

Letters from E. M. Edmonds to Nikolaos G. Politis

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This article presents the letters sent by the late nineteenth-century English writer Elizabeth Mayhew Edmonds to the Greek folklorist Nikolaos G. Politis. While a preoccupation with folklore and ethnology predisposed the Victorian public to take a narrow view of Greek society, Edmonds's interest in both vernacular culture and the literary, social and political life of modern Greece enriched the complex cultural exchange that developed between European (Neo)Hellenists and Greek scholars. This European-wide discourse promoted modern Greece as an autonomous subject of study, worthy of intellectual pursuit.

Keywords: E. M. Edmonds; N. G. Politis; cultural mediation of modern Greece; folklore; philhellenism; (Neo)Hellenists

This interesting volume is a sign of the times. The claims of the modern Greek language are becoming more generally acknowledged. The Rustic Muse finds more suitors day by day. The study of folk-lore attracts an ever-widening circle of scholars.¹

The centrality of Greek antiquity in the formation of Victorian culture is well attested and extensively studied. The British perception of modern Greece during the same period has not been so thoroughly studied. Nevertheless, an interest in modern Greece and Greeks in late nineteenth-century Britain was a sign of the times, evidenced by articles in the British press and numerous publications with modern Greek subject matter, addressed both to the more educated and to the wider reading public.

A growing preoccupation with modern Greek vernacular language, literature and cultural life was an integral part of the historical moment. Since the 1870s, developments in the Eastern Question had brought the Balkans back into British focus and rekindled the philhellenic sentiments that had been widespread earlier in the century. Cultural responses to modern Greece and its culture were coloured by the ideological preoccupations of imperial society, which, guided by colonial interests, was intrigued by what were considered remote or exotic peoples and defined by the dynamic of cultural interchange. In addition,

1 Unsigned review of *Greek Folk-Songs from the Turkish Provinces of Greece, Albania, Thessaly (not yet wholly free), and Macedonia*. Literal and metrical translations by Lucy M. J. Garnett. [...], *Book-lore*, November 1885, 50.

and perhaps more significantly, they were shaped by the enduring activities of European networks of philhellenes, Hellenists, diaspora Greeks and Greek scholars who, often aware of each other's writings, shared intellectual concerns, disseminated knowledge of the modern Greek language and culture and solicited sympathy for the intellectual progress of modern Greeks. British scholars were not alone in turning their attention to these subjects. Since the mid-1860s, Hellenists and potential Neohellenists in France and Germany, building on an earlier tradition, had developed an interest in Byzantine and early modern Greek texts, in the continuity of the Greek language and in the proper pronunciation of both Ancient and Modern Greek, in an attempt to emancipate research on modern Greece from the study of ancient Hellas.² The characters and perspectives of the individuals functioning as cultural mediators, the pivotal mediating role played by certain key figures, such as Dimitrios Vikelas, and the cultural dynamics between Greek domestic and European-wide discourse systems have recently attracted scholarly attention.³

The letters sent by E. M. Edmonds (baptized 1821–1907) – a female writer, critic and translator active in the advocacy of modern Greece in Victorian England during the 1880s and 1890s – to Nikolaos G. Politis (1852–1921), the founder of the discipline of folklore in Greece, shed light on this wider intercommunication between European and Greek intellectuals that reinforced the study of modern Greece as an autonomous subject of interest. This collection of documents forms part of Politis' rich and mostly unexplored exchanges with about two hundred European and American correspondents, principally scholars, writers and editors, preserved in the Benaki Museum Historical Archives. Of these, few are British, and only four of them, owing to a shared interest in folklore, have been the subject of brief analysis:⁴ E. M. Edmonds; Henry Fanshawe

2 See, with reference to French and German scholars A. Politis, 'Από τον Φωριέλ στην Ιουλιέτα Λαμπέρ-Αδάμ: η παρουσία της ελληνικής λογοτεχνίας στα γαλλικά γράμματα', in E. Chrysos and C. Farnaud (eds), *La France et la Grèce au XIXe siècle* (Athens 2012) 143–66, A. Katsigiannis, 'Η παρουσία Γάλλων ελληνιστών στο Εθνικόν Ημερολόγιον του Μαρίνου Παπαδόπουλου Βρετού (1863–1871). Μια υπόθεση εργασίας', in A. Tabaki and A. Altouva (eds), *Πρακτικά επιστημονικού συμποσίου: Μετάφραση και περιοδικός τύπος στον 19ο αιώνα* (Athens 2016) 135–44, and M. Mitsou, 'Δίκτυα (νεο)ελληνιστών και πολιτισμικές μεταφορές στα τέλη του 19ου αι. (Karl Krumbacher, Émile Legrand, Ν. Γ. Πολίτης)', in U. Moennig (ed.), «...ως αθύρματα παιδας»: *Festschrift für Hans Eideneier* (Berlin 2016) 313–25.

3 See, e.g., M.-E. Mitsou, 'Négoce et transfert culturel: Dimitrios Bikélas et le réseau intellectuel franco-grec dans la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle', *Rives méditerranéennes* 50 (2015) 13–25.

4 See V. Chrysanthopoulou, 'Ο Νικόλαος Πολίτης και οι Βρετανοί αλληλογράφοι του: Επιστημονικές και φιλελληνικές ανταλλαγές', in *Πρακτικά διεθνούς επιστημονικού συνεδρίου: Ο Νικόλαος Γ. Πολίτης και το Κέντρον Ερευνής της Ελληνικής Λαογραφίας*, 2 vols (Athens 2012) II, 1029–43. Chrysanthopoulou deals more extensively with a short letter sent by Politis in 1882 by E. B. Tylor. On the basis of this letter we can ascertain that Tylor acknowledged the Hellenist ethnographer's work and that he established some sort of communication with him. Thanks to another letter sent by Tylor in 1892 and recently discovered in the Politis archive, we can safely surmise that their contact lasted for a number of years. In fact, Politis attributed his study on the funeral rite of breaking vessels in modern Greece, read at the March 1893 meeting of the Royal Anthropological Institute, to Tylor's 'request': See N. G. Politis, 'Το έθιμον της θραύσεως αγγείων κατά την κηδείαν', in *Λαογραφικά Σύμμεικτα*, II (Athens 1921) 268–83; note on p. 268. Also, its translation by L. Dyer, 'Greek folklore: On the breaking of vessels as a funeral rite in modern Greece', *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 23 (1894) 28–41. Cf. Chrysanthopoulou, 'Ο Νικόλαος Πολίτης', 1033–4. Dyer's correspondence with Politis (2 letters) is to be found in the latter's archive.

Tozer (1829-1916, five letters and four postcards), Fellow and Classics tutor at Exeter College, Oxford, during the years 1878–96 and a member of the clergy since 1852; the eminent anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917, two letters); and the classicist John Cuthbert Lawson (1874-1935, four letters). The few letters to Politis from the three male scholars are mostly concise and formal, typical of an academic exchange, mainly thanking him for the receipt of his papers, congratulating him on his work, or seeking expert information. For his part, the Greek folklorist provided them with copies of his own studies and of works he edited, due to his concern to disseminate his ideas and insert himself into a European scholarly discussion.⁵ By comparison, Edmonds's correspondence, despite its fragmentary nature, is more systematic. Indeed, it is one of the lengthiest ones in Politis' archive, as it comprises seventeen letters and three postcards written between 1885 and 1905. It is also more substantive, illustrating not only Edmonds's wish to gain access to Greek literary life but also offering glimpses of her personality and social interactions.

Numerous threads already connect these four correspondents. They were all members of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, and had travelled to Greece, took an interest in Politis' work and publicized his research among Victorian society.⁶ Edmonds, Tozer, and Tylor were elected honorary members of the Parnassos Literary Society in the mid-1890s, when Politis was its president.⁷ Edmonds's election was announced in the columns of *The Academy*,⁸ enhancing her public image as an authority on modern Greek subjects. By itself, but more so in the context of similar examples, this announcement suggests that the process of cultural exchange was immediate, two-directional and self-reinforcing. Edmonds also knew Lawson, whom, as we shall see, she introduced to Politis.

