NINETEENTH-CENTURY GENDER STUDIES

Issue 18.2 (Summer 2022)

Gender and Para-Academic Labor: The Invisible Translators of Old English and their Legacy in Digital Humanities

By Abigail Moreshead, University of Central Florida

<1>In his prefatory material to the Early English Text Society's 1881 edition of *Ælfric*'s *Lives of the Saints*, Cambridge professor and philologist Walter William Skeat credits "Miss Gunning of Cambridge and Miss Wilkinson formerly of Dorking" with having translated most of the homilies included in the volume (vii). He notes his own role as editor of their work and translator of a few specific excerpts but acknowledges that the bulk of the translating was completed by these two women (vii). Similarly, in Skeat's introduction to his translation of *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, he notes that "As regards the Glossary, I have much pleasure in recording my thanks to Miss Gunning and Miss Wilkinson, of Cambridge, who prepared the 'slips' recording the references, and, in most cases, the meanings also, throughout a large portion of the whole work, with praiseworthy carefulness and patience" (qtd. in Chaucer xxii). Skeat's introduction to Chaucer also mentions that his translation of *The Wars of Alexander* was "chiefly prepared by Miss Gunning and Miss Wilkinson" (xxii).(1)

<2>The remarkable nature of these attributions is owing to their lack of remarkability. Skeat merely mentions the women in the prefatory material; their names appear nowhere else in the manuscripts or on the covers of the books which they translated. "Gunning" and "Miss Wilkinson" are credited as translators on the Google Books page of *Lives of the Saints* and their names included as authors alongside "Ælfric (Abbot of Eynsham)," but the backlist of Early English Text Society (EETS) titles credits only Skeat with these editions (Eynsham; "Early English Text Society"). The role of Gunning and Wilkinson can easily be overlooked altogether, and yet Skeat himself is stating in the "Preliminary Notice" of *Ælfric's Lives of the Saints* that much of the work he is taking credit for was not actually

©*Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*, Edited by Stacey Floyd and Melissa Purdue

completed by him (v). Sadly, little archival information appears to exist on either of these women, making the discernment of their identities a challenge. But this lack of information—the invisibility of their identities as individuals whose labor contributed to the building of knowledge of medieval literature and language in the late nineteenth century—is significant in what it indicates about the valuing and recognition of such work, and how these values are carried into the present.

<3>In this essay, I first establish the historical significance of the Early English Text Society for which they translated and the historical relationship between translation and gender, before investigating the identities of these women and how their work contributed to the reputation and output of Skeat. Exploring the work and historical context of these women's lives uncovers the nature of gendered textual labor in what I term "para-academic" settings. My focus here is not on the actual content of the translations of Gunning and Wilkinson; rather, I am concerned with what the under-credited nature of their work reveals about the role of women in knowledge creation more broadly, and in literary and textual production more specifically. Ultimately, I argue that, in considering how the affordances of the digital humanities allows for the digitization of many of these (now long since out of copyright) texts, it is crucial that digital humanists attend to how this labor is being—or failing to be—recognized in newer iterations of Old English literature in ways that perpetuate divisions of labor along gendered lines.

Book History, Gendered Labor, and the Digital Humanities

<4>My first goal in exploring the work of Gunning and Wilkinson is to add to the body of nineteenth-century book studies scholarship by enacting what Kate Ozment terms "feminist bibliography" as a corrective to the lack of gender-focused scholarship in the book history field. This essay builds on Ozment's work both by addressing the overlapping fields of gender and book history and by shedding light on the implications of gendered labor that render the work of individuals such as librarians and collectors outside the purview (and therefore credit) of traditional bibliographic work. Although Gunning and Wilkinson's work as translators of Old English (and as collectors of material for the *Oxford English Dictionary*) does not fit the definition of "bibliographic work," their stories are nonetheless useful for considering the role of women in textual—and therefore knowledge—creation.

<5>Medievalist scholar Jane Chance notes that women medievalists have "worked as scholars side by side without complaint with men who received much more renown for the equivalent work" and that in her anthology of biographies on women medievalists, "It is the voice of the woman medievalists that we long to capture"

(xxx). M. J. Toswell has also discussed the overlooked impact of Gunning and Wilkinson and other women "whose scholarship was undervalued or ignored in the field of Middle English studies" (Toswell 2).(2) Toswell's description of the relationship between Skeat, his scholarship, and those who worked for him as that akin to the work of an *atelier*—"a studio in which a master painter leads a team of apprentices, assistants paid and unpaid, and other artists in the creation and completion of many works of art"—is useful for understanding the role played by Gunning and Wilkinson (13). This essay's second goal involves building on the work of Chance and Toswell, using the specific research they provide on women medievalists, with the aim of "capturing voices," while also looking at Gunning and Wilkinson and the phenomenon they represent through the lens of book studies and literary culture, rather than on medieval scholarship specifically.

