## Lida Shaw King (1868-1932)<sup>1</sup> by Faith Ford Sandstrom<sup>2</sup>

On July 25, 1899 two young women set sail together for Europe. Lida Shaw King and Ida Carleton Thallon (Hill)<sup>3</sup> were already close friends. After a summer of travels in Europe studying German and visiting museums, they arrived in Athens on September 29 to begin their studies at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. They would spend the next two years together at the school. After Athens they would go their separate ways; but their friendship would endure throughout the rest of Lida King's life.

Lida Shaw King was the daughter of Susan Ellen Fogg and Henry Melville King. She was born September 15, 1868 in Boston, Massachusetts. She received the A.B. degree in Classics at Vassar College in 1890. She continued her studies of the Classics at Brown University and was awarded the degree of Master of Arts from Brown in 1894, only the second year that any degrees were conferred on women. She returned to Vassar in the fall of 1894 as a Fellow in Greek for 1894-1895, and as Instructor in Latin and Greek from 1895-1897. It was in September, 1894 that Lida King met Ida Thallon. Miss Thallon was an undergraduate at Vassar College, and Miss King was her instructor in Greek.

For the year 1897-1898 Lida King was a graduate student at Radcliffe where she studied classical philology, Greek vase painting, and the political history of ancient Greece, focusing especially on the politics of Themistocles. She did an independent history research paper in greek history with Dr. Botsford and assisted him in drawing the maps for the first edition of his book *History of Greece*.

In 1898-1899 Lida returned to teaching and was Instructor in Latin at Packer Collegiate Institute in Brooklyn, New York. But she was ready for a new adventure. In the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the number of colleges and universities offering higher education for women had multiplied. There were new opportunities for women in both classics and classical archaeology.

The American School of Classical Studies at Athens was founded in 1881 and admitted its first students in 1882. In 1885-1886 the first woman was permitted to attend the School. Both Lida King and Ida Thallon were as proficient and well prepared in the classics as the men attending the School. They applied to the School for the academic year 1899-1900 and in the summer of 1899 they left for Europe to continue their studies in Athens. Lida Shaw King was approaching her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. She had studied the classics and classical archaeology for many years. She would enter the American School as Fellow in Greek of Bryn Mawr College for the academic year 1899-1900.

The Circular of Information of 1899 for students entering the American School at Athens states: "the ability to read German, French, and Modern Greek is indispensable for success in any advanced work. Students who can command the summer preceding their year at the school will do well to spend a part of it in Berlin, devoting their time to the study of the Museum and to German conversation.<sup>4</sup>"

Lida Shaw King and Ida Carleton Thallon spent the summer of 1899 together, mostly in Germany. Armed with grammars and a dictionary, they struggled to learn the language. They spent many enjoyable hours visiting the museums and also spent the recommended time in Berlin. Finally, they found their way to Trieste, and boarded the boat for Greece. They arrived in Athens on September 29, 1899.

In the fall of 1899 the American School at Athens occupied the original main building constructed for the School in 1887. Classes and lectures and other School events were held there. For the academic year 1899-1900 there were fifteen graduate students: seven men and eight women. But while living quarters were provided at the School for the Director and the male students, women students had to live in rented rooms in town. Somewhat distanced from the everyday life of the school, the women had to commute daily to the school in whatever weather in order to attend their classes, functions, and use the school library and other facilities. Miss King and Miss Thalon shared rooms at Merlin House, on Akadamias Street.

Regardless of the inconvenience of their lodgings, it must have been very exciting for Miss King to be in Athens. At last she could walk among the monuments that she had studied for so many years, and now study them on site with the guidance and experience of the school's learned and renowned professors. In the fall of 1899 the students attended the lectures by the Director of the School, Prof. Rufus B. Richardson. While many of his lectures took place at the school, he also presented his lectures to the students before the objects at the National Museum and at the archaeological sites in Athens. Prof. Richardson had also arranged for Prof. Wilhem Dörpfeld, First Secretary at the German Archaeological Institute in Athens, to lecture to the American School students that year on the topography of Athens.

Perhaps equally exciting for the students were the excursions that both Prof. Richardson and Prof. Dörpfeld led throughout Greece. In the fall, 1899, Prof. Richardson guided the students to Mycenae and Argos, and later through Boeotia. And in the spring, 1900, Prof. Dörpfeld led the students on a hectic journey through several Greek islands.