The links between Edmonds and Tozer, who both wrote about the country's folklore and contemporary cultural life and regularly contributed to *The Academy*, were stronger.⁹ Furthermore, Greek translations of their texts appeared in the highbrow literary journal

5 Further evidence of this concern is provided by a letter preserved in Politis' archive, sent to the Greek folklorist by the editor of the *Athenaeum* sometime in the mid-1880s, declining to publish his criticism of James Theodore Bent's work (probably his book on the Cyclades).

6 See, for example, H. F. Tozer, 'Modern Greek mythology. Μελέτη επί του βίου των νεωτέρων Ελλήνων, υπό Ν. Γ. Πολίτου: Vol. I. Νεοελληνική Μυθολογία: Part 2. (Athens: Willberg.)', *The Academy* 176 (18 September 1875) 298–9, E. M. Edmonds's notice under the rubric 'Charms', *The Academy* 781 (23 April 1887) 291, and Elizabeth M. Edmonds, 'Myths of cosmogony by Dr. Polites', *The Academy* 1177 (24 November 1894) 425.

7 Edmonds was elected in February 1895. See 'Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος Παρνασσός – Φεβρουάριος 1895 – Εργασία Συλλόγου', *Παρνασσός* 17/6 (1895) 479–80: 480, and her letter no. 17. Soon afterwards Tozer and Tylor were also elected. See 'Ἐκθεσις των πεπραγμένων υπό του συλλόγου κατά το ΔΒ' έτος από της συστάσεως αυτού (1896-1897) (Προεδρεία Ν. Γ. Πολίτου)', *Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος Παρνασσός, Επετηρίς* 2 (1898) 329–43: 330.

8 'Notes and news', *The Academy* 1195 (30 March 1895) 275–6: 276.

9 See G. Gotsi, 'Οι Νεοέλληνες στον καθρέφτη του ξένου: Συμβολή στη μελέτη των ελληνοβρετανικών πολιτισμικών δικτύων, 1870-1900', in A. Tabaki and O. Polykandrioti (eds), *Πρακτικά συμποσίου: Ελληνικότητα και ετερότητα. Πολιτισμικές διαμεσολαβήσεις και 'εθνικές χαρακτηρισ' στον 19ο αιώνα*, 2 vols (Athens 2016) I, 95–116.

Hestia (Εστία) strongly associated with Politis,¹⁰ while both the journal and its *Bulletin* (Δελτίον της Εστίας) reprinted news regarding Edmonds's translations of Greek poets and prose writers and their reception by the British press.¹¹ Tozer was also an appreciative critic of Edmonds's work, writing about the 'good taste' of her versions of recent Greek poetry, devoting much attention to the ballad, valuing the historical poems by Valaoritis, Typaldos, Zalokostas and Alexandros Soutsos she had anthologized, and teasing out the animistic element in Vizyinos' poetry.¹² In addition, he reviewed her abridged translation of Kolokotronis' autobiography¹³ and praised her biographical account of Rigas for its simplicity and 'strict regard to historic truth'.¹⁴

Unlike Tylor, his eminent fellow Oxonian, whose influence on the development of the English folklore movement can hardly be exaggerated, Tozer occupied a minor position in his academic milieu. While this can partly be attributed to his 'quaint personality', 'remote from anything modern',¹⁵ the more influential factor probably lay in his style of scholarship. His active interest in geography, defined as a close study of the natural environment in relation to social behaviour, the traditions and the history of the communities living in it, set him apart from the main concerns of the Oxford classicists of his time, who were devoted to linguistic study and philosophical enquiries.¹⁶ If Tozer was an outsider in the dominant climate of Oxford classics, Edmonds had no academic credentials at all. According to her hitherto unknown autobiographical note, published in 1888 in the *Women's Penny Paper*, edited by the suffragist Henrietta B. Müller, it was only at the age of fifty, after a full programme of domesticity, that Edmonds, who

10 H. F. Tozer, 'Οι Φράγκοι εν Πελοποννήσω', trans. ** Λ, *Εστία* 21/523-5 (January 1886) 6-9, 22-6 and 39-43. Also, E. Edmonds, 'Η κόρη του ζωγράφου – Διήγημα', *Εστία Εικονογραφημένη* 26 (June 1892) 401-6. G. Drosinis and N. G. Politis were co-editors of *Hestia* for the period January 1889 up to the end of 1890, when Drosinis undertook the editorship alone until September 1894.

11 See G. Gotsi, 'Elizabeth Mayhew Edmonds: Greek prose fiction in English dress', *Σύγκριση/Comparaison/Comparison* 25 (2015) 23-60 [<http://epublishing.ekt.gr/el/10924/%CE%A3%CF%8D%CE%B3%CE%BA%CF%81%CE%B9%CF%83%CE%B7/14753>] and L. Varelas, *Μετά θάρρους ανησυχίαν εμπνεόντος: Η κριτική πρόσληψη του Γ. Μ. Βιζυηνού (1873-1896)* (Thessaloniki 2014) 85 and 140.

12 H. F. Tozer, 'Two translations of modern Greek poetry. *Greek Lays, Idylls, Legends, &c.* A Selection from Recent and Contemporary Poets. Translated by E. M. Edmonds. (Trübner.). *Greek Folk-Songs from the Turkish Provinces of Greece*. Literal and metrical translations. By Lucy M. J. Garnett. (Elliot Stock.)', *The Academy* 687 (4 July 1885) 1-2:1. Tozer had kind words for Lucy Garnett's collection of translated Greek folk-songs but dismissed Stuart Glennie's introductory essay on the survival of paganism as being irrelevant to a book of poetry.

13 See H. F. Tozer, "Adventure Series." – *Kolokotrones, the Klepht and the Warrior. Sixty Years of Peril and Daring*. Translated from the Greek by Mrs. Ed[mon]ds. (Fisher Unwin.), *The Academy* 1032 (13 February 1892) 152-3.

14 See H. F. Tozer, '*Rhigas Pheraios; The Protomartyr of Greek Independence*. By Mrs. Edmonds. (Longmans.)', *The Academy* 928 (15 February 1890) 113.

15 As his student, L. R. Farnell, remembers in *An Oxonian Looks Back* (London [1934]) 38-9.

16 See P. M. Frazer, 'Tozer, Henry Fanshawe (1829-1916)', rev. E. Baigent, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38073> accessed 23/11/2013]. Also W. A. Koelsch, 'Henry Fanshawe Tozer: A "missing person" in historical geography?', *Yearbook of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers* 72 (2010) 118-27.

as a child was ‘an insatiable reader’, began to teach herself Classical and then Modern Greek.¹⁷ A few years later, Grigorios Xenopoulos drew a similar, albeit more romanticized biographical portrait for the readers of *Hestia*. According to the Greek author, whose story *The Stepmother* Edmonds translated, the female writer received no formal schooling and had to restrain her early poetic penchant. However, she became an avid, if surreptitious, reader and educated herself in Latin, English, French and Italian letters under the guidance of two of her brothers, whereas later on she was strongly supported in her intellectual endeavours by her husband, Augustus Robert Edmonds (1813–1906).¹⁸ Her story – far from unique – is that of a Victorian woman with literary aspirations striving to resist patriarchal strictures. Exploring the ‘feminine fascination’ with modern Greeks and their culture in late nineteenth-century Britain, Semele Assinder has posited that knowledge of modern Greek language, literature and cultural life – a marginal subject at best – offered Edmonds, and a few other women, an alternative means by which to challenge conventional authority regarding learning and also gain access to male-dominated arenas of scholarship and publishing; more significantly, for Edmonds, it constituted a vehicle for expressing her literary ambition and advancing socially liberal views.¹⁹

