

# Longing and belonging within an academic family of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the example of Clarissa and Leopold von Ranke

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Discussions about longing and belonging usually refer to the status of national, regional, ethnic, religious, social, political, groups and individuals, whether rooted or displaced. This essay proposes to adopt a different perspective and to examine the sense of longing and belonging at the level of a family unit, here a 19<sup>th</sup>-century couple, the world-renowned historian Leopold von Ranke and his wife Clarissa. How did their sense of longing and belonging differ? What was their perception of each other's national group? How did they establish their common belonging to a state in Central Europe? Related questions, such as how to overcome classes and national belonging, how to deal with longing or transfer of belonging, languages and perceptions, will also be examined. The Rankes' experience offers a particularly apt study-case within the context of transnational European identity.

## Who were Clarissa and Leopold von Ranke?

Before I discuss their relations to be/longing, I wish to situate the Rankes in relation to their respective cultural backgrounds. The German historian Leopold von Ranke was born in Germany in 1795. His first

major work, *Geschichte der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1514* (*History of the Latin and Teutonic Nations, 1494-1514*), was published late in 1824. It was based on archival research, viewed by Ranke as the foundation of all historical work, and it established his professional reputation. The most influential part of the work was its appendix in which Ranke assessed previous literature on the basis of the critical analysis of sources, a method which made him the founder of modern source-based, scholarly history. It was in the preface to his work that he stated his often-quoted dictum, that he was writing history '*wie es eigentlich gewesen*', as it had actually occurred<sup>1</sup>. Due to the success of his work, Ranke was appointed Professor of History at the University of Berlin. He went abroad late in 1827 and remained away for over three years, researching in Vienna, Florence, Rome and Venice. He had several personal connections which he put to good use to secure access to previously sealed archives. Subsequent years were marked with publications, mainly on the history of the Mediterranean countries and Germany. Particularly noteworthy are *Ueber die Verschwörung gegen Venedig, im Jahre 1618* (*The Conspiracy against Venice; 1831*), *Die römischen Päpste, ihre Kirche und ihr Staat im sechzehnten und siebzehnten Jahrhundert* (*History of the Popes; 1834-36*), *Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation* (*History of Germany during the Reformation; 1839-47*) and the *Neun Bücher Preußischer Geschichte* (*History of Prussia; 1847-8*).

Ranke trained the first generation of modern professional historians in Berlin, including Georg Waitz and Jakob Burckhardt. King Maximilian II of Bavaria was inspired by him to establish a *Historische Kommission* (Historical Commission) within the *Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Bavarian Academy of Sciences) to which Ranke was appointed as chairman in 1858. During his later years, Ranke wrote national histories for each of the major states of Europe, including his *History of France* (1852-61), *History of England* (1859-68) and *The German powers and the Princes' League* (1871). As Ranke's reputation continued to grow, he was awarded many honours: he was granted entry to the hereditary nobility, adding '*von*' to his surname in 1865, and he was

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<sup>1</sup> Ranke 1824: v-vi.

made an honorary citizen of Berlin in 1885. Ranke's university career concluded in 1871 when he retired from his position as professor. However, he continued to write and, by the time of his death in Berlin in 1886, he had completed nine volumes of his *Universal History*<sup>2</sup>.

Leopold von Ranke endeavoured to understand political order within its own historical context. To understand the nature of historical phenomena, such as an institution or an idea, one had to consider its historical development and the changes it underwent over a period of time. Historical epochs, Ranke argued, should not be judged according to predetermined contemporary values or ideas. Rather, they must be understood on their own terms by empirically establishing historical evidence. Ranke emphasised both individuality and development in history. For him, each historical phenomenon, epoch or event had its own individuality, and it was the task of the historian to establish its essence. To do this, historians had to immerse themselves in the subject they studied and assess it in a manner appropriate for its specific time. They had 'to extinguish' their own personality<sup>3</sup>. Ranke was convinced, as evident in all his work, that there was meaning and coherence in history and that the established political institutions embodied moral forces, yet he rejected the reduction of history to a grand scheme. In his opinion, the historian had to proceed from the particular or individual to the general, not the reverse, and it was the particular that opened the path to an understanding of the great moral forces that manifest in history. With his seminar programme at the University of Berlin, Ranke set a model for training historians in systematic, critical research methods, a model employed throughout the world as history became a professional discipline. Ranke was in fact a modern historian with a sense of belonging with a clear awareness of identity and he made important contributions to the emergence of modern history and is generally recognised as the father of the scientific historical school of the

