in the series Philologische Untersuchungen, edited by Wilamowitz. The outbreak of war in August 1914 delayed publication. In fall 1915 in spite of wartime difficulties the press agreed to publish her manuscript. The volume appeared in 1917. Werner Jaeger was quick to greet in a letter to Wilamowitz of 24 July 1917 the "ungewöhnlich selbstständige u. kluge Buch." He has some questions: "Aber die Tendenz, die Einwirkung der

14 See the scholar most able to judge: Kurt von Fritz, RE 5A (1934) 1363. 17–24. Her dissertation is cited with approval at R. S. Brombaugh, "Plato's Mathematical Imagination," Indiana University Publications: Humanities Series 29 (Bloomington 1954; reprinted: Millwood 1977) 275. n. 30 (for the development of the irrationals [=incommensurables]). Her book is cited for the elucidation of Ti 53–54 and Rep VII at 296, n. 36. As no page numbers are provided the citations may well be second-hand.
Mathematik auf Platon zu erkennen, ist jedenfalls sehr fruchtbar." The book is dedicated to no one. At the end of the preface there is a mysterious sentence (viii): "Zu eigen ist dieses Buch, auch ohne Widmung, meinem Lehrer Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff."

This mystery was solved when about 1974 I was able to interview at the home of Margarete Bieber the cousin of Eva Sachs. Professor Vera Regina Lachmann (1904–1985) then professor of classics at Brooklyn College. I published the substance of this interview in 1978. I reprint it here:

A brilliant Jewess, Assistentin to Wilamowitz, she helped much for Platon (see Platon I. v). She was in love with Wilamowitz. Forbidden by Marie Mommsen to enter the house, she dared not even dedicate her book to him, as male students did . . . She was ugly and went mad, ending her days in an insane asylum, speaking ancient Greek and believing "she could save Socrates if she got there in time."

That Marie Mommsen imposed Hausverbot on Eva Sachs struck me as improbable, a typical embellishment that years of retelling often add. A similar case, however, may confirm Vera Lachmann’s statement. One other woman wrote a dissertation under Wilamowitz’ direction. Luise Reinhard, Observationes criticae in Platonem (Diss. Berlin 1916), later expanded to "Die Anakoluthe bei Platon," Philologische Untersuchungen 25 (Berlin 1926), was directed by Wilamowitz. Wilamowitz writes to Eduard Norden on 27 August 1927 (unpublished): "Frl. Reinhard hat definitiv mit mir und meinem Hause gebrochen. Die ist also erledigt—mag sie ihren Unsinn drucken, um unsere Rückständigkeit zu erweisen. Da hat man wieder viel zu viel Wohlwollen verschwendet, Sie auch." Luise Reinhard will not visit Wilamowitz’ house again. No reason is stated, though foolish ideas and stubbornness are implied. In any case the initiative was hers; certainly not Marie Mommsen's. The death of Eva Sachs in an asylum will be confirmed below.

16 Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, "Selected Correspondence 1869–1931," edited by William M. Calder III, Antiqua 23 (Naples 1983) 179. After Wilamowitz' forced retirement in 1921, his successor Werner Jaeger's (1888–1961) opinion on Eva Sachs' habilitation would have been decisive. His intolerance of talented contemporaries (e.g., Karl Reinhardt) is known; and I should not be surprised if he discouraged her.

17 Ibid., 182, n. 92.

18 See Wilamowitz' tribute to her remarkable knowledge of Platonic Greek at Platon I (ed. 1) v. At KS 3. 460 he accepts her emendation of Pl. Ep. 7. 344b7.

19 Dr. Luise Reinhard wrote to me on 9 June 1979:
An unpublished letter of Wilamowitz to Eduard Norden dated 15 April 1919 casts considerable light on Eva Sachs’ later career. He writes:


Friedrich Solmsen, Kleine Schriften III (Hildesheim/Zürich/New York 1982) 432 must refer to this incident when he writes that Luise Reinhard participated in Wilamowitz’ Graeca “from 1921 to 1928.” He adds unhelpfully: “Miss Reinhard left for personal reasons.”