<6>This essay's third goal is to draw on current conversations happening in the field of digital humanities about issues of precarity, invisibility, and lack of compensation around labor that often undergirds the growing body of digital scholarship. Shawna Ross and Andrew Pilsch's 2019 monograph *Humans at Work in the Digital Age* is a particularly relevant insertion into this conversation as it relates to Skeat's associates because of their emphasis on how humanistic modes of enquiry can resist the tendency to subsume all digital labor into an impersonal mass:

> Carefully describing, categorizing, and analyzing these diverse practices reveal the wide scope and variety of the forms of human digital labor, even when only its textual forms are under investigation. By focusing on cultures of labor as they have been practiced throughout the history of digital textuality and across a variety of institutions, this volume is intended as a rejoinder to convergent tendencies in the way we account for digital labor. (2)

Pilsch and Ross's emphasis on avoiding a depersonalization of invisible labor is relevant to this analysis of Gunning and Wilkinson because sweeping all clerical, service-oriented labor under one umbrella term, such as "invisible labor," risks maintaining the lack of personalization and specificity that render such individuals invisible in the first place. Thus my aim in contextualizing the specific work of Old English translation done by Gunning and Wilkinson is to add to a body of work that personalizes the invisible, impersonal, and easily generalized.

<7>Concerns about digital labor—that which is done to digitize texts, specifically—have also been addressed by Yoonhee Lee, who characterizes digital labor as an exploited and invisible form of knowledge work, which includes "software engineers who design digital collection platforms and systems, librarians and

archivists who coordinate and interpret projects, to the scanners and technicians who process and transform digital surrogates" (Lee). Lee situates this invisible knowledge work in the neoliberal capitalist system where such work is used for a myriad of further gains, such as "new knowledge products, which generate large investments" and to "increase the visibility and viability of knowledge organizations" (Lee). How Lee views exploited and invisible knowledge work as a building block for more lucrative institutional aims is akin to the way in which Gunning and Wilkinson's under-credited labor helps create the impact and reputation of their contemporaries and scholars of the future, as I will explore in more detail below.

Para-academic Labor and the Early English Text Society

<8>Throughout this essay, I employ the term "para-academic" to describe the type of work undertaken by Gunning and Wilkinson, and countless others—often women—whose identities remain obscured. Drawing on *para*'s Greek origins, meaning "near to," this phrase denotes a level of proximity to the official institutions of higher education or to the kind of labor undertaken at those institutions; yet often this proximity belies both formal and informal gatekeeping mechanisms that keep women, or those who perform coded-feminine labor, on the outside of formal academic status or membership. Ozment lists the historically gendered facets of library work that seems to typify the nature of para-academic labor undertaken by women: library work (especially that which is done in public libraries) was deemed appropriate for women because of its emphasis on service, and librarians received uneven payment and promotion between men and women librarians, and fewer educational credentials as compared with academic positions (167–68). Ozment summarizes, "These factors contribute to the gerrymandering of women's bibliographic labor away from the core of book history scholarship, despite their performance of much of the same labor in a different context" (167–68). The key phrase I wish to emphasize here is "much the same labor in a different context" as it points to the arbitrary nature of how and when credit is assigned—or how and when labor is considered "academic" or not—which is especially relevant to the labor of translation.

<9>The nature of the work of translation makes it especially typical of the kind of work around knowledge creation that fits with the concept of para-academic gendered labor. One reason for this is the historically complicated relationship between translation and professionalization. As Peter France notes, historically, literary translation has been undertaken for a variety of purposes, as a pastime for some and a livelihood for others, but even those not considered "professionals"

could earn money translating (98). The language skills necessary for translation could be gained through formal education, from a governess, from living abroad, or "through private study" (France 98). Thus, the field did provide opportunities to women who were not professionals but had command of the necessary languages.

<10>In their translation work for the EETS, Gunning and Wilkinson were part of a growing number of women translators across the nineteenth century whose status as peripheral to the author/text are deeply ingrained: "Notions of translation as derivative, imitative, subordinate and 'feminine' have persisted throughout the history of translation" (Martin 13). Hierarchies around labor exist not just in relation to the translator's "subordinate" relationship to the text but also within the field of translation itself. Susanne Stark points out that in the nineteenth century, "women were more likely to be employed on the translation of fiction, history, biography, or religious writing from French and German than on classical or Oriental texts" (125), or as Mirella Agorni describes it of the eighteenth century, men were translating works of more literary weight because of their access to training in classical languages, whereas women were limited to translating works in contemporary languages, "of a secondary literary value" (819). Given the nature of these hierarchies, then, it makes sense that Gunning and Wilkinson, as women, would be working with a language that, as I discuss below, was often self-taught, outside the purview of institutional attention, and certainly not considered in the same standing as the "classics."

