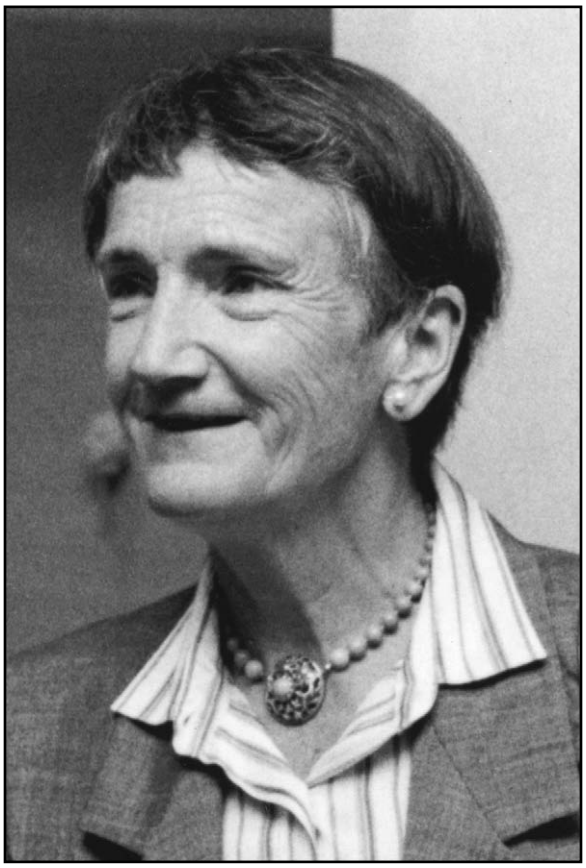
ELFRIEDE REGINA KNAUER



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ELFRIEDE KNAUER, affectionately known to her friends and colleagues as Kezia, so appreciated being a member of the American Philosophical Society that she attended the April 2010 Meetings despite being in a wheelchair, suffering from an ulcerated wound on one leg that may ultimately have led to her premature death about a month later. Personally reserved, albeit most generous in sharing her vast knowledge, Kezia seldom mentioned her complex background or her many vicissitudes. I had known her as a treasured and admired friend for more than forty years, yet I could not have produced a coherent narrative of her life without considerable help. Luckily, in 2009 a publication by the Akanthus Press (Kilchberg, Canton of Zürich) promoted by Adrienne Lezzi (*Coats, Queens, and Cormorants: Selected Studies in Cultural Contacts between East and West*), prefaced a collection of fifteen studies by Kezia with a biographical sketch and a bibliography by the author. I have quoted extensively from that source, as well as from additional material kindly provided by Kezia's husband, Professor Georg Nicolaus Knauer. Such papers included an autobiographical essay for the APS started in 2005 but never finished; it covers Kezia's family background and her life until the end of World War II, thus supplementing the preface in the Akanthus volume.

Kezia's family was originally Austrian, but became officially German after the *Anschluss* of 1938. She was born (a twin) in the house of her maternal grandfather, Professor Dr. jur. Edmund Kloeppel, in Wiesdorf —a small village whose name was changed to Leverkusen with the growth of the Bayer firm, of which her grandfather was a board member. Kezia's father, Dr. jur. Julius Overhoff, a businessman, was from Vienna but began working for Bayer in Cologne, where he met and married Edith Kloeppel. The union produced five children: a son, Julius, the twins, Kezia and Sybille, a second son, Martin, and one more daughter, Konstanze. Julius was killed in action during World War II (1944); Sybille, who married Denys Haynes, keeper of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the British Museum, is now a noted Etruscologist and lives in Oxford. The two remaining siblings are in Germany.

Kezia's father was a learned man who wrote lyrics, essays, and travel accounts. Because he had learned the respective languages, he worked for IG Farben in Poland and (in the 1920s) in the young USSR. There he became friends with two families who had to leave Russia, settled briefly in Berlin, and were eventually forced to repair to the United States. Their generous friendship (across two generations) was to prove important to the twins after the war. Later, Dr. Overhoff's work occasionally demanded lengthy stays in South America, and Kezia's mother had to cope with her family alone for months at a time. She had studied architecture, but could not complete her dissertation

because of her teachers' forced departure from Germany; she learned Arabic, Persian, and Turkish while bringing up her children and was a major force behind their education. The family had settled first in Berlin, then in Frankfurt, where the twins began their formal schooling. Although primary instruction under Hitler's regime was intellectually "less than stimulating," the Overhoff children profited from the extensive library assembled by their parents and from their interesting discussions "especially at meals." Before the war broke out, moreover, despite restrictions on traveling, they were taken on a short trip to Northern Italy and to vacation places in Austria where "collecting, drawing and analyzing flowers" were encouraged activities. The seeds of Kezia's uncanny skill for observation were planted.