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<sup>2</sup> For further details see also Boldt 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Leopold von Ranke, *Englische Geschichte, vornehmlich im 17. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 1860, vol. ii: 1; Leopold von Ranke, *A History of England, principally in the seventeenth century*, Oxford, 1875, vol. i: 467.

nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thanks to him, methodical principles of archival research and source criticism became commonplace in academic institutions<sup>4</sup>.

Ranke's wife, Clarissa, is much less-known. Nevertheless, recent research has shown that she had a notable impact on her husband's later career. Clarissa Helena Graves, born in Dublin in 1808, came from a well-known Anglo-Irish family, who formed, in effect, an intellectual dynasty. The roots of the Graves family went back to 1647, when Colonel Graves of Mickleton in Gloucestershire in England commanded a regiment of horses in the army of the Parliament,<sup>5</sup> volunteering for service in Ireland the same year. As a result of the Cromwellian Land Settlement, the Graves family acquired lands and later public office in Limerick. Clarissa's father, John Crosbie Graves, was Chief Police Magistrate in Dublin. In 1806, he married Helena Perceval who was from an equally long-established family who had lived in Ireland for centuries. From 1814, Graves lived at 12 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin. Helena Perceval supported her husband in his career and shortly after their marriage, Lord Redesdale, who was a patron of Helena Perceval, appointed Graves a Commissioner of Bankruptcy in 1806.<sup>6</sup> Because of

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<sup>4</sup> Some further information can be found in Peter Gay, *Style in History*, New York, 1988: 57-94; Felix Gilbert, *History: Politics or Culture? Reflexions on Ranke and Burckhardt*, New York, 1990: 11-45; Leonard Krieger, *Ranke: the Meaning of History*, Chicago, 1977.

<sup>5</sup> The Irish Rebellion against English rule started in 1641 and was defeated by Oliver Cromwell 1649-52.

<sup>6</sup> For further details see Andreas Boldt, *The Role of Ireland in the Life of Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886): The Historian and Historical truth*, Lampeter, Edwin Mellen Press, 2007; the introduction of Andreas Boldt (ed.), *The Clarissa von Ranke Letters and the Ranke-Graves Correspondence 1843-1886*, Lampeter, Edwin Mellen Press, 2012: 1-66; and Ingrid Hecht, *Clarissa von Ranke. Im eigenen Körper gefangen mit blühendem Geist*, Göttingen, Selbstverlag, 2013. The main manuscript collection in relation to the family history of the Graves in Ireland is located in Trinity College Dublin (TCD), Ireland, Manuscript Department, Graves Archive, MSS 10047. This collection contains about 3000 documents covering three centuries.

Helena's reputed royal descent from several medieval kings of England (Edward I), Ireland (MacMurrough), Scotland (David I) and France (Charlemagne and Henry I), the Perceval name was widely adopted by the children<sup>7</sup>.