<11>The organization for which Skeat, Gunning, and Wilkinson translated Old English—The Early English Text Society—was not founded with any relationship to an institute of higher education; in fact, the EETS itself and all the labor that went into it—not just that undertaken by women such as Gunning and Wilkinson—are an example of a para-academic endeavor. The EETS's founding in 1864 by Frederick J. Furnivall occurred in an era when philology was only beginning to take hold as a matter of academic study. By editing, translating, and publishing Old and Middle English texts, Furnivall's goal was to "make significant to modern Englishmen and Englishwomen the great value of 'the story and thought' of their forefathers," although another crucial impetus for the EETS's founding was the "urgent need for materials" for the emerging *New English Dictionary*—a project on which Gunning and Wilkinson also worked which would later become the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Benzie 117). Prior to the founding of the EETS, these kinds of texts would only have been available to an elite, select few who belonged to printing societies such as the Roxburghe Club (Singleton 90–91). Singleton attributes to EETS (along with the Chaucer Society) credit for publishing "almost the entire Middle English canon as we know it today" (91). Jo McMurtry situates the role of

the EETS in nineteenth-century culture as it relates to moving a Medieval English manuscript beyond the hands of a single collector:

> What was needed was a means to get the manuscript into print—accurately transcribed, provided with notes and glossary—and into the hands of those readers who were already interested in early English or who could be expected to become so. The solution was typically Victorian. If in the eighteenth century learning was further mainly by individuals, and in the twentieth century mainly by universities, the favorite agency in the nineteenth century, highly functional and often highly successful, was the 'learned society.' (17)

Returning to my earlier characterization of the EETS as a para-academic organization, this relationship to the academy can be seen in how the society "relied upon a network of scholars and amateurs," with Skeat as a Cambridge professor being one such scholar (Cowan 230). But in addition to the institutionally affiliated scholars among its ranks, the EETS also "relied upon its members' access to the institutions that held the books they were editing; without the British Museum reading room or the Oxford and especially Cambridge connections, the largely amateur EETS would have been on the outside looking in" (Cowan 230). The term para-academic applies not just to the connections to higher education at the time of its founding, but also in its legacy of producing "mid-brown volumes" with which "Anyone who reads Old and Middle English literary texts will be familiar" (*The Early English Text Society*). Although still without paid staff or institutional affiliation, the EETS has come far "from its amateur roots, evoking an organization for which textual scholarship has become more rigorous and scientific" with editors who are "all professionals" (Cowan 230–31).

<12>Skeat's amateur status as an Old English scholar, though, did not set him apart as an editor for the EETS; in fact, the EETS's founding occurred at a time when the study of English literature and languages had not yet been professionalized: "In these circumstances, Early English was known to, and its study pursued and promulgated by, a small group of (mostly untrained, amateur) enthusiasts; the educational establishment in the nineteenth century provided few opportunities for widening this circle of interest" (Singleton 111). Thus, Singleton points out, much of the work done in translating and editing for the EETS's publications were carried out by "a large number of volunteers" and that "As labour was in short supply, the only qualifications necessary appear to have been enthusiasm for the subject, available time, and a willingness to work" (118, 114). From this, we can surmise that Gunning and Wilkinson's labor on Skeat's editions of *Lives of the Saints, The Wars of Alexander,* and *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* would have been

welcome as part of an effort in which funding and staffing were low and professional qualifications were not required. At a time when formal education in Old English or in lexicography was not accessible in most institutions (to which women would not have had access anyway), women would have had an entry point with their own potentially home-grown or self-taught knowledge.

Who were Miss Gunning and Miss Wilkinson?

<13>The “Miss Gunning of Cambridge and Miss Wilkinson formerly of Dorking” credited by Skeat have been identified by Lindsay Rose Russell as Miss J. E. (likely Isabel) Wilkinson and Miss Catherine Gunning. Russell names these women, along with more than 250 others, as a mostly voluntary workforce for the *Oxford English Dictionary* during the late nineteenth century (Russell 153, 155, 156). We can discern that these are the same Miss Gunning and Miss Wilkinson that Skeat credits because of their apparent intellectual network: J. E. Wilkinson, according to Russell, “compiled the Middle English glossary in Skeat’s (1877) *Chaucer*, and she worked with Gunning to revise and expand it for his *Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*” (158). And given that James Murray, editor of the *OED*, was involved with the EETS, it is clear that there was an overlapping network of scholars and laborers between the EETS and the *OED*—both labor-intensive projects of knowledge creation, for which little formal training existed and both drawing upon the same English philological skill sets.