Nevertheless, the appeal modern Greece held for Edmonds and Tozer, as well as for other unconventional intellectuals such as their contemporary, the lapsed Anglican and socialist scholar Edmund Martin Geldart (1844–85), suggests it was a more varied phenomenon of self-realization. Regardless of the author’s gender, systematic writing on modern Greece and allied topics, particularly in the accessible medium of periodicals, offered less well-placed philhellene writers a means to develop a visible authorial identity.²⁰ In this sense, Edmonds’s exchanges with Politis served both personal desires for literary distinction and the broad politics of promoting ‘New Hellas’ in Great Britain. Against this background she appears to be selective in the texts she rendered into English: her diverse translations (poems, short fictions, fairy-tales, memoirs dealing with the Greek War of Independence) were chosen with an eye towards Victorian readers’ enthusiasm for ethnographic knowledge, folkloric fictions and palatable pastime reading.²¹ Moreover, as in the cases of Politis and Ioannis Gennadius, she chose

17 E. M. Edmonds, ‘After fifty’, *Women’s Penny Paper* 10 (29 December 1888) 6.

18 G. Xenopoulos, ‘Σύγχρονοι ξένοι συγγραφείς: Ελισάβετ Μ. Έδμονδς’, *Εστία Εικονογραφημένη* 36 (1893) 89–90.

19 See S. Assinder, ‘Greece in British Women’s Writing, 1866–1915’, PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2012, quote on p. 16, and S. Assinder, “‘To say the same thing in different words’: Politics and poetics in late Victorian translation from modern Greek’, *Journal of International Women’s Studies* 13/6 (2012) 72–84. In Politis’ archive we also find a letter, written in Greek and dated 15 Dec. 1889, by Elizabeth A. S. Dawes, the first woman to receive a doctoral degree from the University of London: she asks him to review her thesis on *The Pronunciation of Greek with Suggestions for a Reform in Teaching that Language* (1889) in *Hestia*.

20 For a similar view see M. Miliori, ‘Europe, the classical polis, and the Greek nation: Philhellenism and Hellenism in nineteenth-century Britain’, in R. Beaton and D. Ricks (eds), *The Making of Modern Greece: Nationalism, Romanticism, and the Uses of the Past (1797–1896)* (Farnham 2009) 65–77: 74.

21 For more details see Gotsi, ‘Elizabeth Mayhew Edmonds’. Also, Assinder, ‘Greece’, 110–11 and 114, who refers to Edmonds’s ‘translation programme’. Cf. Assinder, “‘To say the same thing in different words’”, 78.

well-known figures with which to associate her name as a translator. Thus, she approached Politis in order to translate one of his papers for the official organ of the Folk-Lore Society in London. In 1885, when Edmonds initially wrote to him, Politis, who the previous year had coined the term *laographia* for that distinctive branch of Greek folklore, was a leading Greek intellectual, well acknowledged outside his country. British folklorists had taken notice of his landmark *Νεοελληνική μυθολογία*²² and subsequent treatises as contributing to the comparative investigation of archaic beliefs, customs and traditions. In fact, this award-winning study for the Rodokanakis competition had been reviewed in the British press soon after publication – by Tozer among others – and its ‘contribution to the science of comparative mythology’ had been recognized.²³ Through her adaptation of studies by a distinguished Greek specialist, Edmonds was able to communicate with George Laurence Gomme (1853-1916), a member of the Council and honorary secretary of the Folk-Lore Society in 1884–5 and its Director for a number of years starting in 1885–6. She thus gained recognition as an associate of the prestigious *Folk-Lore Journal* and reinforced her credentials as a ‘folklorist’.²⁴

Moreover, Edmonds’s letters to Politis highlight the troubling question of religion that arises in any ethnographic discussion on the persistence of pagan superstitions and practices among Greek peasants.²⁵ The writer, acquainted with Christian Orthodox circles, shows a deep respect for religion; in her letters of late 1885 (nos 4 and 6), her appreciation of the Eastern Church and its clerics seems to set her apart from Politis’ unsympathetic stance. The folklorist viewed Christianity as polemical, or barely tolerant, towards ancient religion and he frequently treated Christian saints as veiled reincarnations of ancient deities. Committed to the values of Enlightenment thought, Politis aimed to connect modern Greek identity with ancient Greece and therefore questioned the influence of Christianity upon Greek culture, resisted the very notion of dogmatic truth and promoted critical reason against prejudice and superstition.²⁶ In fact, a few months earlier, in late 1884, the official Church, forced by the wrath of para-ecclesiastical circles who charged Politis with atheism, materialism and Darwinism, censored his

22 N. G. Politis, *Μελέτη επί του βίου των νεωτέρων Ελλήνων, I: Νεοελληνική μυθολογία*, 2 parts (Athens 1871-4).

23 See ‘Modern Greek life and folklore’, *The Saturday Review* 872 (13 July 1872) 57-8: 58. Whereas the anonymous reviewer met the volume’s main premise on the resemblance between modern and ancient myths with scepticism, he commented positively on Politis’ comparative method.

24 See earlier E. M. Edmonds, ‘Notes on Greek folk-lore. Burial customs’, *The Folk-Lore Journal* 2/6 (1884) 168–72 and ‘Local Greek myths. Communicated by Y. [sic] N. Politès to Mrs. Edmonds’, *The Folk-Lore Journal* 4/3 (1886) 250-2. On her methods for establishing authority see also Assinder, ‘Greece’, 57; and 106 on her gradual gaining of renown.

25 On this issue see C. Stewart, ‘Syncretism as a dimension of nationalist discourse in modern Greece’, in C. Stewart and R. Shaw (eds.), *Syncretism/Anti-syncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis* (London and New York 1994) 127–44.

26 On these issues see P. A. Yfantis, ‘Η χριστιανική πίστη στην επιστημονική σκέψη και στα ιδεολογικά οράματα του Νικολάου Πολίτη’ in *Ο Νικόλαος Γ. Πολίτης*, II, 925-44 and E. A. Datsi, ‘Διαφωτισμός και εξελικτισμός: Οι θεωρητικές και ιδεολογικές συντεταγμένες του Νικολάου Πολίτη’, *ibid.*, 633-46.

choice of certain literary materials for the secondary school curriculum.²⁷ In her letters, Edmonds apologizes for Matthias Jenkyns's inadequate introduction to her anthology of translated modern Greek poetry *Greek Lays*, defending her friend on the basis of his philhellenism and Orthodox religiosity. Clearly, from her arguments in support of Jenkyns, and views expressed elsewhere in her writings, Edmonds shared his positions on the Christian foundations of the Greek War of Independence, on the active role of the Orthodox clergy in the liberation struggles and, most importantly, on the 'Helleno-Christian' nature of Greek national identity. As Jenkyns had emphatically stated in his essay, 'to the Hellene, Greek and Orthodox are synonymous terms'.²⁸

If Edmonds's divergence from Politis is discreetly expressed, her disapproval of John Stuart Stuart Glennie's (1841-1910) tenets on the absence of Christian sentiment in Greek folk culture is vociferous and may reflect a personal dislike of his dogmatic style and 'graceless personality'.²⁹ Edmonds interprets Stuart Glennie's 'historical introduction' on 'the survival of paganism' and his notes to Lucy M. J. Garnett's compilation of *Greek Folk-Songs* (1885)³⁰ as a rejection of Christian belief by a secular folklorist, dismissing it accordingly as anti-Hellenic. More specifically, in his prefatory essays to Garnett's collection, Stuart Glennie presented a dubious theory of racial conflict, economic change and civilizational difference on the basis of which Hellenes were close kinsmen to Celts.³¹ This, in his view, explained why 'the most distinguished of English-speaking Philhellenes [...] have, almost all, had in their veins a more than usual proportion of that Keltic blood which is common to the whole Britannic Race'.³² Church-beliefs, despite 'the domination of Christianity for nearly 2,000 years', had little impact on Western Paganism, a feature he found to be 'only somewhat more conspicuous

27 This was an ideological-political attack. For further details see D. T. Katsaris, 'Ο "άθεος" Νικόλαος Γ. Πολίτης', in *Ο Νικόλαος Γ. Πολίτης*, I, 455-76.