Due to her Anglo-Irish background, Clarissa had one foot in two different cultures at the same time, which influenced her own identity. She left home at the age of seven, to be educated in England, Scotland, France and Belgium. This education was not unusual for upper-class Anglo-Irish boys, but very unusual for girls during the first half of the nineteenth century. When her father passed away in 1835, she accompanied her mother on several trips around Europe, especially England, France, Germany and Italy. It was on one of these trips in the summer of 1843 that she met Leopold Ranke in Paris. They were married in Bowness, Windermere, England on 26 October 1843<sup>8</sup>. On the same day, Leopold took Clarissa with him back to Berlin. The news of Ranke's marriage quickly spread throughout Berlin; most people, including the royal family, were surprised «as everyone had been convinced that he would live and die a Bachelor»<sup>9</sup>. Clarissa was welcomed in the city by friends and scholars of Leopold, as well as the press and even the royal family, and it seems, according to the correspondence of her husband and his family, that it was easy for her to make her life in her new home – although we have no written notes or letters from herself during this time period.

The home of the Rankes became a preferred meeting place for several famous and educated personalities. The late 1840s marked the beginning of a cultural and intellectual meeting point that developed more and more into the famous 'Salon Ranke', which reached its full fruition after the revolutionary years of 1848/49, and continued, despite the worsening illness of Clarissa, to be an important salon for Berlin society during the 1850s and 1860s. Much of the time during their

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<sup>7</sup> For more details on the royal linkage, see Boldt 2007: 28-29.

<sup>8</sup> Further details can be found in Boldt 2007: 14-19 and 67-78.

<sup>9</sup> Letter of Starriett M. Owen to Helen Graves, 5 November 1844, Graves-Archive, TCD, MS 10047/20/52.

marriage, Clarissa had been sick and suffered from a disease afflicting her spinal cord. At first, Clarissa's illness affected each of her fingers in turn, until she could no longer use her hands, followed by her feet and as time progressed she slowly became bedridden as the rest of her body succumbed to disease. Clarissa's letters to her brother Robert in Ireland help us understand the various stages in the progression of the disease. She wrote of her disabled hands in her Christmas letters, of being unable to cut meat on the plate by herself, of weakness in her left leg and of the necessity to rest longer and more often on her sofa. Her hand-writing got worse from month to month and, in 1862, she finally stopped writing. At this stage, Clarissa could barely move her fingers and arms. This unimaginable suffering lasted for nearly two decades, from around 1850/1851 to 1871 when Clarissa passed away just a few weeks after the foundation of the new German *Kaiserreich*<sup>10</sup>.

## **Manifestation of belonging and own perceptions of the other**

Due to the different cultural backgrounds of the Rankes, we find variations in the expression and understanding of their respective sense of belonging. To belong is to be a member of a group, nation or culture. Clarissa had an Anglo-Irish background, which meant that her identity was strongly formed by her Protestant higher-class family position within Ireland. At the time of Clarissa's birth, Ireland had become a part of the United Kingdom since 1801, after being previously treated as a colony for several centuries. The Act of Union meant that Ireland was directly ruled and controlled from Westminster in London, and that a Protestant minority ruled over the Catholic majority which formed the

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<sup>10</sup> For further details see Boldt 2007: 89-146; Clarissa von Ranke Letters, pp. 42-66; Hecht, *Clarissa von Ranke*, and Andreas Boldt and Ingrid Hecht, „Clarissa von Rankes Leben und jetzt erkannte Krankheit“, in: Elvert, Jürgen (ed.), *Historische Mitteilungen der Ranke-Gesellschaft*, vol. 26 (Stuttgart, 2014):187-220.

population. This affected her longing for an independent Ireland, a position which may seem paradoxical with her social status. This has something to do with the changing nature of Irish Protestants creating their own (Protestant) national identity rooted in Irish history. Clarissa's brother Charles Graves, later President of the Royal Irish Academy, followed this path and he wrote on the development of the Ogham script. However, having travelled in Europe, in particular for her education (England, Scotland, Belgium and France), and encountered more liberal ideas concerning the necessity for different groups to live together in peace, she promoted the full emancipation of Irish Catholics. This stands in sharp contrast to her brothers who stayed in Ireland and preferred an independent Ireland under Protestant leadership. Instead, Clarissa's travels gave her the sense that she did not belong in one country but in Europe as a whole. Nevertheless, after her wedding in 1843, and until her death in 1871, Clarissa lived in Berlin, growing to feel increasingly more Prussian than German, Berlin being the Prussian capital; she was influenced by its culture rather than by the historical roots of the slowly developing national identity which formed Leopold's own cultural identity. To retain a sense of home and her Irish identity, she brought several aspects of her cultural heritage to her salon in Berlin, such as the English tea-time, thus creating an international cultural atmosphere.