<14>The lack of information on Gunning and Wilkinson makes it difficult to discern how they came to be connected with Skeat’s projects; although since both women are mentioned in connection to Cambridge, which is where Skeat lived and worked for many years, it seems likely that Cambridge—the city if not the university—was a source of connection. This was an especially important era for the relationship between women and Cambridge University as the first women’s colleges of Cambridge, Girton and Newnham, were founded in 1869 and 1871 respectively. Skeat lectured to Cambridge’s new women students with great success; for example, in personal correspondence, Henry Sidgwick describes Skeat as having “devoted time and trouble to the Higher Education of Women,” teaching English literature by Chaucer, Shakespeare, and others to increasingly more numerous classes of women (qtd. in McMurtry 156). Yet, despite his teaching women, Skeat resisted granting women membership to Cambridge, claiming in 1887 that “If given the BA, they must next have the MA” and would expect other privileges such as voting rights, concluding, “I am entirely opposed to the admission of women to ‘privileges’ of this character. And I honestly believe they are better off as they are” (qtd. in Tullberg 73). Ironically, Skeat specifically recoils at expanded library access for women,

stating that "Even the BA degree would enable them to take 5 books at a time out of the University Library on a ticket countersigned by 'their tutor'" (qtd. in McWilliams Tullberg 73). It seems that Skeat at this time saw unlimited book access for women as problematic, but in this same decade he did not resist their help in editing the ones on which he would build his reputation.

<15>Skeat's misogynist concerns about women's education, however, does not preclude the possibility that a connection to Gunning and/or Wilkinson was made through his English literature and Anglo-Saxon lectures (Tullberg 73; McMurtry 156). While I have not been able to narrow down the precise biographical details of Gunning, it is possible that she is related to Henry Gunning, born in Cambridgeshire in 1768, eventually becoming an esquire bedell of the university (*DNB* 787). Henry Gunning maintained "an official connection with the university for more than sixty-five years," and "was highly esteemed for his … readiness to communicate his extensive knowledge respecting academic ceremonies and privileges" (*DNB* 787). Before his 1854 death, he wrote *Reminiscences of the University, Town, and County of Cambridgefrom the Year 1780.* Henry Gunning and his wife had three sons; given his long-standing presence in Cambridge and intimate connection with the university, it seems possible, based on his age, that a niece or granddaughter could be the Catherine Gunning to which Skeat refers. Certainly, such a close familial connection to the school would explain how Catherine Gunning became connected with Skeat's work, although Skeat did not become a fellow of Cambridge until six years after Henry Gunning's death, so they were not Cambridge contemporaries.

<16>The identity of Wilkinson poses a similar conundrum. An amateur genealogy site identifies an Isabella Edith Wilkinson born in 1841 in Kirk Ella, Yorkshire, to Fewster and Sarah Wilkinson (Jones). Assuming this is the same Wilkinson to which Skeat refers, it is possible her connection to Skeat arose through a family connection to Sir Henry Somerville Boynton, 11th baronet who, according to *Debrett's Peerage*, was a nephew of Charles and Mary Griffith. Mary Griffith, according to *Debrett's*, is the daughter of Fewster Wilkinson; per Jane's Genealogy Pages, Mary, born in 1829, is also the name of the eldest sister of Isabella Edith and daughter of Fewster (*Debrett's Peerage, Baronetage, Knightage and Companionage* 53). Both Sir Henry Somerville Boynton and his uncle, Reverend Griffith (1815), were educated at Cambridge, which points to a possible connection for Isabella Edith; however, the Boynton's family status as members of the peerage makes their Cambridge education unsurprising and perhaps only a coincidental connection. There are also mentions of several male scholars with the last name Wilkinson in the Cambridge College Calendar of 1892, such as a Reverend Edward Abercrombie Wilkinson who was a member of Cambridge's Trinity College in 1860

or Reverend Michael Marlow Umfreville Wilkinson of the same college in 1855 who was an examiner for the mathematical triposes in 1865 (Cambridge 203).

