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*Andreas Kalvos and Suzan Fortune Ridout
(1793-1857): New Evidence*

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Andreas Kalvos and Susan Fortune Ridout (1793-1857): New Evidence*

To Mario Vitti
Lefkios Zafeiriou**

The archival material related to Susan Fortune Ridout (1793-1857), a pupil of Andreas Kalvos, in Italian language, during the first stay of the poet in London, is a result of a research conducted from September 2008 until July 2009, as part of work for Benakis Museum. Ridout was known to us only by her letters to Kalvos, discovered by Mario Vitti in 1959 at the Vatican Library and published by him in 1963.¹ The new evidence related to her and her family, includes all the basic registry data and other important information about the life of this apparitional woman who lived close to the poet of the *Odes*, in the period 1817-1819.

The new material was collected, among other archives, from Bristol, Brighton, Surrey, London, Wareham, as well as from printed information. The contribution of Dr Karen Francis to this research, from the very beginning in September 2008 until June 2009, was precious at every stage, and without her assistance, the grave of S.F.R. which was found last June, would have been remain undetected.²

According to the book of marriages, baptisms and funerals of the Church of St. Mary le Port (Bristol), she was born on 5 December 1793 in Bristol and was baptized at the same church, on 9 October 1795 (“Susan Fortune Daughter of Charles & Jane Ridout born Dec. 5th 1793 was baptized in this Church Oct. 9th 1795”).³ Ridout (who finally remained unmarried) died in Bristol on 23 August 1857 from “Chronic Heart affection. Rheumatic years. Effusion pericardium. Anasarea 8 weeks” as it is mentioned in her death certificate on 25 August 1857⁴. An announcement of her death is published in two newspapers: *The Brighton Herald* on the 27th of August and at *The Brighton Examiner* on the 1st of September.

* A first variant of this article was published in the *Μικροφιλολογικά* magazine, issue 25, Spring 2009, pp. 21-22. The present article is enriched with new evidence.


** Philologist and writer

On 19 January 1857, she made her Will in Spinster of Wareham, Dorset, in which she bequeathed the greater part of her property, to her nephew, Bleamire Moody De Michele (b. 8 April 1831), who was the son of her ill sister, Elizabeth (bapt. 1.1.1793-1865?). Elizabeth, according to the censuses of the years 1841, 1851 and 1861, was a resident of Brighton and was married on 11 January 1825 in Hustings of Sussex, with John George De Michele (d.1859) who was 51 y.o. in 1851, according to the Census of that same year. [Ridout] also bequeathed a part of her property, in cash, books, and other objects who were found at her home where she resided, to her friend Samuel Richard Capel, whom she appointed as the executor of her Will, along with his son, George Blight Capel. The remaining part of her property (cash, household utensils, jewels, books and other objects) bequeathed to three of her friends, Amalia Da Silva, Elizabeth Harry and Emma Wickham (2.6.1810-3.2.1887) who was the wife of the Reverend Edward Dave Wickham (24.2.1810-17.6.1894). The Wickhams, with whom Ridout was connected by friendship, arranged for the transportation of her remains, from Brighton to South Holmwood, where the funeral took place in the cemetery of the Anglican church of Saint Mary Magdalene, on 28 August 1857.⁷

In the death certificate, it is written that she was a daughter of the merchant Charles Vie Ridout, an information given by S.F. Ridout in two of her letters, of the year 1819.⁸ The research brought to light some evidence about her father, who was born in 1753, and married in London on 19 October 1784, with Jane Smith (1768-1827). He died in 1815⁹ and his funeral took place on the 1st of March at the church of St Michael-on-the Mount, in Bristol. The Ridouts had also another eight children, five girls and three boys.¹⁰

In 1838, she released her book in London, entitled *Letters to a young governess on the principles of Education and other subjects connected with her duties* [Part I, Published Edmund Fry, London], which had a second enriched edition in 1840.¹¹ According to the official census of the population in the evening of the 6th of June 1841, Ridout directs a school for girls, in Brighton, 45 Sussex Sqr., and in the boarding school, there are sixteen pupils at the age from eight until fifteen years old.

