

Marion Rawson, who was instrumental in laying bare the citadels of both Priam and Nestor, was born August 17, 1899, in Cincinnati, Ohio where her grandfather, Joseph Rawson, had come from Boston in 1831 to enter the pork-packing business. Of Rawson's eight children the three sons who first joined and then followed him in J. Rawson & Sons, settled their families in the attractive suburb where Marion lived all her life. As the last of her generation, she was younger than her nearest sibling by six years, younger than the nearest of her fifteen first cousins by eight years and crowding close to the next generation. This special position in her early years may help to explain Marion's unusual combination of independence and effectiveness in working with others both older and younger. In addition, she grew up in an environment, both of family and of city, that was as stimulating in its variety as it was rich in all kinds of interests, in music and the arts as well as commerce and the world of work.

Marion's father, who became president of J. Rawson & Sons the year before her birth, had wide musical interests. Beginning in his generation travel in Europe both to museums and for music was an accepted and expected thing among the Rawsons, with two of his sisters taking up permanent residence there and serving as both magnet and base for extended visits by the cousins of the next generation. Her father, like her uncles and brothers, had gone back East to Harvard, and one aunt attended Vassar. But it was to Bryn Mawr College that three of Marion's girl-cousins went, graduating in 1902, 1906 and 1913. Marion herself, after primary education in Cincinnati, followed her sister Dorothy to Wykeham Rise in Washington, Connecticut. In 1918 she entered Bryn Mawr where she did her major work in Psychology and in Economics and Politics, although the course she most remembered in later years was one in Music

Appreciation. That her interest in Archaeology came later seems clear from the fact that although both Mary Hamilton Swindler and Rhys Carpenter were on the Bryn Mawr faculty at that time she took no courses from them. Oddly enough, both of the two other members of the Class of 1922 who became archaeologists and were to play important parts in the Agora Excavations in Athens did their major work in fields other than Archaeology: Margaret Crosby in French and History; Virginia Grace in Greek and English, but with three semesters of Archaeology. Bryn Mawr was then small enough, with only about 400 undergraduate students, so that the three must have known each other well, since all held various class or college offices and took part in group activities. And all would have been well acquainted with a member of the Class of 1923, Dorothy Burr (Thompson), whose major work was in Greek and Classical Archaeology; perhaps she may have shared her enthusiastic interest with them.

On her return to Cincinnati and in attendance at the University there Marion not only continued some study in English but also took up work in Archaeology in 1923-26. At this time she was sharing with her sister Dorothy the care of their mother, a widow since 1917, and instead of traveling abroad made use of her Bryn Mawr training in Psychology as she worked with the Vocation Bureau of Cincinnati Board of Education, doing intelligence testing. In 1926 she began to take courses in the University's School of Architecture, presumably to implement her growing interest in Archaeology, and after her mother's death in 1927 she was able in 1928 to put that interest into practice by joining the Cincinnati excavation at Prosymna, the prehistoric site at the Argive Heraeum. The excavation was started by Carl W. Blegen in 1925 when he was Assistant Director of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. After a second season in

1927 Blegen took up an appointment as Professor of Classics at the University of Cincinnati where he recruited Marion for the third and last season of actual excavation at Prosymna. Because this year the staff lived in Nauplia instead of at La Belle Helene in Mycenae as in previous seasons the comparatively long drive meant the addition to the staff of a cook to prepare breakfast and lunch at the site, and it may be that it was this taste of both the rigors and romance of Archaeology that first confirmed Marion in her choice of a career. In 1929 she returned to Greece to help in working over the finds from the dig, arranging pottery for photography, and making up captions and the list of illustrations. This work, along with her B.S. in Architecture which she received in 1931, was the most useful kind of preparation for the key part she was soon to play in the University of Cincinnati's Trojan Expedition..