<17>Another potential point of connection is EETS founder F. J. Furnivall, who also played a major role in the creation of the *OED*; as a philologist and founder of several literary societies, he was closely connected to Skeat and other philologists of the period. Of his time in charge of the early stages of the *OED*, Benzie states that "Furnivall brought to his new job as chief editor a rare ability to persuade and even induce persons to undertake huge amounts of work without payment" (94). Perhaps it was this talent for recruitment that played a role in connecting Gunning and Wilkinson to the EETS and the *OED*. Ann Thompson chronicles a romantic relationship between Furnivall and Teena Rochfort Smith, a young woman who edited Shakespeare's *Hamlet* for the New Shakespere [sic] Society, another of the many literary clubs that Furnivall founded (125). Thompson states that, in his older years, Furnivall "was famous for his social work with girls and women," starting a sculling club for working-class girls in 1896 based on his staunch opposition to excluding women from "aquatic sport" (Thompson 137; Munro lxxix). A volume of memorials to Furnivall, written by his friends and published after his death, characterizes Furnivall as a "friend and champion of women," who campaigned for their admission to and equal status in higher education, although his belief that "the society of women" is "necessary to a man's refinement and happiness" points to a utilitarian perspective not inconsistent with his use of women's free labor (Munro xxvii–xxviii). Nonetheless, Furnivall's connections to and advocation for women in education may have been a source of connection between Skeat, Gunning, and Wilkinson.

<18>The experiences of other women medieval scholars during the late Victorian period can shed some light on the experiences of Gunning and Wilkinson, showing possible routes to their knowledge of Old English and to their connections with Skeat and the EETS. Mary Dockray-Miller describes the work of medievalist Mary Bateson who attended Girton College, Cambridge, after its opening in 1871, noting that while women could earn certificates at Girton but not actual degrees, "Mary Bateson, for all her scholarly achievement, was not actually Mary Bateson, B.A. or M.A. or Ph.D.—she is always and only 'Miss Mary Bateson'" (Chance 69). Thus we must consider the possibility that despite their lack of honorifics, Gunning and Wilkinson may have, like Mary Bateson, received Cambridge education in the 1870s or 1880s, before or during their work with Skeat. It is also possible that, similar to independent scholar Lina Eckenstein, born in 1857, lack of "constraints of professional training or departmental expectations" meant that she could explore a wide range of topics that interested her (Chance 57).

<19>Another persistent question is how these women came to learn Old English in the first place. Even for men or the few women who had access to higher education in the Victorian era, most universities were not teaching Old English language or literature. As pointed out above, Skeat was a self-taught Old English language and literature scholar, and in chronicling his journey to the subject matter, he noted that in his mid-nineteenth-century education, English literature was "only to be seriously regarded when in the privacy of our own homes during holidays," (ix–x) and that his exposure came through "scraps" of English literature provided by his teacher on which to practice his Greek and Latin translation skills (ix). His continued interest in English literature as an extracurricular activity throughout his education provides some insights into its translation being relegated to women. If English literature was "for the home," it would make sense for its translation to be domesticated also.

<20>Again, using the example of other women scholars can shed some light. Elizabeth Elstob, for instance, an eighteenth-century Old English scholar and the first person to author an Old English grammar "in the vernacular," learned Old English from her brother (Hughes 3). As adults, the orphaned Elstob and her Oxford-educated brother William lived together in London where they circulated among a network of "Oxford Saxonists," thus affording Elizabeth the chance to learn Old English (among other languages) from William, Oxford being one of few universities where the Old English language was studied (Hughes 6–8). While it cannot be assumed that Gunning and Wilkinson learned Old English in the same manner, it seems likely that learning a subject as specialized as Old English—and as limited to certain groups—would have required a college-educated male relative or acquaintance as a point of access to the language. The idea of family connection is reinforced by Mitchell's statement about early women librarians that when libraries of Boston and Harvard University "decided to hire women workers in the 1850s, they apparently did not need to look far for acceptable employees. Patronage and nepotism played a large role" (138). While clearly much still needs to be learned about these two women—and other women who have similarly completed underacknowledged work in intellectual circles—the fact that we are reduced to "educated guesses" about who they are is as telling as anything else; the lack of information on Gunning and Wilkinson speaks volumes on their status as necessary but overlooked members of the workforce around knowledge creation.

<21>To understand the stakes involved in the work of Gunning and Wilkinson, it is necessary to look briefly at how Skeat's prolific editing of Old English texts played a role in his own influence on the study of medieval literature specifically and the discipline of English literature more broadly. Of the EETS edition of *Ælfric's Lives of the Saints* on which Gunning and Wilkinson completed the bulk of the translating,

Michael Lapidge states that it, along with Skeat's work on the gospels, marks his "principle contribution to Old English studies," and says, at the time of writing in 2002, that Skeat's "Herculean" undertaking of editing these texts "has not been superseded … more than a century after its first appearance" (42). Given that Gunning and Wilkinson did much of the translating for the *Lives of the Saints*, which was a defining work in Skeat's long career, it becomes especially noteworthy to read the following quote from Lapidge: "There is no doubt that Skeat was one of the great pioneers in the editing of Middle English texts" (40), although Lapidge does acknowledge the work of Gunning and Wilkinson on Ælfic's text in a footnote (42n12). Skeat's impact was not just in the work he conducted for the EETS, though. In his work on Chaucer for Clarendon Press, he altered the trajectory of Chaucerian scholarship, ushing in "the beginning of its Modern Age," through the level of authority and completeness that Skeat's Chaucer editions contained—characteristics that prior versions had lacked (Edwards 171). Gunning and Wilkinson, Skeat says, assisted with the glossary for this work. While this labor is not as skilled as that of translation, their role's minimal acknowledgement speaks to the valuing of kinds of labor around para-academic work.