But there was one limitation that frustrated Miss King, and the other women students. In the Annual Reports of the School for both 1899-1900 and 1900-1901, under "Regulations of the School," item (I) recorded that one of the stated "Object(s) of the School," was to "cooperate with the Archaeological Institute of America, so far as may be able, in conducting the exploration and excavation of classic sites." Item (XV) of the Regulations further states that "Excavation shall not be part of the regular work of a member of the School, but any member may, at the discretion of the Director, be permitted to take part in it."

At the beginning of the school year 1899, no female student at the School had yet been allowed to excavate. While disappointing, it was not unusual that in 1899-1900 neither Lida nor Ida were permitted to work at the School's excavation sites. In April-May, 1900 the School's excavations at Corinth were in their fourth campaign. The Corinth excavations were an important undertaking for the School. The results already indicated that the site would become one of the larger excavation centers in Greece, confirmed by the fact that the Greek government had already begun constructing a museum at the site. But while several of the men students assisted in the work at the site, Miss King and her fellow women students were only allowed to study the small sculptures and fragments removed from the site.

On May 1, 1900, the students set out with Prof. Dörpfeld on a tour of the archaeological sites and museums on several Greek islands: Aegina, Poros, Delos, Mykonos, Paros, and Santorini (Thera) – what was termed the "*inselreise*." Lida King's notebooks are filled with her observations, remarks about the geography surrounding a site, quick outlines of a floorplan, or small line drawings of figures depicted on vases.

The group ended their trip on Crete. On May 7, 1900 at Kaudia (Heraklion) Lida wrote: "Lunch with Miss Boyd and Miss Patten." Having been denied participation in the excavations directed by the American School at Corinth, Harriet Boyd<sup>5</sup>, the current Hoppin Fellow at the American School, had convinced Prof. Richardson, to allow her to use her own funds, the remainder of her fellowship grant, to seek out an excavation site in Crete that she would direct herself. She and her colleague, Miss Jean Patten, had just initiated their expedition in search of an excavation site when they received the visit from the American School students.

In Lida King's second academic year in Athens, there were sixteen students at the School: ten men and six women. Lida received the prestigious Agnes Hoppin Memorial Fellowship for the year 1900-1901 and was considered a "Fellow" of the School. The Agnes Hoppin fellowship had been established in 1898, preferably for a second year student at the School, to aid women scholars in continuing their studies in Athens. The previous year's recipient was Harriet Boyd.

Seeing Harriet Boyd on Crete had made a significant impression on Lida King and Ida Thallon. During the spring of 1901 the School initiated excavations of a sacred cave at Vari, near Mt. Hymetteus in southern Attica. The project was financed by contributions from Professor Edward D. Perry, Professor Dunham and two women students, Lida King and Ida Thallon. Professor Maurice E. Dunham provided overall supervision. Charles Weller, like Lida King a second year student and a Fellow of the School, was asked to direct the excavations. Lida and Ida must have concluded that as Miss Boyd was allowed to excavate on Crete using her own funds, then their contributions for funding the Vari cave site would permit them to participate with the excavation team at Vari.

Responsible for the integrity of the excavations, Mr. Weller was faced with a dilemma: "How was he to allow the two female students to participate in the excavations when no woman to date had excavated – or been permitted to excavate – in mainland Greece?" On February 15, 1901 he wrote: "The Vari project is humming. ... (Prof.) Dunham is going with me. .. Miss King and Miss Thallon also want to go down but I do not know what they will decide." He admited that the funds were provided largely by the two women, so "it is natural that the girls should want to go and they had fully planned to until Mr. (Rufus B.) Richardson (the Director of the School) had just conceived the idea that it might not be proper.<sup>6</sup>"

Several days passed before the situation of whether or not the two women might participate in the excavations was finally resolved. On February 19, 1901 Weller reported that the women did come down to the site, but only for the day, returning to the School in the late afternoon. But by February 25 it seems that the difficulties of the situation had been resolved, and Weller recorded, "Miss King and Miss Thallon decided .... to stay down and have already retired in another quarter of the 'town.'"

Lida and Ida stayed at the site for the remaining few days of the excavation. In the Annual Report of the School for 1900-1901 it was noted that "the explorations of the grotto of Pan, Apollo, and the Nymphs greatly surprised scholars of all lands who had visited the cave without dreaming that so much of interest lay under a few inches of soil.<sup>8</sup>" But the participation of the women was not immediately acknowledged publicly. Writing on behalf of the Managing Committee of the School in the "Twentieth Annual Report to the Council of the Archaeological Institute of America," Thomas Day Seymour, Chairman of the Committee, credited the excavation to Charles Weller. There was no mention that either Lida King or Ida Thallon had participated, nor that they had helped to finance it!