Belonging, for Leopold, expressed itself in a different way: his nation's history was even more complex than the Irish situation, and on top of that the expression of his belonging was influenced by his profession as a historian. While Clarissa could easily build her belonging on the idea and dream of an independent Ireland, this was more complicated for Leopold; born in Thuringia, then a part of the Kingdom of Saxony, which later became Prussia after the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815, he had to assimilate into the Prussian system, but he never identified himself as a German. This has something to do with his childhood education, where he was taught of the ordained nature of 'God-given' structures. This has nothing to do with religion but needs to be understood from the perspective that states and orders evolved 'naturally' over time and found their organic situation within the society

of a state<sup>11</sup>. This particular aspect manifested itself in his historical work where he preferred the political system of either the Holy Roman Empire or the German Confederation, rejecting the nationalistic (and in his mind not naturally evolved) version of Germany created by Bismarck<sup>12</sup>. The approach he applied in his works on different nations made him more aware of a common European heritage, as he was able to recognise connections among national traditions and histories.

Despite their different backgrounds, Leopold and Clarissa thus shared a similar attachment to their birthplaces and a similar sense of longing for a state that would match their political ideas. They first met outside of their own home nation states, in Paris. When asked which cities they would regard as the most interesting cultural places, both would mention Berlin and London which by coincidence were at the same time the capitals of their nation states. Both would have a great interest in travelling and by saying this, both would also have a great knowledge of languages. Leopold was fluent in a number of ancient and current languages at that time, a necessity for his travels as well as his historical studies. Clarissa was fluent in 20 languages, including English, German, Italian, French, Greek, Latin, Spanish and Flemish, and had good knowledge of 20 more. In her poetry blotter, books were translated by herself from Greek, Indian, Polish, Persian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish and Hungarian<sup>13</sup>. Recognising the importance of knowing many languages for a better inter-cultural understanding she mentioned in a letter to her brothers in 1865 that her children could “only” speak four (languages) fluently<sup>14</sup>. However, English remained the main language for her daily use: nearly all of her letters and poems were written in English. The Rankes’ great knowledge of languages and their experience of extensive travel allowed them a great openness to and understanding of other cultures, ideas and identities (which were

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<sup>11</sup> Boldt 2007: 237.

<sup>12</sup> See Leopold von Ranke, *Abhandlungen und Versuche*, Leipzig, 1888: 522.

<sup>13</sup> For details to her language knowledge see her 24 blotter books.

<sup>14</sup> Letter of Clarissa Ranke to Robert and Helen Graves, Wiehe, *Englische Briefe*, p. 69.

discussed in Clarissa's salon) and it helped them to articulate a recognition that the history, culture and politics of the nations of Europe were intertwined.

Clarissa viewed her perceptions of the Germans from a pragmatic perspective and she was a critical observer of her surroundings. Some aspects she found quite strange; the customs of German youth, for instance, seemed to her rough and uncouth in comparison to her Anglo-Irish experience. Marriage in Germany, in her opinion, was mostly guided by reason and not enough by feeling. To her mind, engagements took place at a far too early age, yet the waiting time for marriage was too long, and Clarissa found it quite comical that the bride had to obtain a dowry consisting of everyday clothes. She reacted similarly to the German custom of giving birthday presents based on everyday things, which would be necessary anyway, only adorned with sweets and flowers. The jubilee system of formal awards (given after a certain number of years) seemed to her simply exaggerated as a similar system of recognition was not practiced in Ireland. Even though she held on to some aspects of English-Irish culture mainly manifested in her salon culture, and despite her descriptions of strange customs in German culture, Clarissa respected German habits and integrated well into German society. She even voiced her belief that the education of German officers was the best in Europe, and that the English military system was not of a similar calibre.