In 1936 the twins joined the Ziehen Oberrealschule, a coeducational institution in Frankfurt-Eschersheim that offered also French, English, and three years of Latin. But in 1938 their mother decided that they should supplement their lessons with drawing and painting, and they were sent to learn the various techniques at the studio of Frieda Blanca von Joeden in Frankfurt. This training proved especially useful to Kezia, who later, in researching the oeuvre of the Triptolemos Painter (a red-figure Attic vase painter of the early fifth century BCE), personally examined, measured, and *drew* 175 pieces by that master.

The war years were understandably hard on the twins. Forced to join first the *Jungmädel* (National Socialist youth organization) and then the *Bund Deutscher Mädchen* (the second stage of the same group), they had to work for underprivileged families and on farms at harvest time. After completing their high school, they were automatically drafted into obligatory labor, first with farmers in a poor mountainous region, then in an ammunition factory located in an old mine, where they were joined by French and Russian prisoners of war. Both twins often fell ill, but only Sybille (the younger by five minutes) was occasionally allowed to spend time at home. During air raids, the workers "were made to wait out in trenches, many filled with ice and water." In a rare moment of sharing wartime confidences, Kezia told me how they actually hoped that bombs would strike the factory to put an end to their ordeal. Yet in her writings Kezia stressed how such experiences built "character"; they must have bred into her that iron discipline and self-control that allowed her to devote such focused attention to scholarship and research. When the war ended and the twins were able to leave the factory, they made their way, largely on foot, to their (miraculously) still standing home, only to be evacuated later, finding refuge in an abandoned, windowless apartment.

Life gradually resumed a more normal course, and Kezia's parents could gather around them a group of accomplished friends. A "frequent

visitor" was the Sinologist Carl Hentze, who was both a philologist and a painter. Through his private tutorials in language and art, Kezia was auspiciously introduced to early Chinese imagery and its connections with western Asian civilizations—a subject that would occupy so much of her attention in later times. This training, moreover, proved excellent preparation for courses in classical archaeology, history of art, ancient history, and ethnology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt, which Kezia joined in late 1945, and at the Frobenius Institute with its emphasis on African cultures. Among the array of major scholars who had gathered at these re-opened institutions, two proved especially influential on Kezia's intellectual bent: the art historian Harald Keller and the anthropologist Adolf Ellegard Jensen. The former insisted that his students view, analyze, and describe "the minutest item," exposing them to "the nuts and bolts of the field"; the latter opened their minds to potential connections among human rituals and beliefs, encouraging comparisons of disparate cultures. Another influential teacher was the Swiss Matthias Geltzer, an ancient historian of "singular moral authority" who stressed "rock-solid" methodology.

Two significant events took place during Kezia's university years, each of them bound indelibly to affect her future. In 1948, at the lectures of the Grecist Karl Reinhardt, she met a classical philology student from Hamburg University, "Nico" Knauer, whom she married in 1951. And between 1948 and 1950, supported by their old Russian/American friends, the twins could travel for several months to museums in France, Italy, and England. The professional contacts made during those travels became lifelong friendships. In Paris Kezia worked briefly with "a ladies' tailor," and the acquired ability to make clothes gave her an acute understanding of, and interest in, the history of costume.

In 1951 Kezia obtained her Ph.D. with a doctoral dissertation on pre-Christian apsidal buildings in Greece and Italy, under Guido von Kaschnitz-Weinberg. Her husband (whose Hamburg dissertation was on the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine) worked for two years at the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* in Munich, but there were no positions for female archaeologists. During that time Kezia had a son (Lorenz) and studied Arabic. The family then relocated for twenty years (1954–74) to West Berlin, where Nico taught at the Freie Universität and Kezia was temporarily assigned (as *Wissenschaftliche Angestellte*—research assistant—under Adolf Greifenhagen) to the antiquities section of the Berlin State Museums in Charlottenburg (1962–63; 1968). In that capacity Kezia had the exhilarating experience of working hands-on with Greek and Roman objects hitherto known to her only in images. Her previous publications had consisted of art-historical translations and numerous biographical/historical entries in lexica and encyclopedias,

but now she could devote herself to Greek vases: her monographs on the Berlin vase by Andokides *(Reclams Universal-Bibliothek* no. 103, 1965) and a *skyphos* by the Triptolemos Painter (*Berliner Winckelmannsprogramm* no. 125, 1973) are only two early examples of Kezia's extensive use of Greek pictorial imagery, which provided insights and evidence for most of her later publications.