\(^2\) I am grateful to Dr. Klaus Hänel for permission to quote both these letters. The transcriptions of both were made by the late Dr. Wolfgang Buchwald.


\(^2\) For Wilamowitz’ view in 1897 on higher education for females see his remarks at Die akademische Frau. Gutachten hervorragender Universitätsprofessoren, Frauenlehrer und Schriftsteller über die Befähigung der Frau zum wissenschaftlichen Studium und Berufe, ed. Arthur Kirchhoff (Berlin 1897) 222–25. Thirty years later he was more tolerant: see Solmsen, op. cit. (supra, n. 19) 449: “In the University he was generally friendly to students and remarkably polite to the women; for although at heart he did not believe in women’s study, they were ‘Damen,’ and with a kind of old-time courtesy he kept his hat in his hands as long as he talked to them.”


\(^2\) Dr. Buchwald observes that Wilamowitz means “Als <Klassischer> Philologe.”
allem Scharfsinn zu enger Emendant. Friedländer wäre Verpflanzung sehr zutraglich.26 Aber wer kann da jetzt hoffen und wirken?

Clearly he does not think that Frl. Sachs should be encouraged. She has made a sensible suggestion for her teaching. Wilamowitz approves but asks Norden's opinion. As far as habilitation goes, although not enthusiastic, he is ready to accept the inevitable. Antisemitism plays no role in his decision. Morality and scholarly ability must rule in every case. Wilamowitz and Norden are to agree on its subject beforehand. She is qualified to habilitate. She never did. Already she is victim to self-torture. This may have been indicative of her later illness and a reason why she never completed the habilitation.

III. The Two New Documents

Vera Regina Lachmann described the mental illness and death of her cousin some 40 years after the event. A contemporary source has recently been discovered. Otto Kern (1863–1942), an admirer of Wilamowitz, who did not return the admiration,27 sought in the last years of his life to write a biography of his teacher. The manuscript is unfinished and in the opinion of Freifrau Hiller did not deserve publication. It survives today in the Göttingen Nachlaß in 455 handwritten pages.28 The manuscript is often valuable for facts otherwise unattested. Kern had interviewed people now deceased and even made an effort to gather documents. Furthermore, the full corpus of Wilamowitz' letters, so far as Freifrau Hiller had assembled them, was available to him. Because he was unable to discover the date of death for Eva Sachs, he enquired in 1940 of Hiller von Gaertringen, Wilamowitz' son-in-law, who passed the enquiry on to Josefine von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Ulrich's grandniece, then at Kobelnik, the Schloß of her grandfather Hugo, Ulrich's eldest brother and inheritor of the estates. The first document is her reply to Kern.29

28 There are copies at the Villa Mowitz and the Library of the Freie Universität West Berlin.
29 The original letter is preserved at Otto Kern, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff: Leben und Werke 394-95.
Sehr verehrter Herr Geheimrat,


In Januar 1935 hat man die Unglückliche in eine Heilanstalt bringen müssen. Ihr Zustand liess keine Besuche mehr zu, und im Herbst, ich glaube 5 September 1936 ist sie in volliger Umnachtung gestorben.


Mit den besten Grüssen

Ihre sehr ergebene
Josefine Wilamowitz

2. Eva Sachs to Josefine von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff:31

Aus einem Brief vom 18 Dezember 1933 an Josefine v. Wilamowitz von Eva Sachs:

30 Nothing else is known of a sister of Eva Sachs. Possibly Vera Regina Lachmann, her maternal cousin, is meant.

31 The fact that the introductory sentence is in the same copper-plate hand as the text of Eva Sach's letter proves that Kern had the original copied by an amanuensis and presumably then returned it as requested to Josefine von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff. Presumably only a bit from the beginning of the letter was withheld. The text is found at Kern, op. cit. (supra, n. 29) 391–93. The paragraphs, "Was sich nicht . . . das Wilamowitz eigen ist" were copied in error out of place at p. 391. A second version is inserted at 392–93 in its correct place. I have followed the correct arrangement.
Vielleicht habe ich in oder nach den Feiertagen noch ein bisschen Ruhe um Ihnen noch einmal zu schreiben, denn dieser Brief muss gleich fort, um noch schnell da zu sein.