Leopold saw the English from a pragmatic, and the Irish from a Romantic-historical perspective. Although, when he visited London, he greatly admired English culture and architecture, he saw them also as expressions of the excessive power of imperialism. In a number of letters, especially those written in the 1850s and 1860s, this dual feeling is mentioned several times, particularly after the Indian Mutiny of 1857. But despite all actions taken by the British system, Leopold could not help but admire the British parliamentary system, which to his mind allowed the people to rule themselves and to control royal activities in some respects, as in budgetary and legal matters. In election years, he would follow some candidates all over the country, analysing how orators captured the minds and hearts of the voters. The Romantic lens

through which Ranke viewed the Irish was clearly influenced by his wife's own attachment to her birthplace. He considered them as honest, devout and hard-working people<sup>15</sup>.

## Salon Ranke

The late 1840s marked the beginning of a cultural and intellectual meeting point that developed more and more into the famous 'Salon Ranke', which reached its full fruition after the revolutionary years of 1848/49, and continued, despite the worsening illness of Clarissa, to be an important salon for Berlin society during the 1850s and 1860s. The salon was famous for its musical parties, classes in poetry and literature, particularly Shakespeare, and discussions of politics and history. Clarissa also gave classes in various languages including French, Italian and English. She fashioned this style of salon culture based on her experiences back in England and Ireland and adapted them to her new home in Berlin. Before the revolution of 1848, prestigious guests, such as the Court Preacher Strauss, the American Rev. John Lord, the Swedish soprano Jenny Lind, the families of Schelling, Puchta, Bellson, Heman and Napier, the historian and politician Raumer, Prof. Richter, Minister Eichhorn, the brothers Grimm and the Crown Prince of Bavaria, later King Maximilian II of Bavaria, regularly visited.

As the years went by, and as the increasingly ill Clarissa became more confined to her home, many people came to visit her, rather than her husband. From the late 1850s onwards, she was the head of the salon. The number of famous names diminished, yet the intellectual and spiritual life continued. Friends of this period were Hertha von Manteuffel, the wife of Leopold's close friend Marshall Edwin von Manteuffel, the Prussian Ambassador in London Christian Karl Josias von Bunsen and his family, the writer Elfriede von Mühlentfels, whose nickname was "the Boat" because she had promoted the construction of a Prussian fleet, the naturalist Christian Gottfried Ehrenberg and the

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*: 390.

Senior Court Preacher Wilhelm Hoffmann. British diplomats like Sir Andrew Buchanan and Lord Francis Napier were frequent guests as well. Clarissa's closest friends were the writer Ida von Düringsfeld and the Prussian Prince Georg, general of cavalry, who was known as the Poet Prince. During the 1850s and 1860s English, Irish, American, French and Italian visitors became acquainted with Clarissa and her husband. Altogether the Ranke family were in contact with at least 400 people<sup>16</sup>.

The most important moment in the day took place when friends arrived in the salon of 'Madame Ranke' at the traditional English teatime, in the early evening. It was possible to come along freely and without invitation. In the morning, young girls arrived and read letters aloud to Clarissa and wrote letters for her. Once a week, Clarissa's Shakespeare class came together to read Shakespeare and other English authors, and they sang songs and ballads before and after class. From 1862, on Fridays, a so-called 'Open Evening' took place. The number of guests generally was around 70 or 80 and sometimes over 100. Several topics were discussed in small groups while drinking tea and having biscuits, which was followed by wine as the evening proceeded. Piano concerts organised by ladies took place which were followed by poetry presentations and society games, during Carnival, fancy-dress balls were organised and often large house concerts took place. Music was an essential component of the representational culture and it not only reflected Ranke's position as a historian but also the open-minded mentality of both Clarissa and Leopold to wider European culture. While Clarissa had been the focus of the social aspect of her salon, Leopold contributed with cultural and historical discussions about the past and present. If the discussions were interesting for Leopold and the topics went into details he would take the guests to his library where he

