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Anodos, Late Antiquity and Greek Translation in George MacDonald

Oliver Burton Langworthy

Introduction

In George MacDonald's 1858 novel *Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women,* the main character, Anodos, enters Fairy Land the day after his twenty-first birthday and embarks upon a journey through that land before returning home at the end of the novel. Scholarship on *Phantastes* contains a number of speculations about the name Anodos. Within this body of work there are therefore competing definitions of the word's philology, source, and its meaning within MacDonald's text. Moreover, these definitions often become the cornerstone for larger arguments regarding the sources MacDonald could have used in the text as a whole. This article aims to provide a closer examination of the name Anodos and the Greek *anodos* (ἄνοδος) with the aim of clarifying the discussion of the term within MacDonald scholarship. This will be undertaken in two related parts. First, I will discuss, with reference to recently disclosed primary source material, MacDonald's education in Greek at the University of Aberdeen and Highbury College so as to establish the probable boundaries of his capacity to translate Greek and to fix some possible source texts within, or closely related to, that probable range. Second, having established some sources on *anodos* in Greek literature to which he could have been exposed, I will discuss the issues of translation, principally of sense and meaning, that arise from the use of *anodos* in these sources.

Ultimately, the intent of this paper is not to argue for a unitary meaning, let alone a single meaning, of *anodos* within *Phantastes*. The lack of substantial works translated by MacDonald from Greek has relegated the subject even further back than his similarly unappreciated knowledge of and translations from German. Nevertheless, MacDonald's Scotland was steeped in a tradition of study of Classical Greek literature, and his later education and experiences in England would further expose him to works composed in Greek. This is an exercise in clarification in service to a broader and more significant aim: to put flesh on the bones of the current appreciation of George MacDonald as

a translator of Greek, coming out of a Scottish educational milieu had high regard for Greek language and literature. [1]

MacDonald's Education in Greek

Works of Greek literature formed a cornerstone of education at the University of Aberdeen since the foundation of King's College by William Elphinstone in 1451, attested by a range of works retained in the libraries of King's and Marischal's Colleges. The earliest source for MacDonald's own interaction with this tradition in Scottish education is from May 2, 1838, at the MacDonald family estate of Bleachfield Cottage, when he was fourteen years old and would have been studying for his entrance exams for the University of Aberdeen.

This date, and his age, are fixed with reference to his earliest Greek textbook, a translation of the Latin edition of Moor's *Elements of the Greek Language* from 1836.[2] Casual vandalism of the volume appears to have been a family tradition, as annotations in several hands, in English and Greek, can be discerned on these pages. In addition to George MacDonald's inscription, there are four others, in three distinctive hands, from a John H. MacDonald and a John Hill MacDonald. Except for George MacDonald's, a date is attached to only one inscription, that of John Hill MacDonald at Bleachfield Cottage on April 27, 1846. Another from Bleachfield Cottage, and two from King's College can be seen, but damage to the pages has obscured the dates. While it is therefore impossible to attribute the other writing in these pages to a particular MacDonald, they are instructive examples of the level of proficiency the holders had when it came into their possession. In addition to the Greek alphabet, written in four distinctive hands, several lines of English written in Greek letters can be made out by one -ννες Μαχδοναλδ, where he reproduces his current address: Ὑντλυ – Αβερδεενσιρε Σχοτλανδ Βριταν ὁ μεγας νου στειγγ ατ θε στρεετ του Βασιλεος. Four words of actual Greek are present here, all with incorrect diacritics. Transliterated back it reads 'Huntly – Aberdeenshire, Scotland, Great Britain now staying at the street of the King.' That this is the product of a neophyte is apparent. A very basic familiarity with declensions and some rudimentary grammar is telling in itself, but even

[1] See Neil Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries Vol. II, Abbotsford to Keele* (Oxford: 1977) and M. R. James, *A Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts in the University Library Aberdeen* (Cambridge: 1932) or the extensive digital catalogue provided by the University of Aberdeen.

[2] With particular thanks to Christopher MacDonald for making images of these documents available for study.

beyond this the act of writing out English in Greek letters to familiarise the student with the alphabet is still practised today. While these inscriptions do not appear to be in George MacDonald's hand (acknowledging the difficulty of discerning this), he wrote at least one of the alphabets found in these pages and was likely around this same level of proficiency when he received the book.