<22>In addition to making available many Old English texts, Skeat also influenced the trajectory of English literature's adoption as a discipline at Cambridge; according to Jo McMurtry, "it was with Walter William Skeat that the study of English language and literature at least became an official, recognized academic pursuit at Cambridge" (3). Beginning in 1878 (just three years before the publication of the EETS's *Ælfric's Lives of the Saints*), Skeat was appointed the first Elrington and Bosworth Chair of Anglo-Saxon at Cambridge, which, dissimilar to Oxford, did not previously have a professor of the Anglo-Saxon language and would therefore more quickly welcome the idea of incorporating the study of English literature into that of language (McMurtry 153). The importance of studying Old English literature alongside its language is a topic on which Skeat was passionate. Even before this appointment, Skeat was recruiting Cambridge undergraduates into the study of Anglo-Saxon literature and language, through holding lectures, setting English examinations himself (rather than waiting for the university of college to do so), and by self-funding a prize for best examination in English language and literature (McMurtry 149). All of these efforts, McMurtry points out, were "an ingenious method for getting an academic study under way in the guise of an extracurricular hobby and is similar to the strategy used by the E.E.T.S at about the same time" (149). The reason why Skeet's work as the Elrington and Bosworth Chair matters to the invisible labor of Gunning and Wilkinson is that, while undertaking the work of advancing his career and the study of English language and literature, he was assisted by women, whose "'privileges'," as I have pointed out above, he was "entirely

©*Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*, Edited by Stacey Floyd and Melissa Purdue

opposed" to. As competent translators of Old English Gunning and Wilkinson would have developed a similar philological skill set to that of Skeat and, as a result, a great familiarity with Old English literature. And yet, as Skeat was ascending disciplinary heights at Cambridge through his work on Old English, Gunning and Wilkinson, despite their linguistic competence, remain marginalized figures in the history of English language and literature.

<23>My final point on what is at stake in the invisible work of Gunning and Wilkinson relates to their role in the literary culture of the late nineteenth century. Stark notes that for women who wished to be engaged in the literary sphere and yet were limited from participating in more public forms of dialogue, such as authorship, translation afforded women the chance to use their linguistic abilities while participating behind-the-scenes in literary endeavors (126). For some women, translation was a starting place. George Eliot, for instance, began her own literary career translating German texts, but eventually found novel-writing a more "adequate way to express her ideas" (127). For Gunning and Wilkinson, then, without more information on their identities or knowledge of their lives, we have no way of knowing if they had ambitions toward authorship or frustrated desires to express their ideas in ways more overt than translation.

Conclusion: Tangible yet Intangible

<24>My earlier mention of what gets counted as academic work is relevant to how scholars treat going forward the identities of women such as Gunning and Wilkinson, an issue made more prescient by the advent of digital humanities and consequent digitization of many of the texts with which societies such as the EETS dealt. For translators, specifically, issues of how to credit their work are made more complex by the digitization process. The way we as audiences and scholars interact with the translator is often directly related to their gender: "Women rarely provided their translations with introductions or prefaces, and when they did so, they did it for reasons other than the celebration of a highly acclaimed literary tradition" (Agorni 820). Thus, even the role of the translator within the text is influenced by the translator's gender, and these are factors that need to be considered when creating digital iterations of translated work—or any work para-academic work, for that matter—where this kind of work is obscured in original versions of literary works, such as Gunning and Wilkinson's labor on the glossary of Skeat's Chaucer edition.

<25>To understand the ramifications of identifying and crediting workers such as Gunning and Wilkinson in the age of digital humanities, I turn to my own experience as an intern with *Johnson's Dictionary Online*, an NEH-funded site, supported by