In 1843, she is mentioned as a subscriber to the fifth volume of *The History of England* by John Adolphus, and residing in Brighton.¹² However, in 1848 she is located in London and according to the official census of the population, in the evening of the 30th of March 1851¹³ she directs a boarding school for girls, in Hamilton Terrace 61-63, St Marylebone, in Middlesex, London, in which there are eight boarding female pupils and another five women as part


CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY
 Pursuant to the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953

FD 452584

Registration District Brighton									
1857. Death in the Sub-district of Kemp Town, Brighton in the County of Sussex									
Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
17	Twenty third August 1857 5 Old Steine	Susan Fortune RIDOUT	Female	66 years	Daughter of Charles Vie RIDOUT Merchant (deceased)	Chronic Heart Affection. Rheumatic years. Effusion Pericardium Anasarea 8 weeks Certified	Mary Therlon Present at the death 37 Sussex Hill, Brighton	Twenty fifth August 1857	Chas. Dumbrell Registrar

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody.

M. S. Addison
 18.11.2008
 Deputy Registrar

Date

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Death Certificate of Susan Fortune Ridout

of the staff. She is registered at the same address, in a London mailing list in 1848, as well as in a Banking list in 1852, and it's very possible that she was directing the same school.

The letters of S.F. Ridout to Kalvos, providing us with a variety of information, and besides their personal relationship, they consist documented evidence about the life, the personality and the literary -and other- activities of Andreas Kalvos. The thirty letters (from a total number of fifty four letters, whose the very first is dated March 27, 1817), cover the period from 21 October until 30 December 1819, since they reconnected, after the death of his wife Maria Theresa Josephine Thomas when Kalvos was accommodated at the house of his publisher Samuel Bagster, near St. Paul's Cathedral. (There are two letters dated in October, seven letters in November, and the other twenty-one in December, of which the most are dated in the last two weeks of the same month).

In the first letter there is an information that S.F. Ridout, was already an old pupil of Kalvos, and it's very possible that she was one of first people who had been taught Italian by him, after his establishment in London in September 1816.



The Grave of Susan Fortune Ridout

Ridout recommends pupils to the poet and thanks him in one of her letters about a Hymn (*Inno*) which he sent her, and gives us the information that his *Italian Grammar* is going to be ready very soon.¹⁴ In a letter dated in March 1818, she mentions that she received the copies of the *Σύνοψις της Ιταλικής Γραμματικής* sent for her and another two for his pupils. In June of the same year, she writes to him that she has read the article in *The Times* regarding his lectures on the Greek language and congratulates him. In a letter of the year 1819 she refers to the second series of his lectures. There are also additional information concerning the multilingual *Αρμονική Γραμματική* by Frederick Nolan, for which the poet will write a “Modern Greek Grammar”, as well as *L’ Ape Italiana* magazine, by B. De Sanctis, with whom he used to be in the same circle of friends and afterwards, according to one of her letters dated 26 October 1819, he was going to be in rupture. A few days later, she is asking him, if the Bible is released in single booklets. Some of her letters are of a great interest, as she points there the characteristic elements about Kalvos, which gives us a completely different portraiture of him, contrary to what we usually have through some unsubstantiated narratives (integrity of character, independence of thought, prudence, dignity, etc.). Even the related references to their erotic relationship give us, implicitly but clearly, a different image of the poet, much different from the anecdotal characterizations of his relations with the

other sex. Additionally, in her letters there is information given about a trip of the poet to Egypt, as well as his upcoming visit to Italy and Greece. Finally, besides the references about her family, in one of her letters, we have a unique to date, factual information about the death of his first wife Maria Theresa Josephine Thomas, a few months after their marriage in May 1819 .¹⁵