28 See M. Jenkyns, 'Introduction', in *Greek Lays, Idylls, Legends, &c. A Selection from Recent and Contemporary Poets*. Translated by E. M. Edmonds. With Introduction and Notes (London 1885) 19-20. Cf. M. Jenkyns, 'Introduction' in *Greek Lays, Idylls, Legends, &c. A Selection From Recent and Contemporary Poets*. Translated by E. M. Edmonds. With Introduction and Notes. Revised and Enlarged Edition (London 1886) 19-20.

29 On Stuart Glennie and his long collaboration with Garnett see R. M. Dorson, *The British Folklorists: A History* (London and New York 1999 [1968]) 310-12; quote on p. 310.

30 L. M. J. Garnett, *Greek Folk-Songs from the Turkish Provinces of Greece, Ἡ Δούλη Ἑλλάς: Albania, Thessaly, (not yet wholly free,) and Macedonia: Literal and Metrical Translations*. Classified, Revised, and Edited, with An Historical Introduction on the Survival of Paganism by John S. Stuart Glennie (London 1885). From Garnett's letter to Politis of 27 March 1892 (also found in his archive), it is apparent that, at Vikelas' suggestion, she solicited 'historical' legends from him for her *New Folklore Researches. Greek Folk Poesy: Annotated Translations, From the Whole Cycle of Romanic Folk-Verse and Folk-Prose* (Guildford 1896).

31 Stuart Glennie, 'Preface: Remarks, political and linguistic', in Garnett, *Greek Folk-Songs*, xxx-xxxi, and 'The survival of paganism', *ibid*, 32-3. On the resemblances among Greek, Irish and Scottish identities in 19th-century British discourse see R. Tzanelli, 'Unclaimed colonies: Anglo-Greek identities through the prism of the Dilessi/Marathon murders (1870)', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 15/2 (June 2002) 169-91.

32 Stuart Glennie, 'Preface', xxxi.

among the Greeks' and was attested to by their folk-songs.³³ He contended that the Olympian gods lived on, 'transformed only, and deformed, in Greek Christianity', citing in evidence Politis' position on the solar origins of the worship of St Elias.³⁴ In accordance with his racial schema, the Semitic origins of the Eastern Church's theology underlay its intellectual deficiencies.³⁵

It would have been interesting to know the Greek folklorist's stance towards Stuart Glennie's thesis, given their shared assumption about the cultural superiority of the classical world. By demonstrating the survival of various ancient linguistic, cosmological and religious elements in popular culture, and pointing to their acceptance of, or syncretism with, the Christian tradition, Politis established continuity between ancient and modern Hellas. Following a line agreeable with Politis' Enlightenment Hellenism, Stuart Glennie spoke of 'the wonderful identity of Modern with Classical Greek sentiments', explained by the 'identity of Modern with Classical, Greek speech' and exhibited in Greek folk-songs.³⁶

It is quite possible that Edmonds's disputing of Garnett's and Stuart Glennie's philhellenism, despite their book's dedication 'to the Hellenes of enslaved Greece [...] for the completion of Hellenic independence' and their forthright calls for the country's territorial enlargement,³⁷ conceals a rivalry towards collaborators concurrently introducing Greek poetry to the English public. Nevertheless, her ideological disagreement, conveyed in her remarks about the Greek nation's Christianity, reveals a further difference: a divergence of views about Greece's transition to modernity.

In his preface to *Greek Folk-Songs*, Stuart Glennie was very critical of the 'disastrous Foreign Policy of the Gladstone Administration'. Citing the argument of linguistic and ethnological affinity between Greeks and the inhabitants of Southern Albania, he advocated the creation of a 'Greco-Albanian Confederation' potentially serving as a means for the 'enfranchisement of Northern Greece' and forming a barrier against the threat of a Greater Serbia.³⁸ Edmonds, in contrast, espoused the blessings of order and peace with the Ottoman Empire. Consistently, in the 1880s and 1890s – a period of military turmoil in the Balkans – she embraced the policy of Greece's 'internal progress' as a prerequisite for the future expansion of its borders. Notably, as early as May 1881,

33 Stuart Glennie, 'The survival of paganism', 41, 5 (cf. p. 16).

34 Stuart Glennie, 'The survival of paganism', 19-20 and note 99, for his reference to Politis, *Μελέτη επί του βίου των νεωτέρων Ελλήνων*.

35 Stuart Glennie, 'The survival of paganism', 60.

36 Stuart Glennie, 'Preface', xxvii. On Politis' and Glennie's treatment of classical Greece see M. Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece* (New York 1986) 104.

37 See Stuart Glennie, 'Preface', xx, where he stated his hope to contribute 'in some degree, to the renewal of British Philhellenism, and to the completion of Hellenic Independence'. Similarly, Lucy Garnett in her 'Note by the Translator', *Greek Folk-Songs*, 66, hoped 'that such study will have not only speculative and scientific, but practical and political results in exciting sympathy, and gaining aid, for that reconstitution of Hellas which is still unachieved [...]']

38 Stuart Glennie, 'Preface', xxi-xxii.

just a month before the settlement of Greek authorities in newly annexed Arta, she used the preface of her travelogue *Fair Athens* to caution: ‘War, however, would but retard all internal progress, and undo much that has been done; strength here being the arts of Peace alone; and the disinterested enlightenment of Europe will hope that through its means the future of Hellas will be what her National Hymn expresses [...]’.³⁹ Along the same lines, in both the 1885 and 1886 editions of *Greek Lays*, Edmonds and Jenkyns hope for the future enlargement of Greece on the basis of her ‘steady progress commercially and educationally’.⁴⁰ Edmonds admired Charilaos Trikoupi (letter no. 14) and seems to have endorsed his policy of prioritizing state and army modernization, economic growth, and social progress over territorial expansion. By contrast, in her letter of 10 March 1886 (no. 7), she openly blames Prime Minister Theodoros Deliyannis (1826-1905) for his frivolous tactics of threatening war with Turkey to extract concessions for Greece from European powers.

*

Many aspects of Edmonds’s letters presented here help us understand the process by which modern Greek culture was mediated in late nineteenth-century Europe: they reveal hitherto unknown facets of her translating activity, publishing circles, and role as cultural mediator; they also contribute to the reconstruction of her still incomplete biography and corpus of texts. Thus, through her letters we gain insights into her relations with Ioannis Gennadius and Georgios Viziynis, and additionally learn about her acquaintance with John Cuthbert Lawson whom, in 1898, she introduced to the doyen of Greek ethnography as ‘a young student in folk-lore’ (letter no. 16).⁴¹

Letter no. 11 brings to light her previously unknown collaboration with *The Ladder: A Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art* (1891). Edited by David Balsillie, a thinker of socialist orientation, this short-lived sixpenny monthly, designed ‘to interest and instruct’,⁴² contained fiction as well as a range of articles concerned with political leadership, scientific developments, and literary and cultural issues. Showing remarkable awareness of continental literature, the magazine also provided brief critical

39 E. M. Edmonds, ‘Preface’ in *Fair Athens* (London 1881).

40 Jenkyns, ‘Introduction’, in *Greek Lays* (1885 and 1886), 16. Cf. Edmonds, ‘Preface’, in *Greek Lays* (1886), viii. Moreover, see her congratulatory message on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of King George’s accession in ‘Αυτόγραφα’, in *Εστία. Πανηγυρικών τεύχος επί τη εικοσιπενταετηρίδι της Βασιλείας Γεωργίου, 1863-1888* (Leipzig [1888]) 36: ‘Η έκτασις της χώρας δεν συνεπιφέρει αναγκαιώς το μεγαλείον ή την ευπορίαν του έθνους. [...] Είθε να μη αναχαιτίση την τοιαύτην ανάπτυξιν [της Ελλάδος] πολιτική αστασία, είθε ο Βασιλεύς αυτής να αισθάνηται την αγάπην του λαού του αυξάνουσαν από έτους εις έτος, και τότε – θεού θέλοντος – δεν βλέπει ολίγη πλειοτέρα απλοχωρία’.