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<sup>16</sup> See Bäcker-von Ranke, G. (1967). *Ranke's Ehefrau Clarissa geb. Graves Perceval*, Oldenbourg Verlag, Göttingen, and his unfinished PhD thesis, Bäcker-von Ranke, G. (1955). „Leopold von Ranke und seine Familie: Kulturgeschichtliches Bild einer deutschen Gelehrtenfamilie im neunzehnten Jahrhundert“. Bonn: unpublished Diss. In his appendix (pp 1-113) Bäcker-von Ranke presents an exhaustive list of friends, visitors and acquaintances.

would continue the discussion also by referring to his latest work, his library and manuscript collection.

As a result of these activities, Leopold's brother, Heinrich, called the house "the happy island"<sup>17</sup>, and it followed the example of the Anglo-Irish traditions with which Clarissa had grown up. A special circle developed to discuss religion and biblical knowledge. Clarissa continued to discuss the Bible with her brother Robert in Ireland until she died. After 1862, she managed to cope with the disability which prevented her from writing letters, by singing and by religious devotion. Her salon was unique due to its international reach and, unlike other salons in Berlin that only entertained nobility, diplomats and soldiers, it welcomed artists, composers and academics<sup>18</sup>.

Writing poetry had been one of Clarissa's preferred hobbies since her childhood, and poems became of even greater importance to her during her time in Berlin. Not only did they help her in coping with her disease, but they also were a means of dealing with being away from her closest relatives and home in Ireland. In her collection *Stars of my Life*, Clarissa also used poetry to celebrate the people she had met or by whom she had been impressed<sup>19</sup>. The poems were presented with illustrations and photographs of the personalities she portrayed. The collection is divided into two major parts, one called 'Family' and the other 'Celebrities'. The first part was marked by her oldest memories of

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<sup>17</sup> Letter of Clarissa Ranke to Amalie Ranke, Wiehe, Clarissa von Ranke 8.

<sup>18</sup> For further information see also Bäcker-von Ranke, *Ranke's Ehefrau Clarissa*, and Boldt 2007. The Ranke-Museum in Wiehe, Thuringia, Germany, holds over 600 letters of Clarissa von Ranke, thus giving a good insight into the life and practice of Clarissa's salon. This collection once belonged to Dr Gisbert Bäcker-von Ranke, a direct descendant, who presented the museum with the papers in 1995. The letters afford valuable insights into the private life of the Ranke's as well as Clarissa's experience in a foreign country.

<sup>19</sup> A copy was made available to the author by Dr Graf von der Schulenburg, a descendent of Ranke. All of the 246 poems were for the first time published in the appendix of Boldt, *Clarissa von Ranke letters*, pp 509-646.

Dublin, with poems such as 'Childhood', 'Our old Home' or 'The loss of my Father', and also poems about her brothers, Leopold and their children. The section entitled 'Celebrities' covered English and Irish names as well as many celebrities from the continent, such as King Maximilian II of Bavaria, the Countess of Stolberg-Werningerode and the composer Mendelssohn<sup>20</sup>. Her memories and depictions of Irish and English luminaries reached and influenced many people in Berlin and, by extension, Germany as a whole. Clarissa left a further 24 books, mainly exercise books and note books, with more than 2600 pages of poems<sup>21</sup>. Two of them were called 'Continental Lore' and were translations of poems from different European countries<sup>22</sup>. Although Clarissa discussed with her brother Robert if she should publish her poems, she could never make up her mind how many and which ones. She then created her large scrap book 'Stars of my life'. She was quite excited yet unsure what to do she tried to get advice from Robert when Prof. Thomas Solly<sup>23</sup> asked her for poems for publication. This idea came from Leopold. A short time later Clarissa decided to give Prof. Solly two poems for publication. Her poems 'Wishes for a supposed admirer, composed as a companion piece to Crashaw's "Wishes for the supposed

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<sup>20</sup> Some English and Irish names are: Bloomfield, Buchanan, Butler, Cobden, Coleridge, Drakes, Egmont, Hamilton, Hemans, Liston, Lowther, Napier, Nightingale, Owen, Scott, Sommerville, Swinburne, Todd, Twinning, Wilkinson and Wordsworth.

