

Pedagogy in Performance: The Life and Works of Lillian B. Lawler

The American classicist, Lillian B. Lawler (1898-1990), is perhaps best known as the author of *The Dance in Ancient Greece* and of *The Dance of the Ancient Greek Theatre*, both published in 1964. As a professor of both art history and classics at the University of Iowa, University of Kansas, and Hunter College, Lawler devoted many years of her scholarly career to researching the various aspects of Greek dance and published literally dozens of articles on the topic (Naerebout 1997: 77-85). Her narrow attention to a single topic was somewhat unique in its multidisciplinary approach, which included at times literature, art, epigraphy, and even anthropology. For example, she drew heavily on Athenian black- and red-figure vases in her writings and believed it possible to label and identify the dances being performed on their surfaces using information mined from the ancient texts (Smith 2010: 89-91). Titles such as “A Snub-Nosed Hand in the Greek Dance” (i.e. *cheir simē*) and “Dancing with the Elbows” (i.e. *epankonismos*), characterize her sense of humour and her lively, original and learned approach. Through her abundant writings, she elevated both the dance and the dancer in the eyes of the classical establishment, and made Greek dance more approachable to teachers of classics at all levels. Be it deliberately or not, she distanced the discussion of Greek dance away from the French reconstructionism of the proceeding decades, and moved the subject more in the direction of contextual and thematic concerns - a place it continues to occupy today. (Ley 2003).

What is not terribly well-known about Lawler, perhaps because it is not evident in her printed work, is her unapologetic enthusiasm both for Latin pedagogy and also for the performance of ancient dramas with her students. While there is little doubt that Lawler remains the most important Greek dance scholar in the English speaking world, a clear link can be made between her Latin teaching career (with its focus on costumes, enactments, etc.) , and her passion

for dance (she was herself a trained dancer). Through a combination of published scholarship, archival research conducted at several institutions, and biographical information about her life and career (e.g. she was a devoted member of CAMWS), and her education and travels, this paper presents Lillian Lawler's contribution as a classicist, presents her 'hidden' career as a Latin instructor, summarizes (and criticizes) her holistic path to dance research, and defends the unexpected legacy of ancient performance she created.

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