Kezia's career-long research on the Triptolemos Painter demanded, as already mentioned, that she travel extensively to view personally all vases and fragments attributed to that master. She thus began a series of journeys in which her husband was her faithful companion and willing photographer, whose excellent pictures illustrate most of Kezia's publications. In 1957 they visited Anatolia (for which Kezia learned Turkish); in 1963–64 for the first time they traveled within the United States; in 1973 they were in Sicily (Magna Graecia) and Greece (for which Kezia acquired modern Greek). In 1973–74 they returned to Princeton, where for nine months Nico was a member at the Institute for Advanced Study, enjoying the friendship of APS member Homer A. Thompson. On their way back to Berlin, two spring months took them to Hawaii, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, India, Afghanistan, Iran—an Eastern "detour" that triggered Kezia's already incipient fascination with East-West cultural contacts and was to inform so many of her writings.

In the meantime "the political skies over Berlin had darkened considerably" and the university was threatened by "radical ideologues." After becoming involved in a resistance movement, in 1975 Nico Knauer was ready to accept a chair in Classics at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Soon after that, another APS member, Paul Oskar Kristeller of Columbia University, assigned to him the "Latin Translations of Homer ca. 1350–1620" for his *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum* (Washington, D.C.). This task, too, required extensive traveling to inspect manuscripts in many European and American libraries. The Knauers therefore embarked on a new series of peregrinations.

Kezia would have enjoyed teaching, but at the time unwritten rules prohibiting husbands and wives from working at the same university prevented her from doing more than lecturing twice for the Department of the History of Art at Penn (spring terms 1979, 1981: "Development of Greek Vase-painting"). This apparent obstacle freed Kezia for almost unlimited research and writing. From 1983 to 1986 she was officially appointed research associate in the Mediterranean Section of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology of the University of Pennsylvania—a title, converted to consulting scholar in 1986, for which, in 2002, she received the Director's Award. Other scholarly recognitions followed. In 1989 (with a grant from the APS) she was asked to

contribute to the International Congress on Problems Connected with the Rider Statue of Marcus Aurelius on the Occasion of its Restoration (Rome, 13–15 April). In 1994 she was invited to the Study and Conference Center of the Rockefeller Foundation in Bellagio, Italy, where she spent February–March—in the process making use of her fluent Italian. That same year she was a fall-term resident in classical archaeology and art history at the American Academy in Rome (AAR), whose extensive library she continued to use almost annually. Other helpful resources were the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, Germany (from which she received a director's grant for March 2000), and the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, which inspired several of her essays.

An important feature of Kezia's life in the States was her travels. From her list, omitting repetitions from my previous mentions, I have extracted the following: "Western and Eastern Europe (including Iceland), North Africa (Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco), North-, Central-, and South-America, the Middle and Far East (including Burma, Cambodia, Cyprus, China with Tibet, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Laos, Mongolia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Syria, and the former USSR)." Kezia had the uncanny ability to remember apparently disparate features from different cultures and different times, seen at great intervals in varied locations, and then to connect them in ways that threw light not only on unsuspected influences down to present days, but also on unforeseen and hidden meanings. For instance, she was able to give new significance to the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius through an analysis of its saddle cloth, which is of clear Persian origin. That origin had thus far gone unremarked; it proved that the monument could not have commemorated the emperor's Danubian campaigns, as generally assumed, but symbolized instead the peace he had negotiated in AD 176 with several Iranian kings. Similarly, a detail in Giotto's fresco of *Infidelitas* in Padua's Arena Chapel connects the personification with the Muslim "infidels": an inconspicuous *cuffia* (cloth cap) worn under a helmet but noticeable through the straps hanging on either side of the face. Kezia shows examples worn by Mongols and other foreigners and suggests that Florentines might have been familiar with visitors from Eastern lands and their attire.

