PROLEGOMENA AD HOMERUM

A Brief Look at Homeric Background

The Old Idiosyncrat's Method for Starting Homer

New Approaches Reading for Iliad I

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A Brief Look at Homeric Background

As soon as a person starts getting interested in Homer, whether reading in translation or taking up the study of the Greek language, the question arises: "Who was Homer? Was he one or many...? " and a cloud of uncertainty collects over the poem. Books and whole libraries have been written about this, more than anyone would really want to peruse, and even a summary volume like that of Gilles' back in 1885 would hardly cover the 'Homeric argument' up to that date. So perhaps a fresh and highly compacted statement will be useful.

In England Blackwell before 1750 and Wood in 1776 wrote about Homer with a suggestion that the epics were consolidated from recited poems, which were much like the English balladry from the 17 th c. made popular by the publication of Bishop Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry" in 1763. German translations of Blackwell and Wood caught the eye of F. A. Wolf who expounded the theory of the role of "Homer" as compositor of ballads current in a wide epic cycle, in his famous book "Prolegomena ad Homerum" in 1795.

The book fired and fueled the Homeric Question so well that a century later his views were still being approved or attacked. It was only in the mid-twentieth century that scholars neca,e perhaps tired of the complexities and unprovable quality of Wolfian Divisionism, and rearrangements of "Homer" into early and Late Homer, even printed with late portions marked off as such. The scholarly world started to admit that perhaps Homer was an actual Greek author.

A new chapter in Homeric scholarship developed from the study of bardic materials which Milman Parry collected from Serbian Guslars in the 1930's, Homer was felt to have supplied the artistic quality of his poetic sensitivity in recasting and re-shaping the ancient Epics into a text almost identical to the text we have today. Albert Lord's book "Singer of Tales" 1963, experimentally cemented the Parry materials to the Homeric Epics, and his views have prevailed with much amplification in the scholarly community to the present day.

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So we now have a double set of paths, from the Divisionists / Unitarians as well as that of the Greek poets / Serbian guslars. We are still not clear about how much alteration was done to the proto-Homeric texts. A recension of many texts was done around 500 BC under the Peisistridean command, but it is clear that the text which Zenodotos had before him around 200 BC was largely the same as an Oxford or Loeb printed book, with minor variations. A scholarly perusal of all the ancient MSS does point to alternate wording and to lines which might be questionable, even words which show different dialect peculiarities. Yet the overall meaning of the lines is for the most part unchanged.

Since the field work of Milman Parry in the l930's , who recorded Serbian oral poetry as recited by the guslars or Bards working in a five century long tradition, the word "Bardic" has been regularly associated with Homer. There are certain similarities but there are great differences, which should not be overlooked. The Homeric Epics are clearly highly worked and much refined literary texts.

They must have gone through the hands of a master-editor or consensus of arrangers somewhere after the 9th century, but there are no real traces of oral procedure in the books as they stand. The tradition that they were sung by a chorus of Ionian maidens in the 9th century BC points not toward oral transmission, but to a public reading which required an orchestra of high and clear voices to project well at a public festival.

A memorized recited performance is by no means similar to bardic and oral poetry, which will be fluid and improvisatory in some degree. Looking back from this century, both the bardic - balladry interests of the l9th c. analysis, as well as the neo-bardic strain from Serbian sources, both seem most interesting, but still somewhat peripheral to the Homeric texts, which stand firmly planted on well established textual foundations. They stand as written, they are literary productions parallel to the early books of the Hebrew Old Testament which were also ensconced in a literary tradition at a very early date. "Homer" was no more a bard than "Jeremiah" singing in 586 BC about the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. History, poetic compositions, a long tradition, revision and finally codifying scribes are all involved in both cases.

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Greek scholars have always had a special preference for connecting literary ma-
terials with historical and social data. They can hardly refrain from establishing
hypothetical biographies for writers like Sappho and Archilochus, whose work
may be known to us in only a hundred scraps and pieces. But for Homer this is
clearly impossible, since his date in the 9th century BC has virtually no correlate
materials to work with. His social background is of the 9/8th centuries, but the
society of his artistic world nelongs to the end of the Minoan-Mycenean world
of 13th c BC, where we think he must have had scant information. After more
than a century of archaeology, we can say we know far more about that lost
world than the poet "Homer" could possibly have known, or at least that is the
current scholarly assumption.