This level of proficiency is unlikely to have persisted as rigorous engagement with Greek would have continued at King's College, with MacDonald having studied it for at least three hours a day during his undergraduate degree.[3] Unfortunately, there are no known materials directly attributable to MacDonald's study of Greek during this period. MacDonald's successful completion of his undergraduate degree suggests that he at least had a basic familiarity with the material tested in these exams. Upon entering Highbury in 1848 to train as a Congregationalist minister MacDonald's studies would have been 'comprise[d of] the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syriac languages, the belles lettres, intellectual and moral philosophy, the mathematics, history, biblical criticism, the composition of sermons, theology, Hebrew antiquities, &c.'[4] While recourse is often made to F. D. Maurice, or more rarely to A. J. Scott, as influences on MacDonald while at Highbury, a notable interlocutor was Ebeneezer Henderson. From 1830–1850, Henderson was the theological lecture and the professor of Oriental languages.

So, in sum, MacDonald had about twelve years of Greek while at Aberdeen and Highbury, which is more than sufficient to qualify him as a translator of the language. He had ready access to a range of texts, as attested in the review of the Highbury curriculum, and implied by the works of his immediate tutors. As we continue on to consider the uses and significance of *anodos* within Greek literature, we will return to the Highbury curriculum, and to Henderson's work, but this hopefully provides a sense of the scope of Greek to which MacDonald was exposed.

Anodos in MacDonald Research

Within the main body of criticism on *Phantastes* there are several definitions of *anodos* supplied. These include 'without a path' or 'pathless' 'the way back', and 'the way up'.[5] Jonathan Sotto provides an excellent overview, noting these

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[3] David Robb, *George MacDonald* (Edinburgh, 1987), 9.

[4] 'Isham – Iver', in *A Topographical Dictionary of England*, ed. Samuel Lewis (London, 1848), 6–628.

[5] For 'without a path' see Yuri Cowan, 'Allegory and Aestheticism in the Fantasies of

definitions and highlighting the need for an academic exploration of this issue: if a large part of MacDonald's enigmatic story is to be understood, the Greek meanings of this word must be reviewed in their full historical settings and contexts. The uses of the word *anodos*, along with the Greek mythology and religion associated with this word, Sotto asserts, prove central to an understanding of the mysteries within *Phantastes*.[6] These differing definitions *anodos* influence the interpretation of the text, and larger arguments are built upon the definition which the individual critic chooses to use. Other scholars make similar arguments for translations of *anodos*, which Sotto notes as Wolff, Hein, Manlove, Reis, Docherty, Gunther and Muirhead.[7] Sotto goes on to argue principally around the mythical significations of *anodos*. Prior to considering these ourselves, it is profitable to consider *anodos* in more strictly philological terms.

Sense and Meaning

The 1855 edition of Liddell and Scott dates from a few year prior to the publication of *Phantastes*, and offers translations under two different entries ἄν-οδος: 'having no way/impassible' and ἄνοδος: 'way up/ascent'.[8] While it is true that *anodos* can mean both of these things, this is only true in the sense that idea is the same in an ideal definition and a definite ideal. One is adjective, and one is a noun, just as *anodos* as an adjective means impassible, and *anodos* as a noun means way up. In fact, the difference is even more pronounced in the case of *anodos*: there are two different constructions leading to an identical word distinguished by context. On the one hand is ἄνοδος constructed from an alpha privative attached to -οδος and giving us 'impassible' or 'no way'. It is from this that MacDonald scholars derive their 'trackless' imagery. On the other is ἄνοδος, constructed from ἀνα- attached to -οδος which gives us 'way up' or 'ascent', or 'rising'. These different constructions produce, in effect, two different words. That is to say, when used in context it is relatively difficult to confuse them – one being a noun, and the other an adjective. With this in mind, it is possible to consider the meanings and their sense in context, which are more expansive than the limited entries in the 1855 edition of Liddell and Scott suggest.

George MacDonald', *North Wind*, 25 (2006), 42. For 'pathless' see Christ Brawley, 'The Ideal and the Shadow: George MacDonald's Phantastes', *North Wind*, 25 (2006), 97. For reference to 'the way back' and the 'way up' see Aren Roukema 'The Shadow of Anodos: Alchemical Symbolism in Phantastes', *North Wind*, 31 (2012), 62.