Meanwhile, during these same years after their mother's death, Marion and her sister Dorothy had travelled regularly to Europe, visiting museums in Italy, attending concerts and a round of Wagner operas in Germany, and once, in 1930, taking a motor trip in their Ford down through the Balkans to Athens with such success that they planned to return the same way. They obviously made a good pair, with Dorothy's skill and interest in sports (she was a champion rider, playing polo and a member of the Camargo Hunt) counterpointing Marion's more academic and practical turn of mind, while both enjoyed the arts. Furthermore, as members of a large, extended family, some members of which lived permanently in Europe while other traveled widely, their European visits often included extended visits and reunions as well as new acquaintances of all sorts.

In 1932 both Marion and Dorothy joined the University of Cincinnati's Trojan Expedition, which was made possible through the

generosity of Professor and Mrs. William T. Semple and led by Professor Carl W. Blegen. The regular staff that year consisted of Carl Blegen, John L. Caskey, the two Rawsons, Professor and Mrs. Semple, F.W. Goethert, Dorothy Cox, W.K.Heurtley, and Mrs. R.K.Hack. For a picture both of the first season of that dig and of Marion herself it seems appropriate to quote at some length from the piece she wrote for a Cincinnati paper in the fall of 1932:

The first campaign of the University of Cincinnati excavations at Troy is a never-to-be forgotten experience for those of us who took part in it. A portable house, consisting of a large living-dining room, kitchen, six bedrooms, two baths, and screened porches was brought from the United States and erected at Troy, and with a stone house containing a pottery workroom, drafting room, museum, storerooms and three bedrooms, provided remarkably comfortable and really luxurious living quarters for the staff, miles away from civilization.....

It is hard to imagine a more beautiful place in which to live and work than Troy. The view from the house was magnificent, stretching out over a vast cultivated plain, dotted with green fields, that turned yellow as the grain ripened. Several rivers, their courses marked by clumps of dark green trees, wound toward the entrance of the Dardanelles, with the deserted village of Kum-Kale on our side and the high cliffs of the Gallipoli Peninsula on the other. ...Great herds of cattle, sheep, goats, horses, camels, and water buffalo passed along in the plain in the morning and returned at night.

From the house we could look back inland over cultivated fields sprinkled with great, dark oak trees, toward snow-capped Mt. Ida in the distance. We often had ice cream frozen with snow brought in sacks 40 or 50 miles from Mt. Ida on camel-back.

Then always beside us stood the impressive citadel of ancient Troy, with its recognizable strata of ruined buildings representing nine successive stages of civilization. The magnificent circuit walls of the Sixth City, Homer's Troy, and within them, the almost equally fine walls of the much earlier Second City, rise on a low hill above the plain commanding this splendid panorama. It is no wonder the Trojans fought hard to retain control of such a site.

The life of an archaeologist in the field is undoubtedly a pleasant one, but no one can say it is easy. Take, for example an average day at Troy, when we worked from 6 in the morning until 6:30 at night. Our daily program was something like this: Up at 5:40, and a desperate hunt for our clothes, which we had carefully buried under the bedclothes to keep them dry, for Troy is so near the sea that the nights are damp, with heavy dews; then a frantic scramble to dress and swallow a cup of tea, a piece of bread and a square of chocolate, and get down to our digs before our men started to work. They had roll call at 6, when they were given their tools and assigned to their jobs.

The longest and hardest part of the day was from 8 to 8:30, when the pangs of hunger became so great we didn't see how we could possibly exist until we got that breakfast coffee.....The time from 9 to 12 passed all too quickly, but everyone was ready for a hearty lunch. This was followed by a free hour until 2, in which we

always intended to write letters but never did, thinking ourselves lucky if we could stay awake long enough to read the headlines of the Paris edition of the New York Herald, which was our one link with the outside world, and which arrived spasmodically, with its news anywhere from five days to a week old. We often had drawing or other work to do, so that the brief respite seemed much too short.

At 6:30 there was a roll call for the men, when they turned in their tools and checked out by answering to their numbers. Work was seldom over for us, however, until 7:30, for there were notes to write up for the day, measurements to be taken, pottery to be gone over, finds to be marked and put in boxes, and perhaps some digging with knives on our own account to try to find out where a wall might lead or what was under some stone in one of our trenches. Dinner was at 8, and by 9:30, after putting away the day's finds, we were ready for bed.

