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OBITUARY

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Patricia Elizabeth Easterling née Fairfax (a great name from the English Revolution!) was born in 1934 in Blackburn, Lancashire (of later, Beatles fame), where she attended what was then the Blackburn Grammar School for Girls before coming up to Newnham College, Cambridge, to read for the Classical Tripos in 1952. Women then made up just 10 per cent of the undergraduate body in the University as a whole. It was a mere four years earlier, in 1948, that the University had finally granted women a full and proper degree. Like eminent journalist and broadcaster Baroness (Joan) Bakewell, also from the northwest of England, and just one year ahead of her at Newnham, Pat pretty much lost her local accent after coming to study in Cambridge. (Just one trace remained to my ear – 'one' pronounced something more like 'wann', or so it sounded to me, an unreconstructed London-born-and-bred southerner.) As a Newnham undergraduate Pat had the great good fortune to be taught by Roman historian and epigrapher supreme Joyce Reynolds (1924–2019), a formidable scholar and redoubtable personality and mentor.

Pat enjoyed a seven-year stint as Professor of Greek at University College London (1987–1994), where she made a tremendous difference to the entire research and teaching culture, as well as fostering links especially with King's London and the Institute of Classical Studies. Otherwise, almost the whole of Pat's glowingly successful career as a teacher, administrator and path-breaking research scholar was spent at Cambridge, where she graced us and the University as a whole by becoming its first female Regius Professor of Greek in 1994 (a post endowed in 1540). It was a declaration of profoundly personal intent that, rather than moving to become a Fellow of Trinity College, as was her Regial right, she decided to remain a Fellow of her beloved Newnham (though in all honesty it must be added that her late philosopher-administrator husband John, sometime Cambridge University Draftsman, held a Fellowship at Trinity). If I may be permitted to intrude with a personal note: Pat was my academic fairy godmother, literally holding my hand in Senate House when I a *xenos metoikos* arrived in Cambridge in 1979 as a Lecturer, so that my Oxford DPhil could be magically transubstantiated into a Cambridge PhD for obligatory teaching purposes.

Pat received many honours. She was elected President of the Classical Association in 1989, served as President of our Society between 1996 and 1999 (and Vice-President thereafter, serving also for many years on the *JHS* Editorial Committee), and was elected an Honorary Fellow of UCL in 1997 and a Fellow of the British Academy in 1998. Honorary doctorates were bestowed upon her in this country by Royal Holloway University of London and by the University of Bristol. Abroad, she was honoured likewise by Sweden's University of Uppsala, and she gained especial recognition in Greece, where honorary doctorates were granted her by the universities of Ioannina and Athens. The most generous tribute by the University of Athens' Department of Classics (NKUA) noted that

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among her scholarly output were three edited or co-edited volumes that have become reference works. A public tribute was issued also by the Faculty of Philology of the University of Thessaloniki. I quote from its Resolution of Condolence: 'She will be remembered as a kind and perceptive teacher, an encouraging and generous mentor, and a stimulating interlocutor by generations of scholars.'

Pat was, first and foremost, I'd say, a devoted teacher and wise counsellor to many of all generations and ages. But she was also a palmary scholar. As such, she received two *Festschriften*, the first (published by the Society in 2001) comprising essays by 13 of her recent students edited by Felix Budelmann and Pantelis Michelakis and introduced by Oxford's Professor Oliver Taplin, the second (2009) essays by colleagues including former students edited by Edith Hall and Simon Goldhill. Both have 'tragedy' or 'tragic' in their title, and it was to the illumination of especially Sophoclean tragedy that Pat's greatest attention was devoted to remarkably illuminating effect. One totally credible judgement placed her Sophoclean criticism in a luminous tradition of scholars that included Reinhardt, Kitto, Bowra, Whitman, Knox and – the scholar about whom she would reminisce most fondly – (Reg) Winnington-Ingram. Most appropriately, when Felix Budelmann (Groningen) and Eveline Krummen (Graz) came to place us all further in Pat's debt by publishing with Cambridge University Press (of which she was a Syndic between 1995 and 2002) 66 of her always accessibly written essays and other contributions as *Studies in Greek Literature* (published only in March 2026), the title chosen for the first of the two volumes was simply *Greek Tragedy*.