An diesem Tage als Gruss ein Wort von Wilamowitz, das erste, das ich als Schülerin, heimlich in die Universität eingeschlichen, im Auditorium Maximum von ihm hörte:32

"Denn der Mensch, wenn er was taugt, ist immer mehr wert, als alle Werke, die er geschaffen, und alle Bücher, die er geschrieben hat" (über Clemens von Alexandria).

Ein anderes: "Ein ordentlicher König und ein ordentlicher Gott brauchen sich nicht vor Majestätsbeleidigung zu fürchten."

Am Schluss einer Vorlesung über Aphrodite (1905 Winter): So wird sie ewig in unseren Herzen leben, "denn das Leben ist schön, und das Leben will gelebt werden."33

Über Platon: "nur34 solche Menschen haben dann, wie man zu sagen pflegt, kein Glück."

Nach der Niederlage von 1918 schrieb er mir: "Jetzt heisst es, im Moment und in der Ewigkeit leben."35

1919: "Jetzt müssen wir die Klaglieder des Jeremias lesen!"36

Er hätte wie Äschyllos auf sein Grab37 schreiben lassen, dass er einer von denen gewesen sei, die bei Marathon gegen die Perser gekämpft habe<n>, nichts von seinem Dichten.38


33 In Winter Semester 1904/05 Wilamowitz' public lectures were on "Die Götter der Griechen." The best commentary on this sentiment is Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Griechische Tragoedien I (Berlin 1899) 120-21, where the Aphrodit of Euripides in Hippolytos is an anthropomorphic incarnation of the sexual drive. This, says Wilamowitz (120), is a divinity in which both Euripides and he believe.

34 "nur" in the sense "however." One thinks of the death of Dion and the failure of the Sicilian venture: see my remarks at Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren, 101-07.

35 The best commentary is the Nachwort zu Band II at Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Platon 1 (ed. 2) (Berlin 1920) vi, where he takes refuge in "das Reich der ewigen Formen." As far as the world goes there is no future, only the moment. He has but to "die out."

36 To Eva Sachs he cites the Old Testament. For this mood of utter despair compare his letter of 26 November 1918 to Werner Jaeger at Antiqua 23 (1983) 187-89. Rather than the Lamentations of Jeremiah he cites to Jaeger A. Ag. 139, 159, a text cited on other occasions: see ibid., 190, n. 126.

37 TrGF 3 T 162. For Wilamowitz on this epitaph which he considered contemporary and composed in Athens see Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Aischyllos Interpretationen (Berlin 1914) 234-33, esp. (234): "... es redet nur von dem Ruhme des Kriegers, nicht von dem des Dichters." See further id., KS IV. 204-05.

38 Eva Sachs' instinct was correct. The custom at Schulpforte was that alumni write their own obituaries. Wilamowitz' is published at Ecce (Naumburg 1931) 8-11. He states in this (9)
Nach dem Friedensschluss schrieb er mir: “Ich preise Tycho glücklich, er ist noch im Glauben und in der Liebe gestorben.”

Was sich nicht wiedergeben lässt und auch Sie vielleicht nie von ihm ganz erlebt haben, war die gesammelte Kraft und Leidenschaft, die ausstrahlte, wenn er in Auditorium Maximum eine öffentliche Vorlesung hielt, wirklich die Radiumkraft seiner Seele auf die versammelte Menge der Hörer, und dann das andere, wenn er in seinem stillen Zimmer ganz schlicht und still über Platon sprach, “den Menschen, den ich vor allen auf der Welt am meisten liebe.” Er sprach von ihm so schlicht und herb, wie von einem nahen Verwandten. Wenn Sie den Staat gelesen haben, werden Sie verstehen, was ich meine, wenn ich sage, er war Platon’s jüngerer Bruder Glaukon.