6 Fernando Sotto, 'Chthonic Aspects of MacDonald's Phantastes: From the Rising of the Goddess to the Anodos of Anodos' *North Wind*, 18 (2000), 20.

7 Ibid.

8 Henry Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: 1855), 123.

Impassible

Anodos as an adjective expressing 'impassable' or 'having no way' has two well established examples. Euripedes, c. 480 BCE, wrote of 'trackless paths' in *Iphigenia*. Similarly, Xenophon, c. 430 BCE, referred to mountains that were impassable or trackless in *Anabasis*. Such adjectival are not unusual but are equally far less common than its use as a noun. Despite this, the adjectival use has clearly captured the imaginations of numerous MacDonald scholars.[9] MacDonald's facility with Greek certainly allows for the possibility that he could have encountered the term in either context. However, the presence of Xenophon on both the Highbury and King's College curriculums makes that option somewhat more plausible. However, neither can be definitely asserted on the basis of either arguments currently put forward in MacDonald scholarship or from external evidence from MacDonald's own work.

Physical Rising in Mythology and Elsewhere

The use of *anodos* as referring to ascent, or way up, is rather more well attested than 'impassable'. References range from the rising of stars in Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle to the rising of the Nile in Aelian.[10] The association of these more straightforward, physical ascents with mythological figures are the uses that have most taken MacDonald scholars. This is problematic as the use of *anodos* to refer to ascent from an underworld is quite limited. For example, while there may be a 'way up' for Orpheus, if he ever takes an *anodos*, it will not have been in Virgil or Ovid, both Latin authors (though he does tread an acclīvis (ascending path).[11] In Persephone's cyclical departure and return to captivity, as recounted in Homer's *Hymn to Demeter*, she does not take an *anodos* but is instead told to ἄνειμι (go up) from the misted land of Hades. While these figures may be considered to have ascensions attributed to them the texts themselves cannot be considered valid sources for any consideration of where MacDonald derived the name of the protagonist of *Phantastes* on the simple basis that the word *anodos* does not appear in them.

Problematically for Sotto, and others who argue for a Greek mythological account of Anodos such as Battersby, there are no accounts verifiably contemporary with the religious festivals commemorating these events that contain the word *anodos*. Archaeological and classical works, notably Berard Claude's *Anodoi. Essai sur L'imagerie des Passages Chthoniens* and Sottos'

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[9] See the prior discussion for examples to this effect.

[10] Aristotle, *Meteorologica* 355.6 and Aelian, *De Natura Animalium* 11.0.

[11] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.53.

principle source, Jane Harrison's *Themis* and her *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, draw largely, though not exclusively, on illustrations on red clay jars and mythological sequences that they identify as *anodoi*, but which are not internally identified as such.[12] Their attribution of *anodoi* to these images are largely a construction of the author. However, the association of these mythical images, on jars and in literature, with Persephone or Kore returning from Hades is not without basis.

It is possible to associate *anodos* with Persephone's return by way of the festival of Thesmophoria, a Greek cultic festival. Sotto and Battersby, as mentioned earlier, argue strongly for a connection with Persophone. Although none of the primary sources use the term *anodos*, the scholia on Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* does state that the first day of that festival is referred to as *anodos*, and one of the fictional letters of Alciphron relates that the *Anodos* happens on the first day of Thesmophoria.[13] The term is eminently applicable in this form, but for Sotto and Battersby's argument to be sound it is necessary that MacDonald had access to and was aware of a particular scholia on Aristophanes that is the sole use listed in a number of editions of Greek lexicons published around 1830-50. While this seems far-fetched, the existence of such scholia within MacDonald's intellectual reach is mentioned directly in a quotation from Henderson, in his notes to Stuart's *Elements of Biblical Interpretation and Criticism*:

> p. 72, from Henderon's notes, *Scholia* mean *short notes* upon any author either of an exegetical or grammatical nature. On all the distinguished Greek authors scholia have been written, in more recent times; many volumes of which are still extant, upon Homer, Thucydides, Sophocles, Aristophanes, &c. In like manner a multitude of scholia from the ancient Christian Fathers, especially of the Greek Church, have come down to us in their works. Originally they were brief remarks, occasionally made in their commentaries and other writings. Afterwards these were extracted and brought together, and they now form what is called *Catena*

[12] See Claude Berard, *Anodoi. Essai sur L'imagerie des Passages Chthoniens* (Rome, 1947); Jane Harrison, *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (Cambridge, 1912); and Jane Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (Cambridge, 1908).