Friday, the Mohammedan Sunday, was our so-called day of rest, but in reality we worked as hard then as on other days, for there were innumerable things to do which we hadn't time for during the week. Most of Friday was spent "papsing" sherds - in other words, sorting all the broken pottery found during the week, discarding some of it, keeping the most important and interesting pieces, taking notes on it and trying to determine what type and age of civilization it represented. This was a large task, as each person usually had at least six baskets of pottery to go over, and it meant handling and examining thousands of pieces. Then all the small finds had to be catalogued, classified, marked and studied, drawings had to

be inked in, and there were always vases to be fitted together from innumerable pieces and mended.

Several Fridays, however, we went on excursions to explore other sites in the vicinity and often we managed a swim in the Hellespont on these occasions....

Each member of the staff had his or her own particular dig with from 2 to 50 workmen to do the actual digging. An interesting part of the work was the clearing of half of the stage and scene buildings of the gigantic Roman theater which lies to the northeast of the city and was investigated first by Schliemann.

Remains of Roman buildings and house walls and floors of the Eighth and Seventh Cities were found, and at the time work was concluded for the season, the Sixth City or the Troy of Homer probably had been reached, at a depth of approximately three meters.

The workmen were intensely interested in the work we were doing and always wanted to know how old each wall and every potsherd was that they dug up. They received a few cents' tip for the small objects they found and those who were working in prehistoric strata where coins and figurines do not occur were compensated for the lack of tips by the fact that the sherds they were finding were so much older than the things the other men dug up....

Troy has the same latitude as Cincinnati and much the same climate. The days were hot and the sun so strong that we found pith helmets necessary. The average maximum temperature was between 80 and 85 degrees, but the nights were comfortably cool. Toward the last of June the wind began to blow hard and steadily from breakfast time to sundown, making work difficult, and the dust and

dirt most disagreeable. It became virtually impossible to take measurements, to draw, or to use the surveying instruments unless we got up at 5 and worked before the wind started. On account of this wind, which blows during July and August, it was necessary to stop work the first of July....."

Marion's assignment that first season was one part of a general search for pre-classical tombs. For the five excavators in the search this involved some 2 1/2 to 3 miles of trial trenches on the lower north and west slopes of the mound. The search was largely negative but Marion did uncover an area partly enclosed by a wall which proved to be filled with ashes, broken pottery, a few animal bones and some burned fragments of human bones. The meticulous care she took in both excavation and recording made possible later study determining it to be a place of cremation for Troy VI, VII and VIII.

In 1933 and subsequent seasons it was in the center of the mound (Square E 6) that Marion was chiefly occupied, studying successive floor levels of houses, at first of Troy IV and some debris of Troy II. In 1934 she spent the whole season in an examination of a thick and productive layer of Troy III in that same central area. 1935 found her penetrating a relatively rich deposit of Troy II's final phase, with destruction by fire. In 1936, still in Square E 6, Marion was disentangling strata of Troy II, finding four different phases, each with some architecture and pottery, all subsequent to the construction and first use of Megaron II A; she then began a testing of Troy I. In 1937, extending her investigation to the entire central area (Squares C 4-5 to G 4), she examined the early phases of Troy II and the fortification wall of Troy I. She also excavated half of the island left by Dorpfeld in Squares F 4-5, establishing the stratification of

Troy V, IV, III, II and I. The last season (1938) was devoted to working over the excavated material, of which Marion's share included almost the whole history of the site in the crucial central area. It is obvious from the assignments which Blegen gave Marion that he had complete faith not only in her archaeological eye for changes in the fill and architectural know-how but also for her meticulous record-keeping and patient care for pottery and other small finds. Throughout the seasons after the first Marion was also in charge of the general pottery inventory which was so important to the study of stratification throughout the site.

Although excavation at Troy came to an end in 1938, the work of study and preparation for publication continued for the next twenty years, somewhat interrupted by war work in 1941-45 and later by excavation in Pylos from 1953 on.. But during the '30's the two Rawsons returned each summer to Ducksholm, a house they owned on Nantucket, where Marion worked on material for the current Preliminary Report. And back to Cincinnati each year went the excavation notebooks, the catalogues of finds, the photographs and films, the drawings and measurements - all the material that must be studied and interpreted before final publication could be undertaken. Marion had taken motion pictures of all principal activities throughout the dig in addition to keeping a single-shot record of her own areas of excavation. Office space was provided by Hulbert Taft, the publisher of the Cincinnati Times Star, and the excavators and volunteers, but particularly Marion, regularly worked there every winter over the ever-growing masses of records.