It was up to the Director of the School, Rufus B. Richardson, in his "Report of the Director to the Managing Committee of the School<sup>9</sup>" to formally acknowledge that Miss King and Miss Thallon had "assisted during part of the time." The sacred cave at Vari was not a large site and only eight days were required to complete the excavation, but Mr. Richardson was impressed that "so much interesting material (had) been discovered with so small an outlay of time and money." Important too was the fact that at last, thanks to the persistence and determination of Lida Shaw King and Ida Carleton Thallon, women students at the American School at Athens were recognized for their excavation experience in Greece.

The work of cataloguing and interpreting the finds from the excavation was apportioned among the participants at the excavation. Lida King catalogued the vases, terracotta statuettes, bronzes, and miscellaneous objects. Ida Thallon worked on the large marble reliefs. Their reports, along with the other reports of the Vari finds from 1901 were published in a series of articles in *AJA* 7, 2<sup>nd</sup> series (1903)<sup>10</sup>. In his introduction to his report in the 1903 publication, Charles Weller wrote: "Mr. Weller supervised the actual work of excavation, and in this task was aided by Professor Dunham, Miss King, and Miss Thallon, the two ladies having been present not quite all the time." Even if it was a "qualified" statement, and did not mention the real reasons holding Miss King and Miss Thallon back from the initial days of the excavation, Mr. Weller at last admitted that women had participated at the excavation site. They had truly "broken ground."

Lida King's notebooks from her studies of the Vari finds are testimony to her intense commitment to most accurately interpret the Vari finds, in particular the terracottas<sup>11</sup>. Her pencil drawings, details of figures, decorative bands, and distinguishing characteristics

evidence her passion for researching these newly uncovered objects. Her notes on the terracottas explain *comparanda* from the National Archaeological Museum in Athens and end with a growing list of bibliography to further enlighten her identifications. She was a dedicated and extremely thorough scholar.

Further in his Report for the year 1900-1901, Prof. Richardson wrote at length about the progress of the School's large excavations at Corinth in March and April, 1901. He referred to it as "the great enterprise of the School in excavation," and mentioned that he was assisted that season by several of the men students, including Charles Weller. But the women were not there. However, in commenting on the individual work of the students during the year, Richardson noted that in addition to her work on the finds at Vari, Miss King was assigned an additional special subject: "Architectural Terra-cottas from Corinth." Likewise, Miss Thallon: "Architectural Terra-cottas (assumedly related to Corinth)<sup>12</sup>."

When Lida King left Athens in 1901 she returned to New York to head the Classical Department at Packer Collegiate Institute. But in October, 1901 Miss King's mother died. It appears that after finishing her year at Packer, Lida returned home to Providence, Rhode Island in 1902, most likely to assist her father. Lida's father was an important figure in the Providence community. He was Senior Pastor of the First Baptist Church in America, a position he held from 1891 up to his retirement in 1906, continuing as Pastor *Emeritus* until his death in 1916. He was also a Trustee of Brown University from 1899 until his death, and a member of the Executive Committee of the Women's College in Brown University.

Little is known of Lida King's work or concerns in the next two years, 1903-1904. She was already an accomplished archaeologist and a published scholar. Most likely she anticipated returning to Athens to continue her work with Ida Thallon cataloguing the growing number of architectural terracottas continuing to be found at Corinth. But there was no opportunity for her to fulfill that desire at this time in her life. She remained in Providence.

In 1905 at the age of thirty-seven, Miss King was asked to be the Dean of the Women's College (later Pembroke College)) in Brown University. Her responsibilities for the administration and development of the young and growing women's college were to supercede any further work in archaeology. Her own academic research was postponed for a future time when she would be less encumbered.

The tasks of her Deanship consumed her time and her energies, but she often used the perspective of her many years of academic preparation and experience to help her advise the women students towards achieving their own goals. In her "Talk at the Opening of College" in 1911 Lida drew upon her years as a student in Athens. She encouraged the young women of the College to not just acquire facts as knowledge, but to learn to think, to observe, and to integrate their observations and their learning. She referred to her own past, suggesting how the many years of studying the classics were integrated into her later experience as a student in Greece.