41 From 1898 to 1900, Lawson was a Craven student at the British School at Athens. He made acknowledged use of Politis’ publications in his *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion: A Study in Survivals* (1910); see Chrysanthopoulou, ‘Ο Νικόλαος Πολίτης’, 1034-6. According to Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 103, his treatment of living folk beliefs and practices as a means to interpret the religious thought of ancient Greece ‘may indeed have absorbed’ elements of Politis’ notion of survivalism.

42 See ‘Our programme’, *The Ladder* 1/2 (February 1891) 7-8: 7.

descriptions of the contents of leading home and foreign periodicals. Edmonds joined the *Ladder* in its fourth issue, dated April 1891, when a new section on 'Athenian Magazines', most probably designed by her, was added to its regular contents.⁴³

In the following period, a few of Edmonds's pieces appeared in *The Eastern and Western Review* (February 1892-May 1893), a monthly magazine of orientalist interest and political objectives. This periodical contained articles that dealt with colonial and Eastern European and Asian affairs, travel, history, religious, scientific and literary issues, together with fiction and descriptions of foreign women's lives and activities. Among the various contributions by women, Edmonds's translations of two modern Greek short stories and her articles recording Greek folk customs and superstitions, as well as her double-focused piece on Zante's earthquakes and the eminent poets associated with the island (cf. postcard no. 13), were pertinent to the periodical's purpose to promote 'a better knowledge' of Western and Eastern peoples.⁴⁴

Edmonds's collaboration with these two ephemeral publications of scholarly flavour, alongside her involvement in various other magazines (some aimed primarily at a female readership and at least one other at churchgoers) and her regular contributions to the high-quality *Academy*, is indicative of her efforts to find outlets for her writings and ensure some income. The outcome was the inclusion of her texts in a wide range of magazines and journals that made modern Greece accessible to a variety of audiences. In parallel, the diffusion of her work in the printed media of the English-speaking world raised her writerly profile, giving her an aura of authority. As a result, the elderly woman writer was celebrated in the Greek press as the matron of Greek letters in England. Nevertheless, her letters, marked by deference towards Politis, reveal her insecurity about her mastery of modern Greek and her limited knowledge of national affairs, which she strove to overcome by rigorous concern for factual and linguistic accuracy.

One final point: the personal tone of her later letters to Politis displays the growing familiarity between them, despite their apparently sparse correspondence. These letters offer an insight into Edmonds's Christian moralism and devotion to her marriage. The boon of a tranquil married life, described both in letter no. 19 and in her autobiographical note in the *Women's Penny Paper*, appears to have contributed to Edmonds's increasing autonomy: it allowed her the freedom to exercise her writing skills, to create an extended intellectual family through her correspondence with Greek poets, writers and scholars and to achieve self-realization. In clarifying her marital status to Politis (letter no. 4) she underlines its significance for her authorial identity. That said, the reader of Edmonds's letters might still notice her almost systematic use of the gender-ambiguous signature 'E. M. Edmonds' in the 1880s. In the next decade she tends to replace the abbreviated initials with fuller forms of her first names 'Eliz.', 'Elizabeth', 'Elizabeth Mayhew'. This shift, also

43 On this collaboration see G. Gotsi, 'Η Ε. Μ. Edmonds και ο αθηναϊκός περιοδικός τύπος', *Μικροφιλολογικά* 41 (Spring 2017) 7–13.

44 See 'Introduction', *The Eastern and Western Review* 1/1 (February 1892) 1.

attested in her publications, confirms the view that Edmonds, after gaining some authorial recognition, traded on a signature linked to her gender and marital status.⁴⁵

Edmonds's correspondence with Politis is necessarily presented here in an incomplete form, without the Greek scholar's letters. Even so, it grants us an insight into an aspect of a complex cultural exchange which established modern Greek society and culture as a subject of discussion in contemporary discourses on European cultural identity.

*

The letters⁴⁶

In all letters transcribed below, the author's own underlining, as well as her spelling and accentuation of Greek words, has been preserved, except that I tacitly corrected accents and breathings in the Greek text of postcard no. 9. I added full stops to initials and abbreviated versions of proper names where they were missing. Edmonds writes informally, and a little casually; she occasionally capitalizes the word 'Church', whereas she writes both *Polites* and *Politês*. In these examples and others I have always followed her spelling. Her punctuation is sometimes careless, and here, in contrast, when necessary for clarity, I have corrected it according to current conventions.

1. (Figs 1 & 2)

Carisbrook
Blackheath

19 Aug^t [1885]

Dear Sir

Do you know whether any English translation of the work upon which you are now engaged is contemplated[?] I have thought whether it would not be in my power to undertake it if no other person would be likely to engage in it.

I have lately issued an English rhymthical [sic] translation of Recent Greek Poets, 'Greek Lays' and I do not think Greek Prose would present half the difficulties.

I should be glad to hear from you upon the subject.

I remain
Yours very truly
E. M. Edmonds

—*Politês* Esq[^{tc}]

45 On the confusion created by the various forms of Edmonds's name see Assinder, 'Greece', 72 and 106, who also discusses the way she signed her texts, seeing a gradual movement from 'E. M. Edmonds' to 'Mrs Edmonds'.

46 All the letters and postcards presented here are located in the Nikolaos G. Politis Archive (no. 302) held in the Benaki Museum Historical Archives, Athens. I wish to thank Dr Maria Dimitriadou of the Historical Archives for her help.

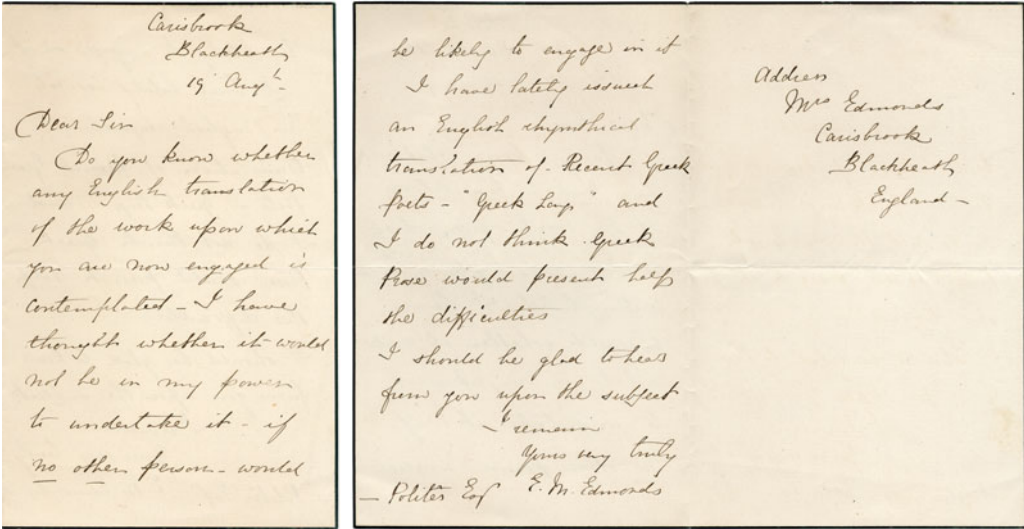


Fig. 1 and 2. (Colour online) Letter from E. M. Edmonds to N. G. Politis, 19 August [1885]. N. G. Politis Archive, Benaki Museum Historical Archives.