the Center for Humanities and Digital Research at the University of Central Florida, which provides an open-access searchable edition of Samuel Johnson's famed eighteenth-century dictionary. One of the many features this site plans to include is identification of and (where possible) links to open-access versions of the hundreds of texts from which Johnson and his six amanuenses selected the nearly 120,000 quotes used in the *Dictionary of The English Language*, along with links to the Wikipedia pages of the quoted authors. But similar to any project in which non-standardized data is made to fit in to the standardized tagging system of XML, defining the concept of "author" becomes troublesome when the person to whom Johnson attributed a quote is actually the translator of that text, not the author. An example of this includes crediting quotes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as translated by Joseph Addison and in Homer's *Odyssey* as translated by Alexander Pope. In a *Metamorphoses* quote used for the definition of the word "Aboard," Johnson credits "Addison's Ovid's Metamorphoses, b. iii.," but in the word "Commutual," Johnson credits Pope's translation of Homer's *Odyssey*, with no mention of Homer ("aboard, adv"; "commutual, adj"). This inconsistent form of crediting the authors versus the translators of specific works is not unusual for Johnson, for whom present-day expectations of standardized attribution did not apply. For the twenty-first-century digital humanities scholar, then, the dilemma becomes how to tag the translators versus the authors in these instances in the dictionary's XML in a way that is faithful to Johnson's text while also being accurate to the roles these individuals played. This matters not just because of a moral impetus to "give credit where credit is due," but also in more tangible ways, the tagging scheme has implications for how users of *Johnson's Dictionary Online* interact with the dictionary itself. Tagging someone as "author" means that when users search for Pope's name using the search term "author," works that were translated by Pope will appear if he has been tagged as such. Also, if Pope is assigned authorship, his, rather than Homer's, Wikipedia page will be linked. From the outside, someone might say that the simple solution is to only credit authors as authors, not translators; however, when Johnsons himself has credited the translator rather than or in addition to the author or has quoted the translator's prefatory material, complications arise over fidelity to Johnson's text versus modern-day attribution conventions.

<26>The fact that this dilemma even exists, though, does, in many respects, go back to the issue of the translator's gender. Samuel Johnson *did* credit the translators of the works he cited, in part because those translators often wrote prefatory material to their editions from which Johnson quoted, inserting their own voices in ways that make the reader aware of their presence. And as translators who also had broad literary reputations, individuals such as Pope and Addison already have Wikipedia pages to which we can provide the links for dictionary readers. We see their "digital

imprint" in ways that are lacking for women translators whose work has been overlooked.

<27>The conundrum of Johnson's translators serves as an example of the ways that assigning credit for someone's work has implications beyond the moment of the text. For Gunning and Wilkinson to be overlooked as contributors to Skeat's body of scholarship is not just a matter of recognizing their collaborations as old English scholars and their impacts on medieval texts. But as these texts circulate in other forms, more opportunities arise to give credit where credit is due—or opportunities to fail to do so in ways that perpetuate the notion of scholarly work as a solitary (usually white male) endeavor. In addition to these quantifiable ways of attributing credit, there are instances where the potential impact of Skeat, Gunning, and Wilkinson's work played a role in the development of Old English studies in less tangible ways. In looking to projects such as *The Digital Ælfric*, the *Piers Plowman Electronic Archive*, and Harvard University's *Geoffrey Chaucer Website*, the following questions arise: how were these projects aided by the impact of the EETS's work in circulating these texts, and how were they potentially helped by the scholars who produced these sites having access to previous translations, such as those done by Gunning and Wilkinson?

<28>What is ultimately at stake here goes beyond the obscured identities of Gunning and Wilkinson, even beyond the issue of how labor is credited along gendered lines—although that is clearly significant. Without proper attribution to those individuals who do the unseen, undervalued, "service oriented," para-academic labor on which all scholarship rests, digital or otherwise, we continue to perpetuate the notion that scholarship and authorship are themselves solitary endeavors and the only academic work worth ascribing credit. Through continuing conversations in the digital humanities about how to improve attributional practices and how to make visible invisible labor, we have an opportunity to begin deconstructing the notion that the Walter William Skeats of the academy achieved their accomplishments on their own.

Notes

(1)I am grateful to Dr Stephen Hopkins for directing me to this topic and his guidance in the initial version of this paper.(^)

(2)My thanks to Dr. M. J. Toswell for sharing her manuscript with me and assisting in the direction of my research.(^)

Works Cited

Agorni, Mirella. "A Marginal(Ized) Perspective on Translation History: Women and Translation in the Eighteenth Century." *Meta* 50, no. 3, 2 November, 2005, pp. 817–30.

"aboard, adv." *A Dictionary of the English Language*, by Samuel Johnson. 1755, https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/1755/aboard_adv

Ælfric (Abbot of Eynsham). *Ælfric's Lives of Saints: Being a Set of Sermons on Saints' Days Formerly Observed by the English Church*. Translated by W.W. Skeat, Catherine Gunning, and Isabella Edith Wilkinson, Early English Text Society, 1881.

Benzie, William. *Dr. F.J. Furnivall, Victorian Scholar Adventurer.* Pilgrim Books, 1983.

Cambridge, University of. *The Cambridge University Calendar*. 1892.

Chance, Jane. "Introduction." In *Women Medievalists and the Academy, Two Volumes*. Edited by Chance. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018, pp. xxiii–xxxvii.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer: Notes to the Canterbury Tales*. Translated by W. W. Skeat, Clarendon Press, 1894.