NOTES

1. See Mario Vitti, *Sources for the Biography of Kalvos (Letters 1813-1820) (Πηγές για τη βιογραφία του Κάλβου), (Επιστολές 1813-1820)*, Thessaloniki 1963, pp. 87-125.
2. The identification of the grave in the Anglican Church of Saint Mary Magdalene at Holmwood, became possible with the assistance of Mrs. Mary Mansell, based in an older sketch of the cemetery. The headstone inscription with the details of S.F. Ridout, was eliminated by the years. The burial ground, became known to me by Dr. Karen Francis by an e-mail message, and the exact burial place of the grave, identified by Mary Mansel in June 2009.
3. Bristol Record Office.
4. Brighton Archives, Death in the Sub-district of Kemp Town, Brighton in the County of Sussex, 1857, No. 17.
5. *Brighton Herald*, 27.8.1857 (“On the 23rd inst., Mrs Sarah [sic] Fortune, 5 Old Steine, aged 68 years”).
6. *Brighton Examiner*, 1.9.1857 (“DEATHS./ RIDOUT. – On the 23rd inst., 5, Old-stein, Brighton, Sarah [sic] Fortune, daughter of Charles Vie Ridout, Esq., merchant, aged 66 [sic]”).
7. Cf. Surrey History Centre: St Mary Magdalene, South Holmwood, Entry number 272. Name Susan Fortune Ridout, When buried August 28th 1857, Age 64.
8. M.Vitti, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-103.
9. M. Vitti, *op. cit.*, p. 102 and Bristol Burial Index: BRO Ref: P.St M/R/4a Page: 30 No 240.
10. Jane Vie Ridout, 29/8/1786, St Mary le Port, FCEP/V/4/35(a)5 frame 40.
Elizabeth Ridout, 7/1/1793, St Mary le Port, FCEP/V/4/35(a)6 frame 13.
Henrietta Ridout, 20/12/1797, (birth date note t as 31 May 1796) St Mary le Port, FCEP/V/25(a)6 frame 33.
Martha Ridout, 31/5/1799,(birth date note as 26 June 1798) St Mary le Port, FCEP/V/35(a)6 frame 38.

Charles Vie Ridout, 2/11/1801, St Michael, FCP/StM/R/1(d)2 frame 39.

Thomas Ridout, 7/12/1802,(birth date noted as 26June 1798)St Michael, FCP/StM/R/1(d)2 frame 44.

Catharine Elizabeth Ridout, 1/1/1805,(birth date noted as 27 April 1806) St Michael, FCP/StM/R/1(d)3 frame 9.

Helen Ridout, 26/5/1810,(birth date noted as 27 April 1806) St Michael, FCP/StM/R/1(h)1 frame 19.

Bristol Record Office, Matt Coles. Archives Asst.

11. *Letters to a Young Governess, on the Principles of Education, and other Subjects Connected with her Duties*. By Susan F. Ridout. London: Published by Edmund Fry, Bishopsgate Street. 1840. [Part I, p. 144 και Part II, p. 106].
12. John Adolphus, *The History of England, from the accession to the decease of King George the Third*, Vol. VI. Published by John Lee, London MDCCCXLIII [Miss S.F. Ridout, Brighton].
13. The census information of the years 1851 and 1841, come from the British National Archives (Census 1841, 1851).
14. For the letters, see footnote 1. For the Greek translation of Ridout's letters to Kalvos, see P. Karagiorgos, *Themata Eptanisiakis Logotehniais*, Athens 2007, pp. 103-148.
15. The research about Maria Theresa Josephine Thomas, which was carried out in parallel with that one of Susan Fortune Ridout, is still in progress and perhaps will give some results. A Maria Thomas, daughter of the doctor Honoratus Leight Thomas, who was baptized in 8 August 1796 in the church of St Anne, Soho, in London, finally turned out that she wasn't related to the first wife of Andreas Kalvos. In the last summer, the marriage registration of H.Thomas' daughter was found, dated in 1825, and the research towards this direction was abandoned. As it is already known, in this same church took place the marriage of A. Kalvos in 18 May 1819. Despite the research in many archives of London, there were no results, even in the most recent at the London Metropolitan Archives. Very recently, there were located some documents of the year 1812 at the National Archives, as well as of the year 1810 at the Westminster Archives, which is very possible to be related to Maria Theresa Josephine Thomas. It is the first time that such a name appears in documents of that period, exactly the same as the one in the registration of the marriage in 1819. The first person who located the certificate of the marriage, was Archmandrite Iakovos Virvos, in 1939, without however to publish its content. The same certificate was located much later by Antonis Indianos, who published the new evidence in 1960.