On the third page of the four-page folded letter

Address
Mrs Edmonds
Carisbrooke
Blackheath
England

2.

Carisbrooke
Blackheath

17 Sept 1885

My dear Sir

Many many thanks for your very kind letter, and for your generous gift of books. I am reading them with the greatest interest. I have well considered the matter and think you are possibly quite right in saying that their great attraction would be to 'Folk Lorists' and not for the Reading Public as a whole. I shall therefore communicate with the 'Folk Lore Society' through the Editor of the Folk Lore Journal, M^r G. L. Gomme, and if he gives me any encouragement to undertake the translation of any of your exhaustive papers I will let you know.

I could not undertake such a work at my own cost and so it must depend upon the Society, whether it will bear the expense. I have forwarded a copy of 'Greek Lays'⁴⁷ to you which I beg you will accept with all faults. In a second edition I shall revise & correct many errors of the press and others arising from my own inadvertence. In the copy I send you I have taken the liberty to make some corrections which I append in a flyleaf.

I do not write to you in your dear native tongue as I know you are a perfect English scholar but I thank you much for writing to me in Greek as I so very much prefer that my Greek friends and correspondents should write to me in their own language.

Again expressing the profound pleasure which the perusal and study of your works afford me I remain

My dear Sir
Yours most truly obliged
Eliz. M. Edmonds

N. G. Politês Esq^{re}

3.

Carisbrook
Blackheath

7 Oct 1885

My dear Sir

I have made a translation of *Αἱ Ἀσθeneiai*,⁴⁸ but abridged it considerably, only extracting those parts which are strictly Greek & modern Greek, and have sent it to the Folk Lore Society to be inserted in their Journal. I have no doubt that the Editor will gladly avail himself of it, if he do not even now find it too long for his Journal which is a small one.

You will my dear Sir readily understand the necessity I was under (when intending to present your able paper in an English form to an English public) to withdraw quotations which you yourself had translated from German & other Authors who are accessible to the English public. I have gathered out of your paper all the accounts that come firsthand and I am pleased with the result. I am sure it will be acceptable to folk lorists who cannot read it in the original. If M^r Gomme thinks so also, I will forward you a number of the Journal when it is inserted, but it may be some time before such is the case as they are rather full of papers just now. I shall now try my hand upon 'Ο Ηλιος'

47 See Edmonds, *Greek Lays*. The first edition of this anthology of modern Greek poetry appeared in the first half of 1885, as one can tell from the publication of reviews in the British press as early as May of that year.

48 See N. G. Politis, 'Αἱ ασθένειαι κατά τους μύθους του ελληνικού λαού', *Δελτίον της Ιστορικής και Εθνολογικής Εταιρείας της Ελλάδος* 1 (1883) 1-30.

but solar myths are more generally known and M^r Max Muller [sic] is even now about bringing out a work upon the subject.

With many thanks for your kindness. Believe me to remain

My dear Sir

Yours very sincerely

E. M. Edmonds

G. N. [sic] Politês Esq^{re}

4.

Carisbrook

Blackheath

Oct 17th 1885

My dear Sir

I am just in receipt of your most kind letter of the 11th inst. for which accept my many thanks. You are very generous towards 'Greek Lays'. There is much which I should like to alter however in it.

The friend who wrote the Introduction would be very glad to be corrected in his errors. It was not exactly what I wished but M^r Matthias Jenkyns is so true a Philhellen[e] that it was as a token of friendship to him and his feelings, that I entrusted it to him. It will surprise you doubtless much, to hear that he is a member of the Orthodox Greek church. He was baptized into it many years since, and his wife and seven children all belong to it. He is a true son of the church and strange as it may seem to you that a son of our misty island should throw himself into the arms of the Eastern mother church yet the fact is very interesting. The Introduction to the 'Greek Folk Songs' of Miss Garnett is able of its kind but rambling off to air the writer's hatred to Christianity.⁴⁹ I cannot believe in the Philhellenism that derides and insults the Greek Orthodox church. Despite the dedication therefore I consider the Greek people are ignored and their feelings disregarded by M^r Glennie. We cannot have back classic paganism if we would. It would be a doubtful blessing to Greece if we could. But I should grieve if in purging away superstitious⁵⁰ and foolish habits, one finger was raised against that venerable structure the Eastern Church. Therefore, I let M^r Jenkyns as a lover, and not a hater of Orthodoxy write the Introduction, would it were better!

I believe that the 'Folk Lore Society' will publish the abbreviated translation of 'Sicknesses &^c' which I sent them. As there are two or three passages which are hardly clear to me such as 'ς τὰ κάρκαρα¹ πῖσων τὸν ἥλιο, ποῦ σσιουλοῦς² δε βαυίζει³ σελ 9, and again on σελ. 10, '4'κουλουροῦλα' '5βλογάει'.⁵¹ Is 'little cake' for no 4 and 'blessed' or 'consecrated' for no 5 a fit rendering? I could not submit the proofs for your approval, so will possibly send the rough MS for you to run your eye over as for the sake of your

49 Garnett, *Greek Folk-Songs*.

50 It might also be read as 'superstitions'.

51 See Politis, 'Αι ασθένειαι', 9 and 10. The superscript numbers 1-5 here are as used by Edmonds.

high name I should not like any foolish mistake to be overlooked. A few minutes would enable you to see errors.

With many thanks for all your generous consideration and kindness. Allow me to remain my dear and honoured Sir

Yours Ever sincerely
(M^{rs} not Miss) E. M. Edmonds

N. G. Politês Esq^{re}

5. Postcard

recto

N. G. Politês Esq^{re}

Athens

Greece

Postmarked: Blackheath OC19 85

verso

My dear Sir

I did not think it worth while to trouble you with a whole MS. so have only sent some portions wherein there were words unknown to me. Do not trouble to return them as the real MS. is with the Editors of Folk Lore Journal. If you will only put down the meaning of the words indicated or note any errors I shall be grateful.

Y^{rs} obliged
E. M. Edmonds

N. G. Politês Esq^{re}

6.

Carisbrook
Blackheath

1st December [1885]

My dear Sir

I desire to thank you most sincerely for your great kindness, and for the trouble you took in correcting my stupid mistakes. How you must have laughed about the crowns. I assure you I laughed most heartily at myself when I read your explanations.

I beg to thank you also for the newspapers containing some contributions of yours which are very curious and interesting. I think M^r Drosines' version of one very good.

I do not know whether he has already written but my friend M^r Jenkyns intends to ask you kindly to point out his errors in the Introduction to 'Greek Lays'. He is too sincere a Philhellene not to be most grateful for any corrections. In a 2nd Edition if called for it might be possible to supply some deficiencies. I dare say you (with your advanced

opinions) will be surprised to hear that M^r Jenkyns has entered the Orthodox church and that all his family were baptized into it. You will see therefore that he takes a different view to M^r Stuart Glennie who in 'Greek Folk Songs' grossly insults the Greek church & its priests. I myself have a great veneration for the Mother church & nurse⁵² of Christianity and wished to show this in my little book. I do not think any benefit will be derived for Greece by her casting aside her Church. Some practices are out of place with the age that is true and the sooner the heathenish superstitions which you so ably portray are gone, the better. I think in 'Greek Folk Songs' the notes & Introduction is an offence which every Greek ought to resent.

When the Folk Lore Society think fit to insert my Translations I will forward you a copy immediately.

Do you know where M^r George Bizuenos is now?⁵³ I think he cannot be in Athens, as I have not heard from him for a long period of time. Excuse me for asking you but in so small a city as Athens I always think every literary man must know each other.

Would it be too great a liberty to ask you (if you have one by you) for a photograph. I am trying to get a collection of the portraits of Greek celebrities and surely no one has done more service than yourself for Greek letters.