Jetzt, wo ich dies alles in Hast und Eile niederschreibe, bin ich ganz traurig, dass ich Ihnen nicht mehr geben kann, und sehe, wie eben die künstlerische Kraft nicht da ist, dies Bild so zu formen, dass er Ihnen nahe

that the highest point of his life was when on 16 June 1871, returning victorious from the French campaign, he marched before his king. The next highest was when he performed Egmont at Pforte on Shrove Tuesday 1867. He was in his own estimation first a soldier, second an actor, and then teacher and scholar.

39 Wilamowitz refers to the heroic death of his son, Tycho (1885–1914), in battle against the Russians before Iwangorod in the early morning of 16 October 1914. An eyewitness of his death, Steinecke, Leutnant der Reserve, reported to Wilamowitz: “Tycho eilte der Artillerie zu Hilfe gegen eine Übermacht und machte die Geschütze frei. Er erhielt bei seinem Siegeslauf einen Kopfschuss. Gelitten hat er nicht. Ohne jeden Laut ist er zu Boden gesunken. Sein Gesicht war vollkommen ruhig, nicht schmerzerzert. Von seinem Tode hat er nichts geahnt. Er selbst wünschte sich einen solchen Tod.” Wilamowitz’ Glaube means faith in the justice of his cause; Liebe means love for his fatherland and comrades. His formulation recalls the famous mot attributed to Solon at Hdt l. 32. 7 never to call a man happy before he is dead.

40 The closest parallel is Eduard Schwartz’ description, written October 1938 to Otto Kern, of the young Wilamowitz lecturing at Greifswald: see Quaderni di storia 7 (1978) 211–12 with an English translation at Calder-Fowler, op. cit. (supra, n. 27) 7.

41 The adoration of Plato was early. Wilamowitz himself dates his conversion to autumn 1866: see Antiqua 27 (1984) 155 with notes 38–41. As a man, he remarked to Norden (KS 668): “Fidem profiteor Platoniam.” A close parallel to the sentiment recalled by Eva Sachs is found in an unpublished letter to Max Fränkel in my possession (13 August 1875):

Stutzig gemacht hat mich Ihr zweifel, ob Platon ein großer dichter oder sonst was sei. freilich der größte dichter der Hellenen ist er, überhaupt die incorporation alles deßen was groß schön wahr in der alten welt ist; ich kenne auf diesem planeten nur zwei solche menschen noch, gegen die der größte gott, den sich die menschen erfand, ein ganz armseliger schulknabe, der eine heißt Raffael und der andere heißt Göthe.

I preserve the orthography and punctuation of the original.

42 For the ancient testimonia for Glaukon son of Ariston, brother of Adeimantos and Plato, see Paul Natorp, RE 7 (1910) 1402. 50–1403. 25. Eva Sachs errs when she calls Glaukon Plato’s younger brother. Plato was the youngest in a family of four children: see Wilamowitz, Platon I. 35–36. Wilamowitz describes Glaukon (ib., 37) as “äußerst lebhaft, vorwitzig, leidenschaftlich.”
sein könnte. Denn der Mann als Ganzes war von einer Herrlichkeit, gegen
die alle Feinheit und Klugheit der Stefan Georgeleute verblasst; aber dazu
gehörte eben einer, der dies eigentlich heldische Wesen mit festem Griffl
festhalten könnte. Auch er war eine "ins Geistige verirrte Tätarnatur,"\textsuperscript{43} viel
mehr als Stefan George,\textsuperscript{44} der freilich auch die Macht des "Führers" über die
Seelen besass, aber nicht das Wickingerwesen, das Wilamowitz eigen war.

Nun leben Sie wohl. Ich wünsche Ihnen ein frohes Fest im
verschneiten Hause. Haben Sie Tannenwald in der Nähe? Das ist das
einzig, was ich in der schönen, der Stadt so nahen Natur hier vermisse;
denn die Schneefülle würde herrlich sein auf Tannenwald; von den
Nadelbäumen, ausser wenn Rauhreif ist, gleitet sie ab.