"If you were to visit the remains of the Theatre at Athens you would see a small part of the stone background. You would see here and there a seat of stone built into the side and it would mean little to you. But if you have studied the Greek plays, and have learned something of the Greek Theatres, when you stand there on the Acropolis, and look down into this Theatre, you can recall that whole scene, of the building, the acting, the scenery and the audience. And there will come to you an hour of joy, which a person who knows nothing about the ancient Greek Theatre must miss. Gather in then, all the information you can from your college course.<sup>13</sup>"

In her early years as Dean, Lida King often admitted that she was unsure of her abilities as an administrator. Several times William H. P. Faunce, President of the University, wrote her notes of encouragement and congratulations on a task well done. As the years progressed, she succeeded in expanding the academic offerings and raising the academic standards of the Women's College. She increased enrollment and enlarged the campus of the Women's College, boosted its financial stability and added several new buildings and facilities.

Her work as Dean gained her wide recognition and praise from universities and scholarly associations. She was awarded two honorary degrees. In 1912 she received a Litt.D. from Mt. Holyoke College. In June, 1913 Western Reserve University awarded her an LL.D. Her commendation from the university read: "As an executive, teacher, and writer, as counselor in public education, as director in various activities for the advancement of learning and the betterment of humanity, she has shown the value of the scholar in American life." A more accurate statement might have read "the value of *women as scholars* in American life."

Lida Shaw King gave fully of her talents and energies to her responsibilities as Dean of the Women's College in Brown University from 1905-1922. She continued to teach courses at the college in classics, language, and greek archaeology, but she would never resume her own archaeological work. At age fifty-three she had been in progressively declining health for two years. She was no longer able to carry on at the college and in 1922 she resigned.

When Miss King resigned, *The Sepiad*, published by the Women's College, kindly noted that she wished to return to her earlier academic research. But her friends understood the truth, that her mind was failing and that she was beginning what would become a long and difficult last period of her life.

Other than the notebooks from Athens and some incomplete notes of a talk she gave to the Women's Club in Providence, little remains to evidence Miss King's memories of her years in Greece<sup>14</sup>. A small group of Greek coins in the Museum of Art of the Rhode Island School of Design are credited as "Bequest of Lida Shaw King," a gift from her estate in 1932<sup>15</sup>. A hemidrachm of Thebes, a tetradrachm of Athens, as well as coins of Argos, Corinth and her colonies, and even coins of Alexander the Great, they were

precious reminders to Miss King of her years in Greece, when she dreamed of dedicating her life to work in classical archaeology.

In 1924, Ida Carleton Thallon married Bert Hodge Hill, then Director of the American School in Athens, and a fellow student at the American School in Athens in 1900-1901. They were returning by ship to Greece when Ida learned of Lida's ill health. On board the *S.S. "Baltic*", she wrote a letter to Miss King's Providence friend and companion, Eleanor Green.

" It seems almost impossible to understand how or why out of all the people in the world this should have happened to one of the most wonderful and brilliant minds that you or I have ever known..... Lida has left a wonderful piece of constructive work behind her, and a monument *aere perennius*. But it is only a part of what she could have accomplished had her health held out after she had retired and laid aside the burden of incessant administrative work. ... I feel more than ever that the terracottas from Corinth are a sacred trust and I shall try to number them in a way that Lida would not be ashamed of. Only I did want her to know what they were like when ready for publication. They will be the first piece of work I undertake for myself and I hope to get a good start on them before long.<sup>16</sup>"

Ida Carleton Thallon Hill remained true to her long friendship with Lida Shaw King and preserved her legacy as an early woman scholar in greek archaeology. Ida Thallon Hill completed writing the volume on <u>The Corinth Decorated Architectural Terracottas</u>. It was published in 1929 by Harvard University Press for the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. Both Ida and Lida are named as co-authors<sup>17</sup>. In the "Introductory Note," Ida acknowledged the early work that she and Lida did in 1900 in initiating the study of the decorated architectural terracottas from the excavations at Corinth, and gave full credit to Lida for preparing a preliminary catalogue of the finds up to 1905. She graciously wrote: "The nucleus of the work was hers (Lida's), and in completing it I am but fulfilling the gladly assumed obligations of an enduring friendship."

Beyond Ida Thallon Hill's publication of Lida's work in Athens, one might wonder what further contributions Lida Shaw King would have made if she had been able to connect her fine inquiring mind and the precise analysis that she demonstrated in Athens with her administrative abilities that were later proved at Brown. As she had brought the fledgling Women's College into academic parity with the men's experience at Brown University, would women's place in field archaeology have been advanced at a more rapid pace if Miss King had been able to direct a program at the American School in Athens or another archaeological institute?

Miss King was never able to return to Greece. After long years of hospitalization, she died in Providence in January, 1932 at the age of sixty-three.