Perhaps the "Homeric Question" has outlived its usefulness, like an old coat
which has become somewhat threadbare by much handling over time. Part of the
problem of the "Question" is of our own making, as we pull the Homeric cloak
back and forth in an inveterate academic tug-of-war. But in our enthusiasm for
the Bardic Interpretation of the Epics, we may have gone too far too quickly,
weaving the warp of the Serbian guslaric tradition onto the woof of an ancient
pattern, while we try to make interesting connections between poetry now and
poetry then. Like the earlier l9th c. Homeric Problem, the Bardic Interpretation
is certainly interesting and has many enlightening pointers, but it is by no means
the key to the understanding and interpretation of the Homeric epic poems.

There is a consistent thread of a certain poetic sensibility throughout the Iliad,
perhaps different in some ways from that of the Odyssey, although the language
as such is largely consistent. This is the ART of the Homeric poems, it is clear
and brilliant and above all, as Poeschl said years ago, it is perfectly "explicit".
If Homer is tough and clear, then Vergil is a coat of an entirely different color.
He is always "implicit", in-turned and artistically a poet of the hidden meaning,
of the intuitive turn of the words. After reading Vergil with care for many years,
I find it clarifying to come back to Homer for a dose of manly directness, for
accuracy of the poetic eye, and his sharpness of the sequencing of the words.

It was not for nothing that Homer was used almost as the Bible of Hellenic civi-
lization, from first "Reader" and on into life as a book of lines and ideas planted
in the mind of every educated person. Homer shows conduct in an almost

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Confucian way, he shows men at work living and fighting and above all talking winged-words to each other like arrows seeking their mark. From Homer you can learn what it is to be angry, to be gentle, to be active or to concentrate on what you are doing or saying. The Iliad is drawn from life experience, it tells about 'men doing things' more directly than the elaborate artistry of the Greek drama, and it is a cure for ineptitude, tomfoolery and even depression in our complex world where a deep draft of Homeric wisdom can go a very long way.There is no place for bullshit in the Homeric world!

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II

The Old Idiosyncrat's Method for Starting Homer

I published a somewhat protreptic essay several years about learning to read Homer in the original Greek as the only way to approach this remarkable body of epic poetry, and this did seem to encourage a number of people outside Academe to have a try at Greek. The standard school way is to take a course in Introductory Greek, or try to work through a grammar by yourself. And then you get one of the several introductions to Iliad I which present a wealth of information on grammar, word meanings and associations, metrics, art and history background and perhaps even a few text variants for good measure.

The problem with this is that it will be some eighteen months or more before you get enough of the actual poetry under control to read a little, and feel that you have enough firmly implanted in memory to own the Greek as your own. But by then there will be a clutter of many words on many pages, much information snipped from dictionaries or grammars, with long time-lapses between the "lessons". This process of extended learning might be likened to a plastic band which stretches out long, but fails to return to its original shape, which is in this case only about ten words on a line with about thirty to a page. That is all that is of concern to you as a reader of the Homeric poem, anything else tends to clutter the mind, hence is peripheral and perhaps more an impediment than a learning aid.

Of course the traditionalist Educator will say that first you learn the Grammar in small pieces, and soon you can start reading a few sentences. The words can easily be taken as illustrations to the Grammar, and one ends up with a lot of grammar but no reading ability, a process for which the classical languages are famous .

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Language learning does not work that way. Whether as children or later in life, we learn words directly ny association of both Meanings and the Functions of grammatical use. If these are perceived in a meaningful and interesting context, we will have them implanted in memory for life. Children do this better than adults but we continue with this ability through-out life, adding new words and new configurations instantly "on the fly", hardly even perceiving as we progress that we have learned something new. One can use his native language elegantly without consulting a dictionary, and nobody really uses a grammar to configure or decipher a sentence.

Schliemann had one thing more to tell is than exactly where Troy was. A man of intense curiosity and aggressive mind, he learned enough of a dozen languages to use them effectively, with a method which was nothing more than getting a book in a new language and reading it word by word and line by line, along with a translation. The meanings came through di-rectly, while the grammatical constructions of the new language distilled bit by bit into his memory as he intuitively tabbed the different ways the new language said things. He was both reading and simultaneously constructing a grammar of the new language code, which he could check and correct by trying it out on a Greek or a Hungarian or an American. Reading more, this grammar can only get better.

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Before going on I want to refer you to two studies on my website, which can serve as background and lingusitic preparation for the following pages.

The first is The Intelligent Person's Guide to Greek , a basic Greek grammar which is written for the serious beginner as a clear and logical text. This is a compact study which has the basic forms of Greek, from which you can deduce (rather than memorize paradigms) forms you will find in Greek writing.