I am in an agony of suspense about Greece. If she goes to war I fear she will be crushed. Alas! what greedy eyes are watching every movement.

Again thanking you much and with prayers for the welfare of your dear country.

Believe me
Ever Yours faithfully
E. M. Edmonds

N.G. Politês Esq^{re}

7.

Carisbrook
Blackheath

10 Mar. 1886

Most learned and Dear Sir

I thank you so very much for your kind letter and photograph just received. It will be literally a very handsome addition to my gallery of Hellenes. You will be between His Excellency A. Rhangabe and D^r Spyridon Lambros. In the 'Spectator' of this week

⁵² Reading unclear.

⁵³ The year 1885, especially its last months, was a difficult period for Vizyinos with the onset of health problems and organized attacks against his scholarly work by certain critics. See Varelas, *Μετά θάρρους*, 94-99, 106 and 114. This perhaps explains why he had not communicated with his translator and amicable critic. For Edmonds's presentation of Vizyinos' poetry to the British public see Varelas, *Μετά θάρρους*, 80-6 and G. Gotsi, 'Αναγινώσκονται, κρίνονται και εκτιμώνται, -να το είπωμεν;- περισσότερο η εν Ελλάδι: Νέα στοιχεία για την πρόσληψη του Γ. Μ. Βιζυηνού στην Αγγλία, 1883-1896', *Πόρφυρας* 150 (2014) 327-42.

is an interesting paper on 'Jewish Folk Medicine'.⁵⁴ I forward it to you by this post thinking it to be possible that you may not have seen it. The cures are very disgusting, but the different charms employed are wonderfully similar to those in your paper on Greek folk treatment of diseases. I almost wish that I had not sent my translation of your paper to the 'Folk Lore Journal' as it is so long before it could be published.⁵⁵ As regards the crisis I believe the opportunity is past Six months since – a decisive blow might have been struck – but dilatoriness [sic] ruins everything in this world. Is it a national feature not to be prompt? To engage in war now would be suicidal. M^{inister} Delyannis⁵⁶ is unfit for his position, and that will be but too clearly seen hereafter. Thanks for M^r Vizyenos' address. Again thanking you deeply, I remain

Sincerely Yours
E. M. Edmonds

D^r N. G. Politês

8.

Carisbrook
Blackheath

Oct 22 [1889]

My dear Sir

I have a life of Rhigas Pheraios going to the press.⁵⁷ I have taken the liberty of making use of your paper in 'Εστία, Jan. 1885'⁵⁸ for certain facts in regard to his youth. In it you mention a village called 'Νταμπέγλι' which I have rendered Ntampegli. My friend M^r Gennadius our Greek minister here does not know the place and almost thinks that I have made a mistake. Could you kindly oblige me by sending two or three words on postal card, two or three words will suffice, if there is another name besides Νταμπέγλι, or whether Dampegli would be the best anglicism for it.⁵⁹ The very little book is dedicated to M^r Gennadius who is much interested in it.

54 'Jewish folk-medicine', *The Spectator*, 13 March 1886, 347-8.

55 It seems that her abridged version of Politis' study was never published in the *Folk-Lore Journal*. Most probably this is why later Edmonds published a long note, under the rubric 'Charms', in *The Academy* 781 (23 April 1887) 291, where she presented two charms against disease recorded by the Greek folklorist in his study.

56 It may be that Edmonds's semi-legible superscript is intended to be 'Monsieur'.

57 Mrs. Edmonds, *Rhigas Pheraios: The Protomartyr of Greek Independence. A Biographical Sketch* (London and New York 1890).

58 N. G. Politis, 'Η νεότης του Ρήγα', *Εστία* 19/470 (1 January 1885) 13-16.

59 Politis writes 'Νταμπεγλί' in 'Η νεότης του Ρήγα', 15. In *Rhigas Pheraios*, 18, Edmonds meticulously added a footnote on 'Ntampegli = Dampegli', specifying that 'In the official documents (Athens, 1884) it is written Ntimpegli'.

I take this opportunity for thanking you most warmly for the Ἑστία which reaches me every week. I consider that it has much benefited by the present editorship. With warmest congratulations, I remain

Yours most faithfully
E. M. Edmonds

D^r. G. N. Polites

9. Postcard

recto

D^r N. G. Polites
Athens
Greece

Postmarked: London NO22 89

verso

Carisbrook
Blackheath
Kent
England

Nov. 21 [1889]

Εὐγενέστατε Κύριε

Εὐχαριστῶ ὑμᾶς ἐξ ὅλης καρδίας μου. Ἄμα ἐκδί[δ]εται θὰ σπεύσω ἐγὼ νὰ σᾶς στείλω τὸ μικρὸν τόμον 'Rhigas Pheraios' [.]

Ὅπως Ὑμέτ.
E. M. Edmonds

10.

Carisbrook
Blackheath
[1891]

Dear D^r Politês

Please accept my hearty goodwishes and warm greetings for the New Year of 1891 during which I hope not one cloud will darken the horizon in your life & surroundings.

Ever Yours truly
Elizabeth Mayhew Edmonds

You will excuse me for enclosing a notice of my forthcoming translation of Old Kolokotronis [.]

11.

Carisbrook
Blackheath
Kent
England

March 14 [1891]

Dear D^r Politês

I am about to ask a favour which I feel sure you will have no objection to grant. I am engaged on a new Monthly Magazine to write notices of Greek periodicals. You know full well that I have the Ἑστία and M^r Damberges sends me the Ἐβδομας [sic]. I have reviewed both the current numbers of these magazines which will appear in April.⁶⁰ Now I want to prepare notices of some other periodicals for the May number, and if you could help me by asking the Editor of any historical or scientific magazine to forward me a number [of] the latest one out, I should be very grateful. I have written to the Editor of the Λόγος⁶¹ to this effect and would have written myself to others if I had known of them. They must be magazines not newspapers. I will send you a copy of 'the Ladder' when out. I am sure you will agree with me that any effort to spread the closer knowledge of the English peoples with Greek literature is desirable.

Ever Yours faithfully
E. M. Edmonds

12.

Carisbrook
Blackheath

Feb 10 [1893]

Dear D^r Polites

I beg to thank you most warmly for your interesting pamphlet, which I value much. I am sending you by this post a n^o of 'Eastern & Western Review', and a little tale I wrote for children at Xmas.⁶² I suppose your children can read English.

60 See the column 'Athenian periodicals', in *The Ladder* 1/4 (April 1891) 255-6.

61 The newspaper *Λόγος* was a religious paper covering general themes, published in Athens under the editorship of S. D. Philaretos for the period 1889-1905. An organ of the popular lay preacher Apostolos Makrakis and his followers, the newspaper advocated his views on the regeneration of 'Christian Hellenism'. It seems that Edmonds was unaware of Politis' hostile relations with Makrakis' circle and especially with Philaretos himself, who had angrily attacked him in 1884-5 for his 'anti-Christian' ideas. Cf. my introductory comments.

62 See E. M. Edmonds, *The History of a Church Mouse* (London 1892).

What great sympathy all must feel at the present time for unfortunate Zante. How terrible is such an infliction!

Again thanking you much

I remain
Yours faithfully
E. M. Edmonds

The mag ought to have been sent in Nov. I put it on one side & forgot it.

13. Postcard

recto

D^f G N[sic] Politês

Athens

Greece

Postmarked: London MY13 93

verso

Carisbrook
Blackheath

May 13 [1893]

Dear M^f Polites

I regret to say that the n^o of Eastern & W. Review containing 'Quaint Customs in Rural Greece'⁶³ is out of print and all my efforts to procure a copy have been unavailing. I have however great pleasure in sending you the current number with my few words on poor Zante.⁶⁴

Yours Ever sincerely
E. M. Edmonds

14.

