

***Ladies' Greek Wins Seventh Annual Robert Lowry Patten Award***  
**Rice University, Houston, 30 October 2018**

The editors of *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* are pleased to announce that the seventh annual Robert Lowry Patten Award, this year for the most outstanding recent contribution to British literary studies of the Nineteenth Century, will go to *Ladies' Greek: Victorian Translations of Tragedy* by Yopie Prins, Professor of Comparative Literature and English at the University of Michigan. Out of a daunting field of 370 qualifying publications, the judges for the 2018 award selected *Ladies' Greek*, published by Princeton University Press, praising it as "a book of great subtlety and power that places archival detective work in the service of a genuinely new account of where literary studies come from and, implicitly, where they should be going." Here are some further excerpts from the judges' remarks:

"In place of women as writers, Prins's study redirects our attention to women as students, teachers, translators, transcribers, memorizers, mourners, actors, even dancers. Not least moving about Prins's reconstruction of these Victorian women's engagement with classical Greek is the deftness with which she reconciles narrative with argument: the forceful new model of literary attachment that emerges from these pages never stands in the way of attention to the particularity of the human figures who populate them."

"Yopie Prins's *Ladies' Greek: Victorian Translations of Tragedy* tells the story of Victorian women's engagement with ancient Greek and the implications of that engagement not only for women's writing and women's education but also for the survival of Greek theater in Victorian and modern culture. Grounded in extensive and scrupulous archival work, the argument of the book is shaped at every point by Prins's extraordinary sensitivity to language. *Ladies' Greek* is a story about Victorian women's passion for Greek letters—where letters are understood both as single characters and as a body of writing—and that passion animates not just the texts Prins studies but also her treatment of them. Whether characterizing the translation of a Greek phrase, the shape of a Greek letter, or the sound of a poetic cadence, Prins's own writing is at once informative and transporting. I found myself not only sympathizing with the Victorian women who sought to be transformed by Greek poetry but desiring to study it myself. For Victorian women, of course, learning, translating, and performing ancient Greek offered a complicated amalgam of challenges and rewards, and one of the great strengths of the book is Prins's sensitivity to those complexities. At once learned and moving, this book will be of interest to Victorianists, classicists, feminist critics, and scholars of the art of translation. But it might well also prompt readers outside those fields to take a new interest in them."

The judges for this year's contest were Talia Schaffer, Professor of English at Queens College, CUNY and the Graduate Center, CUNY; Andrea Henderson, Professor of English at the University of California, Irvine; and Leah Price, Francis Lee Higginson Professor of English Literature at Harvard University.

The award, created in honor of the over forty-year distinguished scholarly and pedagogical career of Professor Robert Lowry Patten at Rice University, will be officially presented to Professor Prins. *SEL* is a quarterly journal publishing scholarly articles on English literature and an omnibus review in each issue of recent studies in the field. For

nearly thirty of his years at Rice, Professor Patten served as either editor or publisher and executive editor of the journal.

Upon learning of the judges' decision, Prins remarked, "I am bowled over that my book was picked out from so many excellent publications in the field. At this time in the humanities, every book is a prize! I appreciate the passionate reading of *Ladies' Greek* by the judges, and I am very proud to receive this award in the name of Bob Patten, a fellow Swarthmorean and a great inspiration as a scholar, teacher, and colleague in Victorian studies."

Previous winners include Thomas Lockwood, Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Washington; Simon Goldhill, Professor of Greek Literature and Culture and Fellow and Director of Studies in Classics at King's College, University of Cambridge; Leah Price, Francis Lee Higginson Professor of English Literature at Harvard University; Peter de Bolla, Professor of Cultural History and Aesthetics and Director of the Cambridge Concepts Lab at King's College, University of Cambridge; the editorial team behind *Benjamin Disraeli Letters: 1868, Vol. 10*: Michel W. Pharand, Ellen L. Hawman, Mary S. Millar, Sandra den Otter, and M. G. Wiebe; and Lucinda Cole, Visiting Associate Professor of English at the University of Illinois.

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