Grüßen Sie, bitte, die Ihren und sagen Sie auch ihnen meine besten
Wünsche. Und verzeihen Sie mein langes Schweigen und diesen
unfestlichen Brief.

Mit herzlichem Gruss
Ihre
Eva Sachs

\textit{Translation}\textsuperscript{45}

Perhaps I shall have a bit of leisure during the holidays or after to write
you once again: for this letter must be posted immediately in order to be
there quickly.

On this day as greeting a word from Wilamowitz, the first that I heard
from him in the Auditorium Maximum, as a schoolgirl, secretly smuggled
into the University:

"For a human being, when he is any good, is always of greater value
than all the work that he has done and all the books which he has written"
(about Clement of Alexandria).

Another: "A decent king and a decent God need not fear lésé-majesté."

\textsuperscript{43} I cannot identify the source of this quotation. No matter. She provides a profound insight
into Wilamowitz' nature; for she has discerned the quintessence of his attraction to the Herakles
figure and the reason for his emphasis on an otherwise obscure text, Aristotle, \textit{Problemat\ae
Physica} XXX.1, which describes Herakles along with Plato and Socrates as the type of the
"melancholic man," that is a sort of unstable genius. In Wilamowitz' words Aristotle sets
Herakles "in die Reihe der Heroen des Geistes" (\textit{Herakles} II. 93): see my discussion,
\textit{Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren}, 97. Aristotle's Herakles is precisely the man of action who has
gone astray into the intellectual.

\textsuperscript{44} For an expert discussion of the complicated relations between Wilamowitz and the George
Circle see Ulrich K. Goldsmith, "Wilamowitz and the \textit{Georgekreis}: New Documents,"
(Darmstadt 1985) 583–612, and for his parodies of George \textit{Id.}, "Wilamowitz as Parodist of

\textsuperscript{45} The translation is intended only to make an important and beautiful document available to
those without German and in no way replaces the original.
At the end of a lecture about Aphrodite (Winter 1905): so she shall live ever in our hearts, "for life is beautiful and life wants to be lived."

About Plato: "However, such men, as one is used to say, have no good luck."

After the defeat of 1918 he wrote me: "Now we must live day by day and in eternity."

1919: "Now we must read the Lamentations of Jeremiah."

Like Aeschylus, he would have allowed to be written on his grave that he was one of those who had fought against the Persians at Marathon, — nothing of his poetry.

After the armistice he wrote me: "I count Tycho happy. He was still able to die in faith and love."

What cannot be communicated and what, furthermore, you perhaps never experienced from him, was the concentrated strength and passion, which radiated forth onto the assembled crowd of listeners when he held a public lecture in the Auditorium Maximum, truly the emanation of his soul. And then the other side, when, in his quiet room, very simply and quietly, he spoke of Plato, "the human being whom I love more than any in the world." He spoke of him so easily and candidly, as though of a close relative. If you have read the Republic, you will understand what I mean when I say he was Plato's younger brother Glaukon.

I regret now, when I write all this hurriedly, that I can't give you more; and see that the artistic power is simply not there to form this picture, so that he could be close to you. For the man as a whole was of a magnificence in comparison with which all the elegance and cleverness of the Stefan George people pale. But for that task someone would be needed who would be able to capture with a firm brush this truly heroic being. He too was "a man of action who went astray into the intellectual," far more so than Stefan George, who of course also possessed the power of the "leader" over minds; but not the Viking nature that was Wilamowitz'.

Farewell. I wish you a happy holiday in a house covered with snow. Have you a fir-wood in the neighborhood? That is the only thing I miss here in the beautiful countrysides near the city. The snowfall would be lovely in a forest of fir-trees. From conifers, except when there is hoar-frost, it slides off.

Greet your family, please, and convey to them also my best wishes. And excuse my long silence and this non-festive letter.

Sincerely yours,

Eva Sachs
IV. What have we learned?