[13] For an example of the scholia contemporary with MacDonald, see *Aristophanis Comoediae: Accedunt Perditarum Fabularum Fragmenta*, ed. G. Dindorfii (Oxford, 1838), 323.

> *Patrum*. Many scholia are also are found on the margin of manuscripts or interlined, or placed at the end of a book.[14]

A less verifiable source – in a variety of ways – is letter 37 of Alciphron. The letter makes the same association as does the scholia, noting that '[t]The Anodos has indeed has already taken place on the first day…'.[15] This is less verifiable for a number of reasons related to the text itself and to its availability to MacDonald. The most demonstrable of these is that while it is referenced in later lexicons, it is not present in those contemporary with MacDonald. While there are early editions of Alciphron their dating is fraught, and there is no way to connect them to MacDonald as with the scholia. While it is not impossible that he encountered, for example, Seiler's German 1856 edition of the letters, thisis far less likely than an encounter with the scholia itself which is referenced in contemporary lexical entries for *anodos*.

Metaphorical Rising in Plato and Neoplatonic Theology

While it is therefore not impossible for MacDonald to have directly interacted with that scholia on Aristophanes, the same source directs us to a rather broader range. Henderson makes particular reference to the existence of scholia in the works of Greek Patristic sources.[16] An examination of Henderson's publications shows which sources he was using, and which were filtering through to his students. In *The Great Mystery of Godliness Incontrovertible*, Henderson uses the authority of patristic sources, to support his arguments.[17] Henderson makes use Berriman's somewhat obscure 1741 *Critical Disseration on 1 Timonthy,* making specific mention of Berriman's use of the Greek and Latin fathers.[18] Henderson also refers to Burton's 1826 work *Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers to the Divinity of Christ.*[19] This text was one of the first to bring patristic sources to a the scholarly community and Henderson's engagement

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[14] Moses Stuart, trans. and ed., *Elements of Biblical Criticism*, repub. and comm. E. Henderson (London,: 1837), 72.

[15] Allen Benner, trans., *The Letters of Alcipheon, Aelian, and Philosteatus* (London, 1949), 143.

[16] Patristic here refers to works of theology in Greek and Latin composed by Christian writers between roughly the second and sixth centuries AD. This period is also referred to as Late Antiquity.

[17] E. Henderson *The Great Mystery of Godliness Incontrovertible or Sir Isaac Newton and the Socinians Foiled in the Attempt to Prove a Corruption in the Text 1 Tim III, 15*. (London, 1830).

[18] Ibid, 93.

[19] Ibid., 96.

with sources such as suggest his involvement within a growing academic engagement with the patristics. The other key text which Henderson would undoubtedly have used in his courses at Highbury is the1827 text *Elements of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation*, annotated by Henderson and quoted above.[20]

Of metaphorical uses of ascent, Plato's use of *anodon* in *Republic* 517b to refer to the ascent of the soul is the most commonly identified source. This is of course an extension of the physical ascent language implied in the scholia on Aristophanes or apparent in Socrates of Constantinople, but it also carries its own unique sense. Crucially, MacDonald cannot have gotten this from a non-Christian Neoplatonic source such as Plotinus, Iamblichus, or Porphyry: they do not depend on the language of *anodos*. A notable and curious exception that perhaps deserves better attention by MacDonald scholarship is the writing of the fourth century Emperor Julian – so-called the Apostate for his outlawing of Christianity. He does deploy the language and concept of *anodos*. The defining feature of his writing is his adaptation and representation of older myths with contemporary religious and philosophical elements, in an effort to render them meaningful and significant to his subjects. His ill-fated attempt to restore the pagan traditions of the Empire bears several interesting resemblances with themes from MacDonald's work, and could perhaps benefit from further examination in its own right. However, it is difficult to say if and where MacDonald would have encountered Julian. His work is obscure, but Greek editions were published in Paris in the seventeenth century, and these were extant in the United Kingdom. I have been unable to definitively identify references to his works in the curricula or libraries to which MacDonald had access, but this absence of evidence is not definitive.