Carisbrook
Blackheath

May 4 [1896]

Dear D^f Polites

I have been quite overjoyed at the great success of the Olympic games in which you took so great a part and thank you most warmly for the beautiful publication sent to me by your orders. I hope that you did not think my lines in the 'Academy' quite

63 E. M. Edmonds, 'Quaint customs of rural Greece', *The Eastern and Western Review* 2/2 (July 1892) 115–22.

64 E. M. Edmonds, 'The flower of the Levant: Zante', *The Eastern and Western Review* 3/5 (May 1893) 341–6.

unworthy of the Marathonian victory.⁶⁵ They were struck off red hot as it were as they had to appear directly whilst the feeling was fresh. M^r Gennadius liked them and others thought they were just enough without any undue exaggeration. Of course I think that they are not nearly good enough, but I am never satisfied with anything I do, but I can but give of my best, though that best is but poor.

It was a sad cloud following so soon upon victory to have the city in mourning for her great statesman[,] for whatever difference of opinion may exist, Trikoupis was a great man:⁶⁶ but grief follows, or treads closely upon the heels of joy, in this life.

Please accept my congratulations for the success of the Games & Believe me

Ever Yours sincerely
Eliz. M. Edmonds

15.

Carisbrook
Blackheath

May 14 [1898]⁶⁷

Dear D^r Polites

Allow me to thank you as the President of the Parnassos for the Annual Report, that you have so kindly sent me. I think that this year's Έπετηρίς exceeds in interest those that have gone before. Being much interested in all matters connected with the Greek church I read the papers bearing references to it with much pleasure and profit.

I think dear D^r Polites that we may now rejoice together over the improved aspect of Greek affairs. Much of course remains to be accomplished, and there are many pessimists who will always look on the cloudy side, but as I have never despaired in the hour of your greatest peril, I shall not begin to do so now.

Ever believe me
Faithfully Yours
Elizabeth M. Edmonds

65 The games, held in Athens from 6 to 15 April 1896 (25 March to 3 April by the Julian calendar), were the first modern Olympic Games. For Edmonds's poem see Elizabeth Mayhew Edmonds, 'Original verse: Runners from Marathon (490 B.C. and April 10, 1896, A.D.)', *The Academy* 1250 (18 April 1896) 324. Photographs of this letter are published in *Ο Νικόλαος Γ. Πολίτης*, I, 399 and II, 1164-5 (Appendix).

66 Charilaos Trikoupis, who served as prime minister of Greece seven times from 1875 until 1895, died in Cannes on 11 April/30 March 1896.

67 The letter was most likely written in 1898. The monthly journal *Παρνασσός* (1877-95) issued by the Parnassos Literary Society was replaced by the annual publication *Έπετηρίς* (1896-1917). The second volume of *Έπετηρίς* appeared in March 1898 (see the announcement in the newspaper *Το Άστυ*, 16 March 1898, <http://invenio.lib.auth.gr/record/97565?ln=es>) and contains the annual report of the president of the society N. G. Politis for the year 1896-7. Timoleon A. Argyropoulos succeeded Politis as president in September 1897. See 'Έκθεσις των πεπραγμένων υπό του Συλλόγου κατά το ΔΒ' έτος της συστάσεως αυτού (1896-1897) (Προεδρεία Ν. Γ. Πολίτου)', *Έπετηρίς* 2 (1898) 329-43.

16.

Carisbrook
Blackheath

July 1st [1898]

Dear D^r Polites

Will you kindly give M^r Lawson, a young student in folk-lore, a few hints that may be useful in enabling him to prosecute his researches in Greece. Any advice from so great an authority as yourself would be most invaluable to him and would save him much loss of time.

I take this opportunity of thanking you for the volume of ΕΤΟΣ Β⁶⁸ of the reports of ΠΑΡΝΑΣΣΟΣ [sic] and for various papers of your own received at different times, and remain as ever

Yours most sincerely
Eliz. M. Edmonds

17.

Carisbrook
Blackheath
SE
England

[190-]

Dear D^r Polites

I write a few lines of thankful joy in discovering that in the late disastrous fire at our house to which we ourselves almost fell as sacrifice, among the many treasured books that were destroyed, your most erudite and justly valued volume 'Παροιμία'⁶⁹ was preserved.

I am sorry to say that your kind congratulations on my Golden wedding⁷⁰ as well as the diploma of my admission as Honorary member into the Parnassos were amongst the many papers and MSS. that perished in the flames.⁷¹

68 Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος Παρνασσός, *Επετηρίς* 2 (1898), which appeared in March of that year.

69 N. G. Politis, *Μελέται περί του βίου και της γλώσσης του ελληνικού λαού: Παροιμία*, 4 vols (Athens 1899-1902).

70 Elizabeth *née* Waller married Augustus Robert Edmonds on 15 December 1849, thus making 1899 their golden anniversary. See S. Assinder, 'Edmonds, Elizabeth Mayhew (*bp.* 1821, *d.* 1907)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Sept 2015 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/107349>, accessed 4 Feb 2017].

71 It is quite probable that Edmonds's correspondence with Greek writers was destroyed in this fire, which might explain why Assinder, 'Greece', 11, found 'no record of the fate of her correspondence.'

My husband joins with me in wishing the happiness and success of yourself, your family[,] your country, and the Society in which you are interested and believe me

Ever Yours most sincerely
Elizabeth Mayhew Edmonds

18.

Carisbrook
Blackheath
[S^t John R.: struck out]
S^e⁷²

ἀπ. 16/29 X. '03

Dear D^r Polites

May I so far presume upon past kindness as to ask you a few questions relative to the policy of your dear country. A friend of mine is going to lecture upon 'Greece' on the 15th November ('The political systems of the world'). I have promised to help her in preparing her lecture. Will you kindly tell me if 1. Education is still free[?] 2. If there is Conscription? 3. Universal suffrage? and give me a few notes that will be useful in bringing the present state of Greece before an audience who meet to learn from a series of lectures how to acquire through descriptions of their history & modes of government a more sympathetic feeling to [cancelled word] and with [sic] foreign countries with a view to promote international amity.

Believe me

Always Yours faithfully
Elizabeth M. Edmonds

19.

Carisbrook
Blackheath
England

23 Feb [1906]

D[ea]r D^r Polites

It is long since I heard from you, and very many things have occurred since the time when you wrote your kind congratulations upon the golden wedding of myself and my adorable husband. You then wished that we might see a diamond wedding. Well, at one time I thought it might be but I hardly desired that it should be [,] as at a diamond with increase of infirmities Joy can never be present. We were not however destined to have a diamond wedding. God decreed otherwise. My dear husband never really recovered from a sharp attack of influenza in 1902, but he enjoyed his life, gardened, and exerted himself to the utmost to make home gladsome & bright, but was frequently obliged to

72 Reading unclear.

remain a semi invalid. We enjoyed however our 55th Wedding day on the 15th of last December, but though he was bright and compani[on]able as usual he declined soon after & passed away on the 24th January. I enclose a cutting from a local paper as perhaps you missed the notice in the Times and other papers.

I still take a lively interest in Greek affairs. My darling husband shared my tastes. We had never worn spectacles and therefore could enjoy reading to the last. He was very enthusiastic in his youth and his bright loveable nature never became dimmed.

I suppose you are still much concerned with your studies in Folklore. Hoping M^{rs} Polites & your family are well I remain

Ever sincerely yours
Elizabeth Edmonds⁷³

20.

Undated letter on decorated notepaper inserted in a small envelope with 'D^r Polites' written on it.

Dear D^r Polites

A very happy Christmas to yourself and all who are dear to you with hearty wishes for a prosperous New Year, never forgetting the wider prosperity and peace of our beloved Hellas from

Yours Ever sincerely
Elizabeth Mayhew Edmonds

73 Enclosed is a brief newspaper clipping recording the death of her husband, Augustus Robert Edmonds, and providing brief biographical information.