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## Reviews

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### An Analysis of Seven Greek Text Books

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Editor's note: This analysis is an extract from a paper, entitled 'The Reform of Greek Teaching', read by Professor Rees to an A.R.L.T. Summer School in Cardiff in 1962 and published (with the omission of all of this extract except the last section) in *Latin Teaching*, Vol. XXX, No. 12.

I begin with two of the more conventional text books – L. A. Wilding, *Greek for Beginners* (Faber and Faber, 1957) and W. J. Bullick and J. A. Harrison, *Concise Greek Course* (G. Bell and Sons, 1957). Wilding has thirty chapters, each containing a portion of grammar and a set of exercises, Greek-English and English-Greek. Chapters eight to twenty-nine contain also pieces of continuous Greek, adapted from Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon (twenty-four in all), referring the pupil on matters of grammar to Abbott and Mansfield. The accidence and syntax do not cover all that is usually needed for a university first-

year course or for O-level, but are intended for use with lower forms; this suggests that the author has published his book mainly with the independent schools in mind. He assumes that the study of Latin has already begun and will keep ahead of Greek, so that he can dispense with a full explanation of usages and constructions already met in Latin. At the end of the book are vocabularies and a list of the commoner uses of prepositions. (It is perhaps significant that Mr. Wilding, who teaches within the sphere of influence of Oxford University, does not favour the use of the 'reformed' pronunciation.)

Bullick and Harrison adopt a different lay-out. They begin with a short introduction on Greek literature and civilisation, and follow this with a section on accident and syntax (sixty-four pages). After that come the usual exercises (fifty-two in all) on individual points of grammar and different constructions, English-Greek first in this case, and a number of continuous pieces of Greek for translation into English, beginning immediately after Exercise 24 and dealing with the story of the Ten Thousand in fifteen instalments. There is a very brief English-Greek vocabulary and a basic vocabulary for use with the Xenophon. The book is intended for the first year of Greek in school and university, and its separate section on grammar makes it more self-contained than Wilding, though the latter has proved to be the more popular.

Both of these text-books represent a major advance on those of the older type and stand closer to *Deigma* than to Hillard and Botting, in that they include Greek passages for translation into English. They are both, however, conventional in their approach and differ only in arrangement and emphasis. Those who would use them in school and university must be prepared to adapt and supplement them to a considerable degree, if they wish to get the most out of their pupils in the limited time available nowadays.

I now turn to text-books which make a cleaner break with the spacious traditions of the past and a rather more adventurous approach to the problem of teaching beginners under modern

conditions. A. H. Chase and H. Phillips, *A New Introduction to Greek* (third edition, revised, Harvard University Press, 1961) is attractively produced with several nice illustrations, is intended for use by students and upper forms in schools, and can, it is claimed, be covered in a year. It introduces selected passages of Greek at a very early stage and continues to use them throughout, interspersed with the usual ration of grammar and sentences (English-Greek, Greek-English, in that order); these extracts differ from those offered in most text-books of this kind by being of a greater variety and generally much shorter, sometimes consisting of one sentence only; the purpose here is to introduce the pupil to as much original Greek as possible as early as possible and to illustrate at the same time various facets of Greek civilisation. Another difference in method lies in the earlier introduction of grammar normally reserved for later stages in the beginners' course, in order to facilitate the reading of more advanced Greek. There are vocabularies at the end of the book, preceded by a number of useful appendices containing grammatical paradigms, lists of prepositions, and a summary of syntax. In its original form this text-book has been in use for twenty years; the present edition offers an extensive revision, including sentences for exercise. It is very expensive in Great Britain.

A text-book which is also admirably produced but at a quarter of the price of Chase and Phillips is F. Kinchin Smith and T. W. Mellish, *Κεφός* (English Universities Press, 1951); it employs the basic material used in *Teach Yourself Greek* with the addition of exercises in translation from English to Greek, and is intended for the first year of a rapid course or the first two years of a school course for younger pupils. The approach is empirical, and the explanation of syntax fuller than that found in the conventional text-book, which tends to rely more on the competence and experience of the teacher. No knowledge of Latin or of any language other than English is assumed, and the aim is to introduce the reading of extracts from Greek authors as early as possible. Grammar is dealt with as the need arises in copying

with the selected pieces of Greek, but the order is still very like that employed in the conventional course, differing only very little from that of Wilding. Considerable use is made of the knowledge which can be gained from etymology, especially in the earlier stages of the course, and, in order to familiarise the pupil with the Greek characters, English words borrowed from Greek are written in Greek in made-up pieces of English narrative. The Greek extracts number about thirty and vary greatly in size and difficulty, many of them calling for some degree of assistance from an experienced teacher. Short vocabularies are placed at the end of the book but are intended for reference only. The exercises are to be worked after the reading of the Greek passages which occur in the same chapter.

*Teach Yourself Greek* (E.U.P., 1947) differs mainly in its format, which is uniform with other volumes in the series to which it belongs, and is therefore rather less attractive; it provides no exercises in translation from English to Greek, but it has keys to all the other exercises, as is usual in a series intended primarily for the use of individuals working mainly on their own. Like *Keptos* it dispenses with accents and recommends the use of the 'reformed' pronunciation, though it does not insist that this is essential.

These two text-books represent a considerable improvement in method on those previously mentioned, but they will not cover all the ground which it is normally thought desirable to cover in the first year and will require supplementation, if used in schools, particularly as some of the pieces chosen for translation are rather too ambitious at this stage. They are most useful with classes of adult beginners but could form the basis of a school course.