However, this is not to say, however, that there is no other Neoplatonic adoption of *anodos*: third and fourth century Christians adopt it, most probably intending to imply a more significant connection to Plato than that enjoyed by their non-Christian contemporaries.[21] Such a move, by the proponents of True Philosophy, would not be out of place. Abundant evidence exists in the works of late antique Christian writers of the appropriation and adaptation of concepts and personages of non-Christian philosophy and religion. I have selected two instructive quotations to illustrate this – notably, both figures are familiar with the works of Origen, with Nazianzus having produced (with

[20] Moses Stuart *Elements of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation* ed. E. Henderson (London: B. J. Holdsworth, 1827)

[21] The appropriation, rather than explicit condemnation, of classical culture by late antique Christians is quite common although hardly universal.

Basil of Caesarea) Origen's *Philokalia*. Eusebius is notable for his *Ecclesiastical History*, but also produced many works of theology and Biblical commentary.

Three selections, from Gregory of Nazianzus' *In praise of Hero the Philosopher*, and one each from Eusebius of Caesarea's commentary on the Isaiah, demonstrate the broad reception of *anodos* language in the Fathers.

Gregory of Nazianzus uses *anodos* in a way which is similar to that employed by Plato, albeit with a particularly Christian reception:

> It does not become us, nor is it in keeping with a philosophical temper, to be impressed in this away with the nobility that issues from legends and tombs and an hauteur long decayed, nor that which is attached to family or conferred titles, a boon derived from the labors of night and the hands of princes who are perhaps not even of noble birth themselves, but dispense it like any other prize; but rather with the nobility that is characterized by piety and a moral life and the ascent (*anodos*) to the first good, the source of our being.[22]

Gregory writes in honour of the Christian convert Maximus, who would later betray him and attempt to usurp his position as bishop of Constantinople in 379. Prior to this, Maximus was highly regarded and considered a zealous and erudite defender of the faith. In praising him, Gregory alludes to two noteworthy themes in his corpus: deification and the true philosophy. The true philosophy, as contrasted with secular philosophy, concerns itself with virtuous conduct, Trinitarian faith, and practical emulation of Christ's example. Through this, one grows in faith towards knowledge of God. Reminiscent of Plato's ascent of the soul, in this case it is the deification of the believer: their ascent towards the divine source of being and good, or as much of it as can be achieved this side of death.

Eusebius, in his commentary on Isaiah, wrote that:

> And after Cyrus, Xerxes, the king of the Persians, sent away Ezra "the scribe of the law" with letters ordering all the rulers of the nations between the country of the Persians and that of the Jews to cooperate with Ezra. This then was the second group of those who returned (*ginetai anodos*) with Ezra. After these things, when Nehemiah was again going up (*aneimi*) to Jerusalem…[23]

[22] *Oration* 25, trans. M. Vinson, *Fathers of the Church* 107 (Washington, D.C., 2003), 159.

[23] Johnathan Armstrong, trans., *Ancient Christian Texts: Commentary on Isaiah* (Downers

This example, commenting on Isaiah 14:2, is especially interesting in that it demonstrates a contrast in context between *aneimi*, here going up, and *anodos*, a return. Eusebius was perfectly aware of the implications of ascent and restoration in *anodos*, and here connects it explicitly with the restoration of the exiles to Jerusalem. Elsewhere, in his commentaries on the Psalms, and on 67(68):33 in particular, Eusebius uses *kathodos*, *epanodos*, and *anodos* to discuss the rising and setting of the sun in tension with the restoration of Christ to Heaven.[24]

In the case of Gregory and Eusebius *anodos* carries implications not just of upwards motion as in the ascent of Christ to heaven or of the soul to its source, but of a return to a proper place. As Christ was incarnate on Earth, so too he ascends to Heaven to take his place as advocate alongside the Father. As mankind fell into sin, so too does it purify itself and progress towards God, the origin of its being. As with Plato's use to describe the ascent of the soul, these Fathers of the Church embraced and iterated the concept of an *anodos* to embrace the particular contours of Christian theology.

Faraday and Electrochemistry

A final area that is one that has generated an increasing amount of recent interst: the 'scientific' adaptation of *anodos* and *kathodos* into anode and cathode by Faraday in his work on electroplating. A familiarity with the genesis of anode and cathode helps concretise that it is precisely MacDonald's familiarity with Greek sources more broadly that must guide such a reading.

