Language accepts letters from readers that briefly and succinctly respond to or comment upon either material published previously in the journal or issues deemed of importance to the field. The editor reserves the right to edit letters as needed. Brief replies from relevant parties are included as warranted.

Correction to the Tlingit names in my article

October 23, 2014

To the Editor:

In the acknowledgments section of my article from the previous issue ('Distributive numerals and distance distributivity in Tlingit (and beyond)', *Language* 90.3.562–606, 2014), the Tlingit names borne by Helen Sarabia and Dick Dauenhauer were unfortunately misspelled. Helen's name was Kaachkoo.aakw (not 'Káachku.aakw'), and Dick's name was Xwaayeenák (not 'Xwaayeenák'). I apologize to their families and clans for this oversight on my part.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge that a few weeks prior to the publication of that article, Dick Dauenhauer passed away. This is a tremendous loss to many, including those working to document and revitalize the Tlingit language. For more information about Dick and the priceless work done by him and his surviving wife Nora, I recommend the beautiful obituaries published in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Juneau Empire* (available online).

I would also like to add Dick's name to the list of those to whose memory my article is dedicated.

Seth Cable
[scable@linguist.umass.edu]

Gladstone and ancient Greek color vision

January 12, 2014

To the Editor:

In his review of *The semantics of colour: A historical approach*, by Carole Biggam (*Language* 89.4.951–53, 2013), Don Dedrick asserts, as a fact, that the nineteenth-century British statesman William Ewart Gladstone held 'that the ancient Greeks could not see certain colors based on an analysis of their color words' (p. 952). That is not true (as I pointed out more than thirty years ago in *Schools of linguistics* (Hutchinson, 1980, p. 249)), but, like the innumerable Eskimo words for snow (Geoffrey Pullum, *The great Eskimo vocabulary hoax*, University of Chicago Press, 1991), this seems to be one of those linguistic myths that refuses to die. The same misinterpretation of Gladstone was the central focus of a widely read recent book by Guy Deutscher (*Through the looking glass*, Arrow Books, 2011), and similar claims about Gladstone thinking the Homeric Greeks were color-blind have been expressed very frequently ever since Gladstone published on the vocabulary of Homer.

In reality, Gladstone explicitly stated that he did not believe there was any defect in ancient Greeks' visual apparatus; see for example *Studies on Homer and the Homeric age*, vol. 3, Oxford University Press, 1858, pp. 483–84. Far from being unreasonable (as the color-blindness idea would have been), Gladstone's analyses of Homeric color-terms and certain other aspects of Homer's vocabulary were a remarkable anticipation of themes that are commonly taken to be original insights of twentieth-century linguistics. I have analyzed the history and nature of this misunderstanding in detail elsewhere ('Gladstone as linguist', *Journal of Literary Semantics* 42.1.1–29, 2013; Sampson and Anna Babarczy, *Grammar without grammaticality*, De Gruyter Mouton, 2014, pp. 269–95). It is a striking illustration of the principle that, in order to succeed, novel ideas require not only an individual to formulate them but also an audience suitably prepared to receive them.

Geoffrey Sampson
[tsampsgr@unisa.ac.za]

Printed with the permission of Seth Cable and of Geoffrey Sampson. © 2014.

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2014.0093 Published online by Cambridge University Press