One of the studies reprinted in Volume 2 is modestly entitled 'Sophocles: the first thousand years'. It sits with 27 others including 'The survival of Greek', her 1987/8 Inaugural Lecture as UCL's Professor of Greek (ch. 27). At UCL she was also honoured to deliver the Inaugural A.E. Housman Lecture, entitled 'Ancient plays for modern minds', in 2005. Volume 2 is divided into five parts: 'The *Iliad* and Early Greek Literature'; 'Actors'; 'Manuscripts and Transmission'; 'Scholia', which includes the essay 'The chorus in Greek tragedy according to the ancient commentaries' (2006, translated from the French by Laura Slatkin, ch. 14); and, the longest, 'Reception and history of scholarship'. Invidiously, I single out, besides her UCL Inaugural, her 'The early years of the Cambridge Greek Play: 1882–1912' (ch. 24), to be read with 'Greek plays at Cambridge', published in 1984 in a volume arising from a 1981 colloquium held at the European Cultural Centre, Delphi (founded by the Greek Parliament, 1977). Together with John, Pat was for many years a stalwart in the promotion and administration of the Cambridge Greek Play, an institution now in its 15th decade. She had herself acted in two earlier Plays (*Agamemnon* 1953, *Bacchae* 1956), and in 1974 co-directed Euripides' *Medea* and in 1977 Sophocles' *Electra*. This is also the place to record with immense gratitude that Pat was from 1998 the inaugural Chair of the Management Committee of the Cambridge Greek Lexicon project, which was brought to published fruition in 2021 largely thanks to the far-beyond-duty-call endeavours of James Diggle.

For many years after her compulsory retirement from the Cambridge Regius Chair in 2001, Pat worked on an edition of Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*; as Budelmann and Krummen rightly observe (volume 1, p. 7), 'Taken as a corpus, PE's writing about *Oedipus at Colonus* constitutes a substantive treatment of the play that would make for an authoritative monograph.' One constituent of that corpus is her article (*Studies* volume 1, ch. 31) originally published in French in 1993 and translated here by Fiona Macintosh as '*Oedipus at Colonus*: characters and reception'. Her edition of the *OC* would be her second Sophoclean edition after her *Trachiniae* of 1982. The latter was published as one of the Cambridge Press' Greek and Latin Classics, known informally and fondly as the 'Green & Yellow' series, of which she with Latinist Kennedy Professor E.J. (Ted) Kenney of Peterhouse was the founding co-editor. (The series, beautifully celebrated by Roman Society President Roy Gibson in 2021, was inaugurated in 1970 with the publication of T.B.L. Webster's edition of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*; it now boasts over 120 volumes, a recent one being *Odyssey* Book 11, the Nekuia, co-edited by

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Emeritus Regius Greek Professor Richard Hunter with Professor Rebecca Lämmle, formerly of Newnham, now of Pembroke College.)

When Pat's death was announced, privately by her son Tom and then publicly, tributes simply poured in from all over the world, aided by one of digital media's positive uses and functions. I personally received many grieving, tribute-laden email messages. As one former student and colleague of Pat wrote to me privately, there was no one with more integrity or humility or decency. The writer added that she was a very good friend to the UK's Open University Classics department – as external examiner at undergraduate and graduate levels, as a supporter of their research conferences, as a board member of *New Voices*, as a mentor, role model and so much else. That is just one, perfectly illustrative and representative instance. Former pupil Mary Beard was able to add a very special radio tribute that praised Pat's critical acumen and how Classics in Pat's view 'taught people to read difficult things', as well as her strong support for the teaching of classical civilization in addition to study of the original languages. Her work with secondary school teachers deserves special mention, especially her considerable support for, and assistance given to, the formation and development of Classical Civilization A-Level courses.

The world – not only the world of Hellenic studies, by any means, though we feel her loss the most keenly – is a far poorer place without Pat's gentle humanity, moral wisdom, personal forbearance, supportive collegiality and peerless scholarship. Thanks to the well-merited devotion of above all her former students, both doctoral and undergraduate, her rich legacy will live on. Οὐκ ἀπώλετο, ἀλλὰ προελήλυθεν.

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