This fragment of a letter brings Eva Sachs nearer than her two books and all else that we know of her short and tragic life. Like Plato, she was a philosopher and a poet. Of the four descriptions of Wilamowitz that have survived by women, one is by his mother, two by his daughters; but only this by a woman, not a relative, but a disciple and a brilliant classical scholar. She was a student of great intelligence, capable of acute observation, and she adored him. In the mountains near Salzburg on the second anniversary of Wilamowitz’ death she met his grandniece and for days spoke inspired only of her master. The first part of her letter consists of sententiae of Wilamowitz, which over thirty years she had never forgotten. She had read Plutarch and Diogenes and knew how sentiments reveal character.

The rest of the letter is her attempt, which she considers inadequate, to communicate to a younger woman, who, although not a scholar, had known Wilamowitz all her life, what the man was. Her comparison with George is revealing. Hers is the only contemporary comparison written by one not a Georgeaner. She is the only one who noticed their similarity. She was a Platonist as was he. No other contemporary describes so well the profound, personal, almost familial, closeness that he felt toward Plato. Perhaps he thought that he could reveal to her an attachment too personal to admit to a man. His irony in the letter to Norden is meant to conceal how intimately he had spoken to her about himself. Did the Platonic specialist err in thinking that Glaukon was the younger brother? More easily she purposely neglected a fact to strengthen the analogy.

She detected, as Eduard Schwartz had, the charisma in Wilamowitz’ nature, the irrational attraction he was able to exert upon his hearers. Wilamowitz himself knew this and described it once in a letter to Ernst Krieck of 12 August 1921.46

Die stärksten charakterbildenden Wirkungen hängen an den irrationalen Austrahlungen des Wesens.47 Dafür wird es dann also keinerlei Methode geben; das lernt sich überhaupt nicht, sondern ist ein Charisma.48 Da wird es doch zweifelhaft, ob man Erzieher bilden kann. Daß die Erziehung die Hauptaufgabe der Gesellschaft ist, von deren Lösung alles abhängt, weiß ich von Platon; da dürfte zu lernen sein.

46 The full text of this important letter is edited in honor of the tenth anniversary of Wilamowitz’ death by Ernst Krieck, “Erinnerungen an Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff,” Volk im Werden 9 (1941) 19–20. For Krieck and Wilamowitz see Gerhard Müller, Ernst Krieck und die nationalsozialistische Wissenschaftsreform: Motive und Tendenzen einer Wissenschaftslehre und Hochschulreform im Dritten Reich (Weinheim/Basel 1978) 371, 373–74. I owe both these references to Bernhard vom Brocke.

47 Krieck (ibid., 19) edits “Wesens <des Lehrers>.”

48 I should argue that the source for Wilamowitz’ use of charisma is Plato and not Max Weber. The next sentence shows that Plato is in his mind.
She detected also the strain of brutality. She called it his Viking Nature. Schadewaldt recalled it. Jaeger called it "the archaic element in Wilamowitz' genius." Eva Sachs also detected another characteristic of Wilamowitz, his unpredictability, which she called "his 'Heraclitean' quality: νέος ἑφ' ἴμερην." This could be documented both in his personal life and in scholarship. She died three years after her letter to Josefine, who knew only that she had died in September 1936. I wonder if it was the 25th, the fifth anniversary of his death.

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49 For Schadewaldt's view of Wilamowitz see Antiqua 23 (Naples 1983) 257-63. I did not there include that on 10 June 1974 Schadewaldt also stressed the brutality of which Wilamowitz was capable. He recalled an incident when Wilamowitz, irritated by something a young man said, wheeled about, turned his back on him, and said nothing until he had left the room. Such behavior could be devastating.

50 See Solmsen, op. cit. (supra, n. 19) 444.

51 Ibid., 453, where the spelling of the Heraclitan citation needs to be corrected. The fragment Eva Sachs cites is now frag. 58 Marcovich. It is revealing that in Heraclitus the epithet is used of Helios who is new every day.

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