<sup>21</sup> The blotter books were made available by Dr Bäcker-von Ranke as a gift to the Ranke-Museum, Wiehe, Germany, in 1995.

<sup>22</sup> Amongst the German poems that Clarissa translated into English are those of the poets Geibel, Kinkel, Brentano, Herwegh, Heine, Tieck, Lenau; amongst the French ones those of Victor Hugo, Pierre Jean de Beranger and Marie Andre de Chessier; amongst the Italian those of the humanist Poliziano; and among the Danish poems several by Andersen.

<sup>23</sup> Solly, Thomas, professor of English literature at the University of Berlin.

mistress''' and 'A sonnet, partly suggested by a German song' were published by Solly in 1864<sup>24</sup>.

Clarissa had a well-developed, critical approach to English literature. She favoured the works of Wordsworth and Tennyson<sup>25</sup>. The works of Walter Scott<sup>26</sup> she thought well-written, but the biography of *Frederick the Great* by Carlyle<sup>27</sup> she regarded as boring and preferred to read Robertson's<sup>28</sup> *Sermons*. She respected the sermons of Cardinal Newman<sup>29</sup> and had a liking for most other theological and pedagogical literature. Clarissa also read several German books including *Verlorene Handschrift* by Gustav Freytag<sup>30</sup>, the geographical works of Raumer<sup>31</sup> and the poetry of Eichendorff<sup>32</sup>. Other works were read in their original language – Don Quixote in Spanish, Voltaire in French, although Clarissa disapproved of the latter's style, saying that in her opinion, he entertained his readers with the 'lowest bestiality'. Italian, Portuguese, Lower German works were read also in their original languages. The fact that Clarissa had such extensive reading and she also read most works in their original language indicates her sense of a European belonging in regards of languages, cultures and literature.

Since the late 1840s, Clarissa had enjoyed Florence Nightingale's friendship. She wrote a poem about how she knew Nightingale before

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas Solly, *A coronal of English verse, or a selection from English and American poets* (Berlin, 1864), pp 207-11. Clarissa is also represented as a poetess in Main's *Tresury of English Sonnets* (1871) and in Solby's *Coronal of English Verse* (1880).

<sup>25</sup> Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892), Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom.

<sup>26</sup> Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), Scottish historical novelist and poet.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), Scottish writer and historian.

<sup>28</sup> Frederick William Robertson (1816-1853), English preacher.

<sup>29</sup> John Henry Newman (1801-1890), English Roman Catholic priest and Cardinal.

<sup>30</sup> Gustav Freytag (1816-1895), German dramatist and novelist.

<sup>31</sup> Friedrich Ludwig Georg von Raumer (1781-1873), German historian.

<sup>32</sup> Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff (1788-1857), German poet and novelist.

