**Barnard, Mary (1909-2001)**

Born in Vancouver, Washington, Mary Barnard was a writer best-known for *Sappho: A New Translation* (1958) and her correspondence with EZRA POUND, which she initiated in 1933 after reading the moderns at college. Impressed by the economy of her verse, which reminded him of H.D.’s IMAGISM, and her interest in Greek cadences, Pound supervised Barnard’s early exercises in Sapphics. After winning *POETRY*’s Levinson Prize in 1935, Barnard relocated to New York where she came under the influence of MARIANNE MOORE and WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS. Williams’ tutelage provided a counterpoint to Pound’s as Barnard developed what she called her ‘spare but musical’ style of poems in the American grain, resulting in *Cool Country* (1940) and *A Few Poems* (1952). This style she translated into fiction, writing mysteries and fables, but also into the clarity and measured rhythms of her Sappho translation. Research on Sappho led to an essay volume, *The Mythmakers* (1966), which anticipated LÉVI-STRAUSS’s work on myth, and *Time and the White Tigress* (1986), an essay-in-verse exploring time myths. Such experiences were retold in her compelling memoir *Assault on Mount Helicon* (1984). Her archive joined the Yale Collection of American Literature at the Beinecke Library following her death in 2001.

**List of key works**

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**References and further reading**

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**Sarah Barnsley, 29 April 2014**