William Whewell, master of Trinity College, was the one who proposed to Faraday that anode and cathode be adopted. As he says in the letter 713,

> I have considered the two terms you want to substitute for *eisode* and *exode*, and upon the whole I am disposed to recommend instead of them *anode* and *cathode*. These words may signify *eastern* and *western way*, just as well as the longer compounds which you mention, which derive their meaning from words implying rising and setting, notions which anode and cathode imply more simply. But I will add that, as your object appears to me to be the indicate of opposition of direction without assuming any hypothesis which may hereafter turn out to be false, *up* and *down*, which must be arbitrary consequences of position on any

Grove, IL., 2013), 77.

[24] *Patrologia Graeca* 23.719.

> hypothesis, seem to be free from inconvenience even in their simplest sense. I may mention too that *anodos* and *cathodos* are good genuine Greek words, and not compounds coined for the purpose. […].[25]

Whewell's explanation of anode and cathode as signifying eastern and western refers to their use in describingphysical rising.[26] The rising of the sun in the east and its setting in the west are a principal point of reference in this regard. There is little to object to in his assessment here, and he continues in a similar vein in letter 716:

> As to the objection to *anode*, I do not really think it is worth hesitating about. *Anodos* and *Cathodos* do really men in Greek *a way up* and *a way down*; and *anodos* does not mean, and cannot mean, according to the anology of the Greek language, *no way*.[27] […]
>
> And if it did mean this as well as a *way up*, it would not cease to mean the latter also; and when introduced in the company with *cathodos*, no body who has any tinge of Greek could fail to perceive the meaning at once. The notion of *anodos* meaning *no way* could only suggest itself to persons unfamiliar with Greek, and accidentally acquainted with some English words in which the negative particle is so employed…[28]

Whewell goes on to refer to an objection mounted by Faraday that it might be misunderstood as 'no way', which is to say as a cognate of the trackless I put forward by some scholars of MacDonald. Whewell's objection is predicted principally on the fact that such a meaning is only possible adjectivally, and that used in the sense he suggests such a meaning would not appear plausible to one familiar with Greek. Although MacDonald was certainly this, what he meant by the sense of Anodos as a name cannot be understood definitively

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[25] Frank James (ed.), *The Correspondence of Michael Faraday: 1832–1840*, vol. II (London, 1991), 179.

[26] Whewell's intellectual reach was expansive and so opens a range of speculative possible sources of knowledge, but one textual source for *anodos* that can be wholly confirmed is Plato's *Republic*. Whewell published a translation from Greek in 1861. The explanation here implies at least a passing familiarity with other sources. The works of Plato and Aristotle are a reasonable absolute minimum.

[27] Whewell goes on to discuss that *anodos* can only mean 'no way' when used as an adjective. The explanation is materially similar to the one laid out earlier in this paper, and so I omit it.

[28] *Correspondence*, 182.

from Whewell's argument. Further, while it is certainly not implausible that MacDonald should have become acquainted with *anodos* by way of anode these quotations do suggest that it be best understood in the sense of ascents and descents in any case. Whewell's argument is on the basis of the ubiquity and clarity provided by 'good genuine Greek words' whose meaning could be easily perceived by anyone 'with a tinge of Greek' and who was not simply making assumptions on the basis of a familiarity with superficially similar English words.

The Utility of Secondary Sources

A final note should be made concerning the utility of secondary sources proximate to MacDonald in rationalising one or another claim about his understanding of *anodos*. Proponents of the claim that *anodos* should be interpreted as 'on no way' or 'wanderer' might point to Mary Elizabeth Coleridge's use of the word that she adopted as a pseudonym in *Fancy's Following*, in a conscious acknowledgement of George MacDonald.[29] Even passing over the grammatical torsion necessary to produce such a translation, Coleridge's understanding of *anodos* is not decisive for MacDonald's. Indeed, in a contest of contemporary sources, the *Eclectic Review*'s 1863 assessment of *Phantastes* offers that the work is '[a] larger "Story without an End", the story of Anodos, a name answering pretty much to our well-known Excelsior.'[30] This paper has, as far as possible, sought to highlight the primary sources to which MacDonald's expertise in Greek gave him access in order to approach the question of MacDonald as a translator of Greek. Where it has strayed from this, as in Whewell's letters, it has been to highlight that Whewell