her rise to fame<sup>33</sup>. Due to her keen interest in social affairs and education, Clarissa soon acquired pet names in Germany; one of them was “the Nightingale” in 1860<sup>34</sup>. Following the example of her English friend, Florence Nightingale, she tried to collect money, clothes and clinical material for the wounded soldiers and the soldiers at the front. During the German unification wars of 1864 and 1866, Clarissa asked and begged continuously for gifts for German soldiers. Many ladies of the upper classes did likewise, but few on such a large scale. On letter paper, at the top of which the new symbol of the Red Cross had been colourfully imprinted, Clarissa also solicited with the help of numerous friends acting as secretaries her friends and relatives in England and Ireland for monetary donations and material relief for soldiers. The military hospitals in Berlin welcomed everything Clarissa acquired from Ireland, including antiseptic towels, then unknown in Germany<sup>35</sup>. Her two sons were involved as well: Otto looked after the wounded in hospitals in Berlin, while Friduhelm enrolled as a soldier and marched with the army to Paris in 1870. His letters to his mother and his uncle Robert give a good insight about the war and also an eyewitness account of the emergence for the first time of a new type of warfare which later produced the horrors of the First World War<sup>36</sup>. When soldiers arrived in hospitals in Berlin from different nations like France, Austria, Italy and Hungary, Clarissa organised, with several friends, a service to write letters to the soldiers’ families. When the war came to an end in 1871, Clarissa looked forward to seeing the king-emperor Wilhelm I, who had been crowned as German emperor just a few weeks before, and she hoped that English-German relations would improve as England had previously supported the French during the war. However, she was so

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<sup>33</sup> See Boldt, *Clarissa von Ranke Letters*: 594-595.

<sup>34</sup> Letter of Clarissa Ranke to Robert Graves, 31 January 1860, Wiehe, *Englische Briefe* 90.

<sup>35</sup> Boldt 2007: 144.

<sup>36</sup> Boldt, *Clarissa von Ranke Letters*: 453-465.

weakened by her disease that she could not watch the return of the troops and even stopped dictating letters.

Despite living in times of historic upheavals, when one's identity and sense of belonging can be challenged and even radically change, Leopold and Clarissa experienced an exceptional understanding of European distinctiveness due to their multinational backgrounds, knowledge of languages and various travels. The international salon of Clarissa and history books of Leopold demonstrate this. Their European belonging was defined by the political developments of their respective birthplaces which were not part of the modern-day nation states: Ireland was a colony under English rule, and Wiehe was at first part of Saxony, then Prussia and, by the time Ranke reached old age, his homeland was suddenly defined as 'Germany'.

Clarissa's migratory experience can be considered as extraordinary. Certain aspects of her experience are an expression of her historical time, for example international marriages within middle and upper classes or the engagement in war relief in Germany. Her encouragement for more education for girls and the establishment of international exchange programmes reflect her international understanding of belonging. Clarissa never changed her home experience of salons and created her own, following Anglo-Irish ideas, thus creating the kind of meeting point which did not exist elsewhere in Berlin. Access to German salons was usually only allowed to nobility, higher military ranks and artists. Even though Clarissa never felt she had assimilated completely and saw herself, besides being Anglo-Irish and Prussian, first as a European woman, she was fully respected by German society. On the other hand, Leopold penned his longing for a better Europe and German state (not the German *Kaiserreich*) into his trans-European history books.

Of course, both built up their own perceptions and stereotypes of the Irish, English and Germans; Clarissa from a more pragmatic viewpoint and Leopold from the Romantic-historical perspective. Both formed their shared and different places of belonging, such as Dublin and Wiehe as their birth places, Paris as their first meeting location, Berlin and London as the most interesting cultural cities for the

exchange of intellectual ideas and being the capitals of their 'homeland' nations. However, despite their open-mindedness both were averse to change. While Leopold continued with his historical book writing and travelling throughout Europe, Clarissa enjoyed writing her poems (in the Wordsworth style!) and running her salon which became famous for musical parties, classes in poetry and literature (especially Shakespeare) and discussions of politics and history. Clarissa also gave classes in various languages, especially French, Italian and English. In her salon, Enlightenment thought and Romanticism were discussed, while the ideology of revolutionary movements was rejected. Even if the salon was dominated by conservative thoughts, several 'Revolutionary' opinions at that time were discussed there: the position of women, cultural exchange and the nation-building of different states, like Ireland, Germany, Italy and America, and the role of religion in a changing society. With her poetry and traditions, Clarissa was a type of ambassador for her Anglo-Irish roots and British culture.

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