The resulting publication, four volumes in eight parts of Troy: Excavations conducted by the University of Cincinnati, 1932-1938, edited by Carl W. Blegen, Marion Rawson and John L. Caskey, Princeton, 1950-

1958, was very much a joint effort by the three editors with other minor collaborators. Not only in the writing, but in the general management of the production Marion's contribution was all important, as the acknowledgement of her work in Troy IV p. viii attests: "From beginning to end M. Rawson has been the active editor and there are few if any pages in the volume that have not benefited substantially from her alert attention. Indeed it is not too much to say that without her organizing ability, patient steady industry and stimulating propulsion, the work could probably never have been brought to completion. In addition to taking the responsibility on the strictly editorial side, she laid out the illustrations that appear in Part 2, dealt with the technical preparation of the material, arranged the objects on the plates, saw to it that proper legends and scales were provided, that pertinent references to the illustrations were made in the text, and settled innumerable other problems and difficulties."

1938 not only marked the end of the excavation at Troy but was the last year of travel abroad for the two Rawsons, a trip to be remembered in the difficult years ahead. They spent some time in Ireland, visiting horse farms to buy a hunter for Dorothy, going to the races and to the Abbey Theater. Then with Jack Caskey on to Berlin where a fellow Trojan excavator Friedrich Goethert was their guide to the museum collections and the German Archaeological Institute. About the pots in the Schliemann collection Marion wrote home, "We nearly went mad with excitement over them." But the atmosphere in Berlin they found disturbing and were happy to go on to the museums in Belgrade and Sofia. In 1939 the war in Europe put an end to travel there, and soon with America's entry into the war there was volunteer work in addition to continuing archaeological research; Marion served as a volunteer at the Cincinnati Art Academy

from 1939 through 1944; worked with the Bureau of Civilian Defense in 1941-42, and served as a laboratory technician in the Cincinnati General Hospital in 1943-45. At the same time the two Rawsons continued even more faithfully to keep up the large garden which their parents had started more than half a century before on their six-acre suburban plot.

After 1945 full time work on the Troy publication resumed, with all of the editors working together to produce the first three volumes which appeared in 1950, 1951, and 1953. For these three volumes, each in two parts, Marion not only directed a staff of editorial and clerical assistants, but had chief responsibility for the preparation and organization of illustrative material. For Troy I she also did the original write-up of the central area (C4 to G4), while for Troy II she wrote up the material from E 6 and F 4-5, putting together the catalogue of objects found there. Troy III involved close cooperation between Carl Blegen and Marion on the classification of both pottery and miscellaneous objects in addition to the detailed description of the important sixth settlement.

In 1952 with all but the final technical launching of the third volume completed Blegen was able to return to Pylos. His trial excavation there in 1939 had produced not only evidence of a large building but also, for the first time in mainland Greece, quantities of Linear B tablets. Despite the war photographs of those tablets had been brought back to Cincinnati and assigned to Emmett Bennett for study and publication, which came in 1951. But because Bennett had long since shared the texts with interested scholars all over the world, already in 1953 Michael Ventris and John Chadwick used them in "Evidence for Greek dialect in the Mycenaean archives" in the Journal of Hellenic Studies. As a result, interest in continued excavation at

Pylos was high, not only in a potential Palace of Nestor but also in new tablets on which to test the decipherment

In 1953 Marion was able to join the Cincinnati Expedition to Pylos and from that year till 1964 she played a major role in the excavation in and around the Palace of Nestor. That first year she was just in time to excavate several of the palace's pantries in one of which were found (as Blegen wrote in the 1954 American Journal of Archaeology, p. 32) "2147 pots, among which Miss Rawson counted 1099 shallow bowls and 1024 teacups." Never mind that they were undecorated; here was a wealth of material on which to speculate about the palace's domestic economy and/or entertainment policy.