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Thanks are also due Dr. Natalia Vogiekoff-Brogan, Archivist at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens; Jane S. Knowles, Archivist at the Radcliffe College Archives; and Prof. Alan Boegehold, Department of Classics, Brown University and former Chairman of the Managing Committee of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

<sup>2</sup> A brief resume of Miss King's life, especially her years as Dean of the Women's College, Brown University, was published by the author as "Hail to Miss King," *Pembroke Associates' News*, vol. 16 no. 1, Fall/Winter 1998, 1-3. Further material was included in a talk given by the author, March 11, 1998 at The Pembroke Center for Teaching & Research on Women, Brown University.

<sup>3</sup> See biography, "Ida Thallon Hill (1875-1954)" in *www.brown.edu/breakingground*. The references to Lida Shaw King from the diary of Ida Thallon Hill were kindly provided by Natalia Vogiekoff-Brogan, Archivist, American School of Classical Studies at Athens and bear the same notation that she has used in referencing the Ida Thallon Hill papers at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

<sup>4</sup> "Bulletin, Appendix to Annual Report for 1898-1899," AJA 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> series (1899), 120.

<sup>5</sup> Vasso Fotou and Ann Brown, "Harriet Boyd Hawes (1871-1945)," in *Breaking Ground, Pioneering Women Archaeologists*, ed. by Getzel M. Cohen and Martha Sharp Joukowsky, Ann Arbor (2004) 198ff; as well as "Harriet Boyd Hawes '92, Papers," Smith College Archives, Smith College, Northampton, Mass. The results and finds of Miss Boyd's and Miss Patten's initial excavations at Kavousi, Crete were published by Miss Boyd in the report for the American School in *AJA* 5 (1901) 125-157.

<sup>6</sup> "The Vari Cave Excavation: Letters from the Archives,": in *Newsletter*, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Spring, 1982, 6-7.

<sup>7</sup> ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Day Seymour, "Twentieth Annual Report of the Managing Committee," in *AJA* 5, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, Suppl. (1901) 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> With special thanks to Eleanor King Earle Ferguson for having identified the Lida Shaw King papers found in her family's home in Cambridge, Massachusetts and donating them to the University Archives at Brown University. And to Barbara Anton, Coordinator of Alumnae Affairs, and Elizabeth Barboza, Coordinating Secretary at the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women at Brown University who helped initiate the cataloguing and interpretation of these papers. Thanks too to Martha Mitchell, University Archivist, John Hay Library, Brown University. Her admirable knowledge of all things related to Brown provided invaluable insight into Lida King's years as Dean of the Women's College in Brown University.

<sup>9</sup> Rufus B. Richardson, "Report of the Director," in AJA 5, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, Suppl. (1901) 26.

<sup>10</sup> AJA 7 (1903), 263-348. See especially, Lida Shaw King, "The Cave at Vari IV, Vases, Terra-cotta Statuettes, Bronzes, and Miscellaneous Objects," 320-334, Pls. X and XI.

<sup>11</sup> "Lida Shaw King Papers," University Archives, John Hay Library, Brown University.

<sup>12</sup> Richardson, "Report," 26.

<sup>13</sup> "Lida Shaw King Papers."

<sup>14</sup> Brown University honored Dean King in commissioning the important New England painter Frank Benson to paint her portrait. Worked in oil, it is a magnificent and sensitive rendering of Lida Shaw King. Benson presented it to the University in December, 1913, and it continues to be displayed, currently in Alumnae Hall on the Pembroke Campus. The University also displays another portrait of Miss King, a charcoal and terra cotta profile drawing by the Providence artist and architect, Sidney Burleigh. Both these portraits portray Lida Shaw King as she was known to the College and to the Providence community, in her years beyond her days in Greece.

 <sup>15</sup> R. Ross Holloway, Ancient Greek Coins. Catalogue of the Classical Collection. Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design. Archaeologia Transatlantica XV (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1998). See nos. 32.064=158, 32.065=159, 32.064x=160, 32.081=173, 32.067=187, 32.073=220, 32.068=246, 32.078=264, 32.069=310, 32.079=313, 32.071=321, 32.082=326, 32.070=345, 32.080=387, 32.083=444, 32.074=465.

<sup>16</sup> "Lida Shaw King Papers."

<sup>17</sup> Ida Thallon-Hill and Lida Shaw King, *Decorated Architectural Terracottas*, Vol. IV, Part I in *Corinth, Results of excavations conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, published for the American School of Classical Studies at Athens by Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1929. (See review, *AJA* 34 (1930), 273-274.)