Cowan, Yuri. "10. Reading Material Bibliography and Digital Editions." *Editors, Scholars, and the Social Text*, edited by Darcy Cullen, University of Toronto Press, 2012, pp. 223–38.

"commutual, adj." *A Dictionary of the English Language*, by Samuel Johnson. 1755, https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/1755/commutual_adj..

Debrett's Peerage, Baronetage, Knightage and Titles of Courtesy. Dean & Son, 1878, https://www.google.com/books/edition/Debrett_s_Peerage_Baronetage_Knightage_a/RQ82AQA AMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0 .

Edwards, A. S. G. "9. Walter Skeat (1835–1912)." *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition*. Edited by Paul G. Ruggiers. Pilgrim Books, 1984, pp. 171–89.

France, Peter. "Amateurs and Enthusiasts." *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English, Volume 4: 1790–1900.* Edited by Peter France and Kenneth Haynes. Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 98–104.

"Gunning, Henry (1768–1854)." *Dictionary of National Biography*. Edited by Lawrence Goldman. Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 787–88.

Hughes, Shaun F.D. "Elizabeth Elstob (1683–1756) and the Limits of Women's Agency in Early- Eighteenth-Century England." In *Women Medievalists and the Academy: Volume 2*. Edited by Jane Chance, Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005, pp. 3–24.

Jones, Jane. "Person Page 108." *Jane's Genealogy Pages.* Jane Jones, 2005, http://freepages.rootsweb.com/~janej/genealogy/Jane/Jane's%20Genealogy%20Pages-o/p108.htm#i7810.

Lapidge, Michael. *Interpreters of Early Medieval Britain*. British Academy, 2002.

Lee, Yoonhee. "Towards Universal Access to Knowledge: The Invisible Labor of Digitizing." *Progressive Librarian*, no. 47, Winter 2019/2020, pp. 118–27.

McMurtry, Jo. *English Language, English Literature: The Creation of an Academic Discipline*. Archon Books, 1985.

Mitchell, Barbara. 2007. "Boston Library Catalogues, 1850–1875: Female Labor and Technological Change." In *Institutions of Reading: The Social Life of Libraries in the United States*. Edited by Thomas Augst and Kenneth Carpenter, pp. 119–147. University of Massachusetts Press.

Martin, Alison E. "The Voice of Nature: British Women Translating Botany in the Early Nineteenth Century." In *Translating Women*. Edited by Luise von Flotow. University of Ottawa Press, 2011, pp. 11–36.

Munro, John. "Biography." *Frederick James Furnivall: A Volume of Personal Record*. Oxford University Press, 1911, https://www.google.com/books/edition/Frederick_James_Furnivall/5RFk4udFhUcC?hl=en&gbpv=0.

Murray, Katherine Maud Elisabeth. *Caught in the Web of Words: James A.H. Murray and the Oxford English Dictionary*. Yale University Press, 2001.

Ozment, Kate. “Rationale for Feminist Bibliography.” *Textual Cultures*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2020, pp. 149–78.

Ross, Shawna, and Andrew Pilsch, editors. *Humans at Work in the Digital Age: Forms of Digital Textual Labor*. Routledge, 2019.

Russell, Lindsay Rose. *Women and Dictionary-Making: Gender, Genre, and English Language Lexicography*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Skeat, Walter William. *A Student's Pastime: Being a select Series of Articles Reprinted from "Notes and Queries."* Clarendon Press, 1896, www.google.com/books/edition/A_Student_s_Pastime/yioPAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1

*"*Skeat, Walter William*." Dictionary of National Biography*. Edited by Lawrence Goldman. Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 817–18.

Singleton, Antony. “The Early English Text Society in the Nineteenth Century: An Organizational History.” *The Review of English Stud*ies, vol. 56, no. 223, 2005, pp. 90–118.

Stark, Susanne. “Women.” *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English, Volume 4: 1790–1900.* Edited by Peter France and Kenneth Haynes. Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 125–31.

“The Early English Text Society List of Publications 2021.” *Early English Text Society*, https://users.ox.ac.uk/~eets/index.html.

Thompson, Ann. “Teena Rochfort Smith, Frederick Furnivall, and the New Shakspere Society's Four-Text Edition of Hamlet.” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 49, no. 2, 1998, pp. 125–39.

Toswell, M. J. “The Lost Victorian Women of Old English Studies.” Manuscript of M.J. Toswell. Forthcoming in *Feminist Approaches to Early Medieval English Studies.*

Tullberg, Rita McWilliams. *Women at Cambridge*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.

©*Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*, Edited by Stacey Floyd and Melissa Purdue