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The second is a very clear statement about <u>How to Read the Dactylic Hexameter</u> , with the stanrdard Rules but also a new system of Logical Patterning, which will help learning to read Homer fluently and in realtime voice..

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Let me tell you about the way I learned to read my Homer as a student. This was years ago and I found the available testbooks of that time overloaded with useless commentary, inconvenient to use with their Notes in the abck of the book (often telling you everything about the verse but the meaning of the criticical words) and a little Vocabujlary at the back. Using a book of that ilk was a two handed affair, holding the book open to read the text, a right thumb in the middle to reach the Notes, and another finger ready to leap into the Vocab. at the back.

I decided to go at it directly, bought an OCT Oxford Press Homer (then available for under three dollars, reportedly financed by Oxford's erstwhile Hymnal trade) and set to work as follows.

First I copied out of an Oxford OCT text a single line of the Greek.

Next I wrote under the Greek words a few words of basic translation The beginning of the Iliad was familiar so the translation I had on hand was hardly needed, but still useful for some new vocabulary.

Then on a third line I put in all the grammar I would need, some of which I derived from an intensive one week perusal of a school grammar (a Manual not a lesson-book).

I deduced more from the context as I went along, leaving question marks where unsure, later going back to fill them in as I learned more. Bit by bit I went through the 611 lines of Iliad I in those OCT twenty pages, finding that after the first hundred lines I was getting repeats of words and constructions. After 200 lines I was moving fairly fast, and by the end I was reading easily.

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Almost sixty years later I ahve a distinct picture of the pages I was writing out as a beginning student. I find I remember everything clearly, and I can pick up any part of Homer by the fire of a cold winter evening and read on effortlessly, noting a new word as unusual or a hapax perhaps, and filing that away for the next decade. In fact this approach has been used with many languages, it is usually called "The Direct Method" and has found effective in many language learning programs. It is only the hide-bound traditionalism of the Classics which makes this seem experimental or questionable as a method for learning Greek.

I recommend this way of approaching Homer as worth trying out. It is above all direct, it keeps the attention on the words as they come. Reading a line or a page, and there is no clutter of extraneous inputs which obfuscate the attention. Do we really need a book showing us a picture of a dig, or the teacher drilling us on paradigms, or that slow student in the back row always asking what some obvious word means ? Isn't is better to go it along in the privacy of your mind, sitting at your desk with the Homeric Greek, with an occasional first-aid from the translation, a dictionary somewhere if really needed, and a confidence that you are a later-comer in a long tradition of persons since Alexandria who have been sitting at a desk with a papyrus roll carefully learning to read Homeric Greek from a bare text?

Studying a detailed Grammar of the language is fine when you know enough to appreciate its worth later. But all you need initially is a little grammatical awareness about Greek, a lot of printed text to copy out and later study on yout work-paper, and a lot of intellectual curiosity and inventiveness. It is YOU who make the grammar, out of the reading, just as you constructed your personal, intuitive "Grammatical System" out of your regular use of your native English.

Yes, there is one thing more about learning a new language, without which nothing serious or important in this world can be done properly. That one last requirement for learning is, of course, nothing but a generous supply of assiduity and patience.

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THE METHOD

Writing out the Greek by hand is most important, it fixes words in your mind by a precise manual effort, and concentrates your attention on what you are doing. It is first stage on the way to memorization, as important here in leaning a language as in learning a musical instrument, the since qua non of taking possession of information..

For abbreviations, I think these are easy terms to recall:

n. = nominative or subject
gen. = genitive or possessive
dat. = dative (to-for)
acc. = accusative or object
s. = singular
pl. = plural
m. = masculine
f. = feminine
n. = neuter
pr. = present
impf = imperfect
aor. = aorist
pf. = perfect
fut. = future
act. =(active unless noted...)
pass. =passive
mid. -= middle
voc. = vocative
imp. = imperative
ppl. = participle

Since Greek can separate noun and adjective hyphens or any other convenient diacritics can serve to show what goes with what, even doubled or tripled if needed. Where words have many meanings the simplest translation is best for this use.

Where the Greek text form is quite different from the "Dictionary Form", remember that the dictionary listing of a noun as Nom. Singular ,

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or a verb a First Singular of the Present Active Indicative, is just a convention. Nominative singulars are often deceptive, and some verb-tracks are almost unimaginable. Do we have to track-backward and say aloud "BE" when we see the words "they are"? Is the seldom seen tiqhmi needed beside the constant Homeric form eqhke

What is important is to see the word as a word with a form and a meaning, and remember both of these. Later when more examples occur, a mental "paradigm" may evene, but if not, you are none the worse. Many verbs will never be seen in the listed dictionary form, it is the third person singular and plural forms which dominate in most texts, with second persons easily recognizable in Homeric speeches.