[29] While many studies of Mary Coleridge assert, without reference, that Anodos as used by Coleridge is to be glossed in line with the 'pathless' translations above, Battersby asserts, without reference, that Coleridge herself glossed it as 'wanderer' in Christine Battersby, "Mary Coleridge, Luce Irigaray, and the female self" in *Beyond Representation and Poetic Imagination*, ed. Richard Eldridge (CambirdgeCambridge, 1996), 254. I can find no indication of this and note that the foreword to the 1900 edition of *Fancy's Following* discusses it signifying 'ascent' and 'return'. See Mary Elizabeth Coleridge ps. Anodos, *Fancy's Following* (1900: Portland, OR., 1900), foreword. I am inclined to accept Battersby's assertion, however, though this remains irrelevant to MacDonald's own understanding. The inclination in scholarship on Coleridge to present 'on no road' likely relates to *Gathered Leaves*, which quotes Coleridge directly connecting her use of Anodos to her godfather George MacDonald's *Phantastes*. Edith Sichel, the editor of the volume offers 'on no road' as the implication of the name and speculates concerning it. Edith Sichel, ed, *Gathered Leaves from the Prose of Mary E. Coleridge* (New York,: 1910), 23.

[30] *The Eclectic Review*, January–June 1863, 163.

himself understood an education in the Classics to be decisive in the correct interpretation of the terms he offered to Farraday. That is to say that, while Whewell is far from the only valid source of information in MacDonald's use of *anodos*, it is notable that the evidence of Whewell suggests one should consider not externalities, but the products of formal education in the Greek language in the nineteenth century.

It is this on this that I would depend. MacDonald's education and skill with the Greek language gave him access to a scope and scale of literary references that make attempts to proffer unitary definitions deeply problematic on two fronts. First, it ignores MacDonald's facility as a translator of Greek and in so doing limits not just his intellectual reach but ignores the intellectual traditions of his education in Scotland and the wider Victorian intellectual culture in which he participated. Second, it passes over the far more likely conclusion that, like Whewell responding to Farraday, MacDonald was not only able to recognise a difference between adjectival and nominal usage but that he was aware of the varying theological significance in Greek and Christian religion. Simply put, an argument about the ambiguous meaning of Anodos in *Phantastes* could be readily constructed only with reference to earlier or contemporary secondary literature. This would tell us nothing about the matter at hand: MacDonald's competency in Greek, the sources to which it gave him access, and the potential richness the range of those sources added to his thought.

Conclusion

In this consideration of MacDonald as a translator of Greek evidence has been adduced for nearly every common scholarly argument for the meaning of *anodos*. The presence of Xenophon on the Highbury curriculum gives strong reason to believe that MacDonald had read his other popular works, widely available at the time, and in doing so encountered the idea of Anodos as trackless. Henderson's allusion to the availability of scholia on Aristophanes certainly opens the possibility that MacDonald connected *anodos* to the festival of Thesmophoria. And finally, my own offering, that the so-called Platonic sense of Anodos may be derived from MacDonald's reading of the Greek Fathers. This is suggested by the syllabus, Henderson's work, and MacDonald's association with F. D. Maurice as well. To a certain extent, MacDonald's familiarity with Whewell and Farraday's electrochemical lexicon of anode and cathode, first introduced in 1834, is supported by MacDonald's undergraduate exposure to chemistry. However, Whewell himself proposed the terms on the basis of his knowledge of Greek literature. MacDonald's familiarity with the

latter could not but strongly inform even an intentional play on the former.

That there is evidence for all of these makes it unlikely that any one can be suggested as the definitive meaning intended by MacDonald. To suggest otherwise is not just difficult to support but overlooks the breadth and depth of MacDonald's erudition. The Scotland of MacDonald's youth and education was one inextricably connected to the Greek language, and to great works of Greek literature. The continuation of this study at Highbury College, with figures notable for their use and popularisation of the works of the Greek Fathers, points directly to his status as a reader and translator of Greek. To search for definitive meaning in a word that in its own construction refuses a unitary definition, in the midst of such a broad and encompassing education, is to diminish MacDonald not just as a translator, but as a dilettante and an author, to whom the multivalence of *anodos* would themselves have appealed.