Costume was an endless source of inspiration for Kezia. Perhaps the most startling of her publications appeared shortly before her death: "Observations on Female Portraits in the Renaissance: The Yellow Shawl and the *Gioconda*," in *Raccolta Vinciana* 33 (Milan 2009): 1–79. By placing the famous "Monna Lisa" (thus correctly spelled in Italian) within the context of contemporary portraits of courtesans and noblewomen, Kezia was able, through an analysis of costumes and their

prescribed colors, to demonstrate that the subject of Leonardo's painting, of whom a naked version also exists, was probably a mistress of the duke of Milan, Ludovico il Moro. The title "gioconda" is an adjective suggestive of her status (like "merry" in English and *Freudenmädchen* in German) and certainly impossible as a derivative from her alleged husband's name, Francesco del Giocondo. Vasari may never have seen the Louvre portrait itself, since his description does not correspond to it and probably refers to a different painting in Florence. Yellow clothing was a distinctive signifier for prostitutes, as Kezia had already argued, on the basis of Venetian laws, in "Portrait of a Lady? Some Reflections on Images of Prostitutes from the Later 15th Century," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 47 (2002): 95–117. As is typical of Kezia's entire corpus of publications, exceptionally long and rich footnotes provide not only documentation, but also forays into related sidelines and avenues for future research.

Kezia's skill in connecting classical antiquity with Early Modern time informed her analysis of a tapestry that had long hung on a wall of the AAR, but had scarcely been noticed. Cleaned and repaired, it was published by Kezia in two articles (2005, 2006/2007), later joined in book form: *The* Battle of Zama *after Giulio Romano. A Tapestry in the American Academy in Rome* (Rome, 2008). The first essay identifies the battle, compares its depiction with accounts in literary sources, and places it in the context of tapestry production; the second emphasizes the Renaissance concept of the "virtuous" Roman victor, Scipio Africanus, which made him such a popular subject in a variety of renderings. Kezia's originality is further demonstrated by another book: *The Camel's Load in Life and Death. Iconography and Ideology of Chinese Pottery Figurines from Han to Tang and Their Relevance to Trade along the Silk Routes* (Kilchberg, Canton of Zürich, 1998), which received the Prix Stanislas Julien de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in 1999. In an unusual approach to the history of the Silk Road (which Kezia had personally traveled), she focused on ceramic statuettes of Bactrian camels, largely found in funerary contexts and now scattered throughout the world. She analyzed what they were shown to carry, compared it with what is known from literary and archaeological evidence, explained the symbolism of the figurines' decorations, and went beyond her chosen periods (206 BCE–AD 907), excellently illustrating both her subject and comparative material.

It is impossible to do justice to the range of Kezia's interests without duplicating her list of seventy-six publications. The essays collected in *Coats, Queens, and Cormorants* justify the East-West subtitle and include (as selected examples) Egyptian marble jar-stands and stepped water fountains, Italian wind towers, exotic pigments in Roman

paintings, mysterious marble objects identified as scroll-holders, the Chinese-Venetian practice of fishing with cormorants, fifth-century Buddhist cave-temples at Yün-kang (whose colossal sculptures she compares to the Hellenistic statues at Nemrud-Dagh), the "Barbarian" use of enemies' heads, and various items of Greek armor adopted in the East, as well as vice versa (e.g., the Oriental tiara worn under Greek helmets to signify victory over the Persians). To this last theme, with emphasis on the sleeved coat, Kezia had already given monographic treatment within the seminal series *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* (II.12,3, 1985). But where to classify one more title? *Die Carta Marina des Olaus Magnus von 1539. Ein kartographisches Meisterwerk und seine Wirkung* (Göttingen, 1981)—a fascinating account of early cartography, its vignettes, its depictions of sea-monsters, and its influence on Italian wall paintings.

Kezia's voluminous material on the Triptolemos Painter will be sent to the Beazley Archives in Oxford, and other work remains unfinished, although she was working at her computer until the last days. (In visiting her then, I was astounded to discover that she enjoyed reading books by Andrea Camilleri, a prolific Italian writer whose Sicilian dialect is at times difficult even for this native Italian to understand!) This remarkable polyglot had still much to offer and will be greatly missed. Our condolences go to her husband, her siblings, her son, and her grandson (Maximilian), but also to the many younger scholars at Bryn Mawr College and Penn who, at lectures and symposia, have lost the benefit of her customary penetrating comments and unstinting help.

Elected 1999; Committee on Moe Prize 2002–10

Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway
Rhys Carpenter Professor of Archaeology Emerita
Bryn Mawr College