You will notice that there are no accents on the material below.. This brings up the matter of the Accents, a bad jumble of contrary information, about which something brief should be said at this point:

a) The diacritics refer to Pitch or musical intonation, which we generally ignore. Later one can read these off a printed text, with some effort and a lot of practice.

I suggest not copying out the accents which have no meaning at this point. Smooth breathing means nothing, the grave is only a demoted acute! Only the rough breathing = Aspirate is needed, and of course apostrophe and perhaps a comma or two. Copying out the accents tells you nothing you need and merely confuses the mind at this stage. Later actue and circumflex will mean music intonations.

b) Greek poetry is constructed with long and short vowel-syllables, which we often mangle by pronouncing loud with Stress. Eta and omega are easily seen as long in duration, the others require guesswork. But there are logical ways of dealing with the rhythms of Homer's dactylic hexameter, as which we have considered in the previous chapter.

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μηνιν   αειδε   θεα   Πηλιαδεω   Αχιληος

wrath   *sing*   *goddess*   *of-- Peleus-son*   *--Achilles*
acc.sc.(is)   *imper.sg*   *voc.f*   *gen.sg.irreg*   *gen.sg (eus)*

ουλομενην   ἡ   μυρι᾽   Αχαιοις   αλγε᾽   εθηκεν

destructive   *which*   *many*   *to Achaeans*   *woes*   *made*
ac.c.sg.mid.ppl   *sg.f*   *neut.pl --*   *dat.pl.*   *--neut.pl*   *3.sg.aor (the)*

πολλας   δ᾽   ιφθιμους   ψυχας   Αιδι   προιαψεν

many   *+*   *brave*   *souls*   *to Hades*   *hurled*
acc.pl.f   *acc.pl.m-f*   *acc.pl.f*   *dat.sg*   *3.sg.aor (iapt-)*

ἡρωων,   αυτους   δ᾽   ἑλωρια   τευχε   κυνεσσιν

of heroes   *themselves*   *-*   *prey*   *made*   *for dogs*
g.pl.m   *acc.pl.m*   *+*   *neut.pl.*   *imp.3.sg*   *dat.pl*

οιωνοισι   δε   πασι,   Διος   δ᾽   ετελειετο   βουλη

vultures   *all*   *,*   *Zeus'*   *was being done*   *will*
dat.pl.m   *dat.pl*   *gen.sg*   *impf.3.sg (telei)*   *n.sg.f*

εξ   ὁυ   δη   τα πρωτα   διαστητην   ερισαντε

from   *when*   *!*   *first*   *they 2 stood apart*   *quarreling*
pre.   *g.sg*   *n.pl.=adv.*   *dual.aor*   *dual.ppl.*
n.pl

Ατρειδης   τε   αναξ   ανδρων   και   διος   Αχιλλευς

Atreus-son   *king*   *of men*   *+*   *shining*   *Achilles*
n.sg.patronym.   *n.sg.m*   *gen.pl.masc*   *n.sg.adj.*   *n.sg.*

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When working with this layout, I found words and grammatical forms reappearing fairly quickly, so after the first hundred lines there were only few entries which I had to append to the Greek lines. Having an open page with less information needed, I started jotting down questions about the meaning, interesting points in the text which seemed to lead to other thoughts, and some of the more detailed points of grammar which my Smyth manual had brought to light. Soon it was one line of Greek with a full page of notations on everythng from grammar to Homeric society to the art of poetry.This day by day record of my venture into the world of the epic poems gave me a good picture of whence I had come and where I was going, both linguistically and intellectually,. Years later I found this Learner's Journal well worth rereading, a daily chronicle of how I had learned what I had come to know. One rarely gets a chance to review his own learning processes in such close view.

I suggest that a person can effectively learn his Greek in a manner similar to the basic mode which I have outlined above, which has certainly served me well in this and other languages. Keeping one's eye and attention on the immediate words is of supreme importance in language learning. For someone who has experience with another inflected language this approach is eminently practical, but the only way to see if it suits it to try it out for yourself. There are many paths to the same point, the interesting thing about this path being its simplicity and directness.