In the following seasons Marion continued the excavation of various parts of the palace: in 1954 the rooms and corridors in the north corner including six steps of the staircase leading to the second floor, from which much debris appeared in the fill; in 1955 continuing along the east side in the two porticos, to main court and east court, and in the bathroom; in 1956 in the Queen's apartments toward the southeast. In 1957 and 1958 she uncovered two buildings to the northeast of the palace: the so-called Palace Workshop and the Wine Magazine. 1959 and 1960 were devoted to exploration of the northeast and southeast edges of the citadel, while she spent the 1961 season in the meticulous examination of a large plaster dump on the northwest edge of the mound, the remains of a large-scale palace redecoration. In 1962 Marion was busy with detailed study of various aspects of the palace construction and in the last two seasons worked closely with Carl Blegen in preparation for the final publication, outlining detailed descriptions, surveying all of the pottery and

miscellaneous small finds, arranging for the necessary illustrations, both plans and photographs.

I was fortunate enough to take part in the Pylos dig for several seasons and so can speak from personal knowledge of Marion's work there. As she excavated both in the Palace and outside, she kept a record more complete in every detail than I have seen elsewhere, with full descriptions, numerous drawings and sections, measurements and a running account of pottery and other finds. (For my own work with the fresco fragments this was especially important in the attempt to make joins.) Her absorption in the digging was complete and infected her workmen with an equal enthusiasm. She was always on the spot, sometimes sitting in their midst on her carry-all stool drawing a plan or section, sometimes taking out her knife to investigate cuttings in a threshold block or a puzzling fill, sometimes examining the latest small find or newest batch of pottery. Her discussions in what she called her broken Greek with the men about what they were digging were frequent and intense. She welcomed their suggestions and at least figuratively left no stone unturned in her pursuit of answers to perplexing problems. And she tended her "pottery garden" assiduously in order to detect the subtlest of changes between different palace rooms or outside fills.

As an archaeologist Marion was superb not only in the field but also in what might be called archaeological group dynamics. Both on the dig, where she presided over the picnic lunch table, and in the excavation house (a converted village hospital) it was she who kept everything running on track personally as well as materially, making a happy family out of often disparate personnel. And at the same time she could keep up with various

current editorial chores and deal with kitchen staff problems, cope with the possibility of lightning interfering with the pexis of the yogurt and see to the listing of small finds to be photographed. In addition, she was always ready after a long day's work to pick the sweet corn and rush it to the pot just in time for dinner!

As knowledgeable about vegetation as she was about second millennium B.C. pottery, Marion was a great companion on Sunday walking expeditions in and mostly up the countryside. She was full of odd bits of botanical and geological information. I learned from her about rock formations and mineral traces, about the differences between broom and furze, about various kinds of heather, and how to recognize some of the multitudinous flowers of the field.

In these years from 1953 to 1964 the old pattern was resumed, with Marion returning from the excavation to Ducksholm in Nantucket for a working vacation, then back to Cincinnati and continued editorial work on Troy IV as well as study and organization of the growing material from Pylos. Troy IV came out in 1958 and Blegen's Troy and the Trojans, for which Marion did some editing and arranged the illustrations, was published in 1963. At the same time work on the Pylos volumes continued with A Guide to the Palace of Nestor by Blegen and Rawson coming out first in 1962 and the formal volumes following in 1966 and 1973.

It was in recognition of Marion Rawson's work at both Troy and Pylos that in 1962 the University of Cincinnati awarded her an honorary L.L.D.. The citation read by Dr. Walter C. Langsam, president of the University, was as follows:

Marion Rawson, native of Cincinnati; educated at Bryn Mawr College and the University of Cincinnati; zealous archaeologist, selfless research worker, respected scholar.

For the more than thirty years during which the name of the University of Cincinnati has been synonymous with the expanding borders of classical archaeology, she has been voluntarily associated with this fascinating work, her important contributions matched only and at all times by her dedicated devotion to the cause of scholarship and her intense desire to remain in the background - almost to becoming 'Miss Anonymous.' Numerous to the point of catalog have been her scientific accomplishments in the field and in museums, and outstanding her chronicling of this University's achievements at such historical sites as Ancient Troy and Pylos. Truly, she has enriched our knowledge and added to our culture by her labor of love.