Another book which breaks away from the traditional line of approach to beginners, although it does so in quite a different direction, is J. A. and G. A. Nairn, *Greek Through Reading* (Ginn, 1952). This is an attractive and comprehensive text-book which assumes, unlike *Keptos* and *Teach Yourself Greek*, that a sound foundation in Latin has already been laid and that the beginner

is able to make a more mature approach to his Greek as a result. The course is in four parts: first, passages of translation (one hundred and thirty one, beginning with synthetic Greek and then moving on through Apollodorus, Aesop and Lucian to Thucydides, Herodotus, Plato, Demosthenes, Plutarch, etc., and often adapting the original Greek to remove difficulties of construction which may hamper the pupil at this stage); secondly, exercises consisting of sentences for translation, Greek-English first, and having their reference to particular points of accidence and syntax; thirdly, a section containing the essentials of accidence and syntax in summary; fourthly, pieces of continuous English for translation into Greek, based on the Greek passages in the first part. Greek-English and English-Greek vocabularies are provided as well as special vocabularies for each set of exercises. It is the expressed intention of the authors that the grammar and exercises should be completed first, that is, before the Greek passages for translation into English are attempted, but experience has shown that translation from Greek can be started in the third week of the course, even if this means that there is no correlation between translation and grammar. The section containing exercises is divided into seventeen chapters; these are uneven in scope and content – e.g., in the middle of the section there is one which embraces the active, middle and passive of the indicative, infinitive and participle of contracted verbs, and is likely to hold up the class for quite a while. It follows that, as *Greek in the Twentieth Century* justly comments, this text-book is 'best used under the guidance of an experienced teacher'; it is not, like *Keptos* and *Teach Yourself Greek*, suitable for use by pupils working on their own with occasional help. But, unlike them too, it can fairly be described as self-contained and potentially capable of supplying the basis for the second year's work as well, since it provides varied and extensive material for translation into English and Greek, albeit almost exclusively in prose. In its present form Nairn has a title which tends to mislead, and it would have profited by more systematic integration of its component parts.

Finally, we come to the most recent and most radical of all the text-books under review – S. W. Paine, *Beginning Greek. A Functional Approach* (New York, O.U.P., 1961). This book certainly lives up to the claims of its title: it employs what the author calls the 'inductive method', that is, it abandons the traditional method of introducing slabs of grammar one after another and exercising the pupil on them by means of sentences to be done into English and Greek; instead, the emphasis is on reading and translating passages of original Greek right from the outset and introducing accidence and grammar as required with full notes on difficult constructions. The original Greek is provided by the Gospel of S. John in the first semester and by selections from Xenophon's *Anabasis* in the second. The pupil thus starts with the *κωινὴ* and then moves on to Attic Greek, from the simpler to the more complex; working translations of the Greek passages are supplied at the end of the book along with a summary of Greek syntax and a full English-Greek vocabulary. There are no English sentences for rendering into Greek, and the grammar is presented in large blocks, rather than small snippets. It is worthwhile to quote the judgment of a recent reviewer in the *Times Educational Supplement*, that 'this book does very well what it sets out to do and will prove most valuable to the older student for whom it is intended. It is not a school book.' The comment is a fair one but perhaps it is also a reflexion of our own excessively conservative approach to the problem of the Greek beginner today. It certainly reveals the crux of the problem, how to provide a course which will be suitable for all three classes of beginner – school, university and adult.

It would be rash for me to condemn or recommend any of these text-books from my own small experience of them; this is a case where either *experientia docet* or *de gustibus non disputandum*. But it would be relevant to draw your attention to certain general trends which can, I think, be detected:

a With the exception of Paine the order of presentation of the grammar is more or less constant; Chase and Phillips bring in

the comparison of adjectives and the use of pronouns rather earlier, as well as the *-μι* verbs and contracted verbs, both they and Nairn also introduce consonantal verbs fairly early, and there is a slight disagreement about the place of adjectives, *εἶμι*, participles, and imperatives. But none of these differences is fundamental, and no one goes so far as to introduce third declension nouns at the commencement, as does Vellacott in his recent Latin text-book (P. H. Vellacott, *Ordinary Latin*, Macmillan, 1962). Obviously, if the translation of Greek, especially original Greek, is to be started early, then Vellacott's experiment could profitably be tried with Greek, when it has proved its worth with Latin.

b The importance of providing a text-book containing within itself passages of Greek for translation at a fairly early stage in the course now appears to be generally accepted, though there is still a difference of opinion as to how soon it is possible and desirable to do this.

c Only Paine dispenses entirely with sentences; Chase and Phillips have had second thoughts on the subject and have added sentences in their revision, while Kinchin Smith and Melluish felt that it was necessary to provide them in *κῆπος*, after having omitted them from *Teach Yourself Greek*, which was designed for a different kind of pupil. The majority place the Greek-English sentences before the English-Greek and regard the latter as a useful aid to the translation of continuous Greek, rather than as an end in themselves.

d Only Paine makes a beginning with N.T. Greek; the others refer to it occasionally, probably because their main object is to familiarise the pupil with the grammar, idioms and constructions of Attic Greek with a view to writing Greek prose at a more advanced stage.

e The text-books produced in Great Britain are reasonably priced, even the most expensive (Nairn) being within the reach of university students at least; the two American books, on the other hand, are sold in this country at a price which puts them

beyond the reach of all but the affluent or the professionally dedicated.

To sum up, there has been only one attempt at a complete break with tradition, and the book which makes it (Paine) is too expensive to be brought into common use in Great Britain and scarcely presented in a way which would make it convenient for use in schools. On the other hand, there is a decided movement away from the traditional procedure (accidence – syntax – sentences) and a much more empirical approach; this is most noticeable in Kinchin Smith and Melluish, though not even they would maintain that the use of sentences as an additional means of exercise is entirely superseded. But there is still no text-book generally available which puts the emphasis squarely on translation into English or could be said to cater at one and the same time for all three classes of beginners, school, university and adult.

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