But it would be most useful if someone in the field of Classics would go through the whole of Iliad Book I in similar pattern, and put the entire tabulation on the Web on Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Folder (pdf) so the Greek and Roman text can be interleaved. This would be an immense boon to learners of Greek, both in Academe and for those working on their own as interested adults, or as school students where Greek is not offered. If anyone is interested in working on such a project, which would be more than one person might want to do, working up a hundred lines or less would me feasible. Half a dozen teachers might agree to do the work in parts. If interested please reach me (harris@middlebury.edu) and I will keep the names of interested parties on file .

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Let me give another example of this method of presentation, this time a more complicated text from the Prolog to Aeschylus' Agamemnon:

θεοὺς μὲν αἰτῶ τῶνδ᾽ ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων
φρουρᾶς ἐτείας μῆκος, ἣν κοιμώμενος
στέγαις Ἀτρειδῶν ἄγκαθεν, κυνὸς δίκην,
ἄστρων κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὁμήγυριν,
καὶ τοὺς φέροντας χεῖμα καὶ θέρος βροτοῖς
λαμπροὺς δυνάστας, ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι
ἀστέρας, ὅταν φθίνωσιν, ἀντολάς τε τῶν

θεοὺς   μὲν   αἰτῶ   τῶνδ᾽   ἀπαλλαγὴν   πόνων
gods --   call on of *these* change   *labors*
acc pl   *i sg pr*   *g pl*   *acc sg fem*   *g pl masc*

φρουρᾶς   ἐτείας   μῆκος,   ἣν   κοιμώμενος
watch   *yearlong* length   which   lying
g sg   g sg   n sg neut   mid ppl n sg

στέγαις   Ἀτρειδῶν   ἄγκαθεν,   κυνὸς   δίκην,
on roofs   of the atr.   crouched   *dog*   *manner*
dat pl fem   gen pl   adv   g sg   acc sg fem

ἄστρων   κάτοιδα   νυκτέρων   ὁμήγυριν,
 stars   recognize   *nightly*   gathering
g pl   1 sg perf   g pl   acc sg

καὶ   τοὺς   φέροντας   χεῖμα   καὶ   θέρος   βροτοῖς
and   those   bearing   winter   summer   men
         acc pl   add pl ppl   accsg neut acc sg neut at pl masc

λαμπροὺς   δυνάστας,   ἐμπρέποντας   αἰθέρι
bright   *realms*   *shining forth*   sky
acc pl masc   acc pl   acc pl pres ppl   dat sg

ἀστέρας,   ὅταν   φθίνωσιν,   ἀντολάς   τε   τῶν
stars   when   die   risings   of them
acc pl   3 pl pres subj   acc pl fem   gen pl

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III

Some other Approaches To Iliad I

When Clyde Pharr's Itropduction to Homer appeard many years ago, it provided a systematic way of letting students get directly into reading the first book of the Iliad, and immediately attractged a following among those of us who belileved that Greek reading should start with Homer, whose epics are not only the dominant figure in Greek literature, but an earlier form of the language which leads naturally into the later Attic language. Learning Attic first presents many difficulties in switching to the Homeric diction, so the use of Homer first makes sense on literary and also linguistic grounds. When th Univ. of Oklahoma Press decidd to reprint Pharr's book which ahd become unavailable for years, it became the standard introductory textbook for a second or third semester Greek course.

But Pharr was teaching and writing long ago and many people havein recent years felt dissatisfied with his book. Yet the idea of going straight from a compact course on Greek grammar right into reading real Homer text has remained as an ideal start in Greek. So it is no surprise that in the spirit of the new millennium, a new book covering the same reading has appeared.

A very well designed format is used in **P. A. Draper's "Iliad Book I" from Univ of Michigan Press, 2002,** which places less than a dozen lines of the Greek in the upper part of the left pages, while the basic language commentary with all words noted for beginning students, is arranged to flow nicely down that left page and over to fill the entire right page. The notes should have everything a student could need, but there is even a thirty page word list (now called "Glossary") at the back of the book. But if one wants a good dictionary to own, any of the smaller Liddell and Scotts from used bookstore will be cheap and useful. Cunliffe's excellent Lexicon of the Homeric Language from Unic of Oklahoma is a fine reprint from a 1924 work which has abundant examples and

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citation to show Homeric use of the words, a fine book if you don;t ahve the Lidell Scott Jones large and very costly Greek dictionary from Oxford.