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Board of Directors of the University of Cincinnati, I hereby gladly confer upon you, Marion Rawson, the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Although Marion Rawson's life work was archaeology, she had many other interests and occupations. She devoted much time to both music and contemporary art: she was an active member of the Contemporary Arts Center and regularly attended both Cincinnati Symphony concerts and those of the LaSalle Quartet. Although she did not herself participate actively in music, she did commission a work for cello and orchestra by Frank Proto, the bassist of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. In painting, however, she was in her earlier years very active, and although

her work has not been seen much outside the family at least one expert has asked why it was not properly shown. Her memberships in the Calvary Episcopal Church, in the Cincinnati Country Club, and in the Archaeological Institute of America attest to the variety and richness of her interests and activities.

Marion Rawson died at the age of 81 on October 29, 1980. Services were held in the Calvary Episcopal Church in Clifton. Professor Cedric Boulter of the the University of Cincinnati said of her work in archaeology: "She was a great one. She learned by doing. Without her, there wouldn't have been any reports. She was an unusual person, with great devotion to her profession and great energy." Her cousin Rawson Collins said, "She was very bright, although she would be the last one to say so." Indeed, modesty and self-effacement so characterized Marion Rawson throughout her life that the quantity and quality of her accomplishments can not be fully known, nor would she have approved even of this modest effort to set the record straight.

Marion Rawson was not cast in the mould of the earliest women who pioneered in archaeology. Hers was not the masterful discovery and exploration of new sites. Her interest was in the work to be done, the knowledge to be gained, and how best it could be presented to the world. . Both what she did in the field and the publications for which she was so largely responsible testify to the magnitude of her contribution to Aegean archaeology. It is right and fitting that the University of Cincinnati has established the Marion Rawson Professorship of Aegean Prehistory in honor of her contributions to the field of Bronze Age Archaeology.

Publications of Marion Rawson:

Troy I: General Introduction: the First and Second Settlements. Part 1:

Text; Part 2: Plates. (Princeton, 1950) with C.W.Blegen, J.L.Caskey,
and J. Sperling

Troy II: The Third, Fourth and Fifth Settlements. Part 1: Text; Part 2:

Plates. (Princeton, 1951) with C.W.Blegen and J.L. Caskey

Troy III: The Sixth Settlement. Part 1: Text; Part 2: Plates (Princeton,

1953) with C.W. Blegen and J.L. Caskey.

Troy IV: Settlements VIIa,m VIIb and VIII. Part 1: Text; Part 2:

Plates (Princeton, 1958) with C.W.Blegen, C.G.Boulter and J.L.
Caskey.

A Guide to the Palace of Nestor (Cincinnati, 1962) with C.W.Blegen

The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia I: The Buildings and

their Contents. Part 1: Text; Part 2: Plates (Princeton, 1966)

The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia III: Acropolis and

Lower Town, Tholoi, Grave Circle, and Chamber Tombs, Discover-
ies outside the Citadel (Princeton, 1973) with C.W.Blegen, Lord
William Taylour, and W.P. Donovan.

Bibliography:

Blegen, C. W., prefaces and introductions to the Troy and Pylos volumes
cited under the joint publications listed above

Blegen, Robert D., Carl W. Blegen: His Letters Home, Book II, 1994

Bryn Mawr College Archives

Burke, Mary Alice Heekin, Cincinnati Pioneers: The Rawson Family 1831-
1991 (Cincinnati, 1992) including on pp. 93-98 a reminiscence of
Marion Rawson by Patricia Neils Boulter

Letters from Robert D. Blegen, Patricia Neils Boulter, J. Rawson Collins,
and Rebecca H. Rawson

University of Cincinnati, Department of Classics Archives

Illustrations:

Formal portrait of Carl Blegen and Marion Rawson (to illustrate
their collaboration)

On site: EITHER M. Rawson standing in field at Troy

OR M. Rawson on ladder held by workmen at Troy