This book follows a long tradition in formatting, which I remember from my 1512 edition of Apuleius, which surrounded a similar patch of Latin with Beroaldo's commentary occupying the rest of a folio page. Burmann's mid l8 th c. edition of Petronius and A. S. Pease's edition of the fourth book of Vergil's Aeneid (Harvard U Press l935, reprinted) went even further with often one or two lines of text generating a full page of commentary. This unlikely loading text with comment was actually no bother, it was easy to deal with since everything was in plain sight on one page, and you could browse at will or ignore and come back later. Ms. Draper does a fine job, in an old and respectable tradition.

Should a text have an accompanying translation? Translations were considered not only improper but reprehensible in our older schools, but most students found their way adroitly to a cheaply printed Bohn. There is a good use for a fairly close translation, which can give many of the words which you need, but relying on an English translation to give you the Grammar in an entirely different kind of language was of course a bad idea.

Another book came on the market in 2000, the currently available edition of **Homer's Iliad I by S. Pulleyn (Oxford U Press 2000** which follows a traditional arrangement, with English translation facing the Greek, in the middle a set of full and detailed notes, with a Vocab at the tail. This is well written book with good detailed notes, in format following the Ginn College Series of l900's. I can only criticize this book for its continual back and forth referencing, which draws attention away from the Greek (curiously printed in light and smaller font!), so I suggest Draper as more conveneitn for use, and the better book for the serious beginner.

When the Loeb Library was conceived in England and at Harvard in the nineteen twenties, it recognized that many format students of the classical languages had learned much grammar nut not nearly enough of the vocabulary to be able to read with any pleasure. Their idea of a Text-cum-Translation in facing pages actually looked better for a reader's aid than it was, since a lot of

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time could be spent searching a quarter of the right hand English for the interpretation of one word of an Ode of Pindar. Words often don;t match up semantically, especially in languages distant from each other in date and culture.

Interlinear Editions were once common for the Classical Languages, There were Interlinear Texts of the Greek of the New Testament Bible which had an English word under each Greek word, long ago published by the David McKay Co. of Philadelphia and a great boon to the student working to enter the ministry. These books had the great advantage of facing a Greek word with an English meaning, of course they avoided the matter of exactly what grammar was involved, leaving that to the wit or imagination of the student. But they did move readers along at a great rate, since the meaning of the book was already familiar, and the Koine language is not complex in literary devices. Had these Bible editions a compact grammatical note in a third line, they would have served as a read introduction to reading Greek, as it stood they made reading that specific text in Greek quite possible, even if not leading to further facility with the language

PERSEUS

But with the opening of our recent electronic world of information, it was inevitable that the classical literatures would be recast in terms of the new techniques, and the Perseus Project now fully developed for Greek and Latin from a base at Turf University, has plunged into the complex new media with much courage and a lot of good financial support. Once the die was cast for electronic texts, and the initial problem of writing Greek in a system which was originally geared to a Roman ASCII, other considerations were in order. Each word in Greek was live-linked to a separate page with elaborate treatment of the meanings, the forms, the grammar, the statistical use in that passage and in all of Greek literature, with reference to artwork, and to other parallel words and passages in that and every other author.

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A new research was made possible with links in every directions, reading was supported by a virtual artillery of language information, to the extent that the students entering these Portals of Infinite Wisdom might find himself floored by excess information. For the art materials which Person contains, this alone is worth the price of admission, and whole college Art courses can be generated from Pereus' materials, along with selections from literary and historical texts as illustrations to th "illustrations".

All this draw the student away from the WORDS, the actual quality of sound and meaning which words in a text possess, while the initial excitement of pressing all these buttons which can take you everywhere often wears thin after a few hours of jockeying through the vanishing electronic files. The not very clear screen characters in Perseus are tiring to read, one could wish for the text to stay still, to be more clear, for the page to be less cluttered. Perseus offer everything for everynody, even links to at and history to those who don;t read Greek but will follows certain words in the furnished Roman transliteration.

We all appreciate Perseus but few of us will want to use it for their first plunge into the world of Epic poetry. Fewer will use it for personal pleasure reading, The old days of sitting by the fire or on the porch in summer with the Iliad in hand will probably be with a Loeb, Greek with English, or English alone if you so wish.

Since Perseus Homer is available online, with all its enormous apparatus for the language, and can be summoned to your monitor screen without more cost that downloading the free Athenian font to convert from Perseus' betacode Greek for your reading, a serious student or amateur of Greek should take a look a what Perseus has to offer. If you like what you see, Perseus could be fine for you, but if you find it annoying, fussy or overly complicated, you can get to the same place with Ililad I along with Ms. Draper's excellent book which I mentioned above.

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