
Brian T. Walsh
The University of Vermont

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H. Paul Brown,  
*Twenty Greek Stories (Designed to Accompany Hansen and Quinn’s Greek: An Intensive Course).*  
Pp. xiii + 222. Paper  

Hansen and Quinn’s *Greek: An Intensive Course*, long a favorite Greek textbook of many college students and autodidacts for its thorough grammatical exposition and bountiful drill and exercise sentences, has at last found a companion reader worthy of its intensity in H. Paul Brown’s *Twenty Greek Stories*. While it was composed on the model of the *38 Latin Stories* reader, which accompanies *Wheelock’s Latin*, Brown’s new work easily outstrips its Latin exemplar with its fifty-seven reading passages plus appendices. Indeed the sheer number and rich variety of passages render this new reader a useful accompaniment to many other Greek textbooks. The number of stories per unit (generally three) is in keeping with the spirit of Hansen and Quinn (hereafter H&Q), while the annotations and running vocabulary are similarly generous throughout. H&Q, it should be noted, also include short ‘Readings’ with running vocabulary for most of their book, but the majority of the selections in the first half of their work, apart from Menander’s *Monostichoi*, are poetic. Thus Brown’s effort immediately justifies itself. A closer look reveals a number of features that add to this impression.

Running line-by-line vocabulary features copiously throughout all the selections and achieves the author’s stated aim of “minimizing the need for ‘page flipping’” (ix). The depth and frequency of the annotations are the most striking pedagogical element throughout, as Brown guides the reader along in an engaging style that simultaneously reviews (‘Review,” p. 128 and “H&Q §118,” p. 441), interrogates (“what number and gender must δεξιὰ be here?”, p. 2) and challenges (“Σθενώ: one of the three Gorgons. Use the other names to determine what case this name is,” p. 100) the learner. Thirteen of the twenty units include an appended ‘Review’ page, while all units are prefaced by a ‘Grammar Assumed’ section. Students who appreciate H&Q’s learned ‘Vocabulary Notes’ will undoubtedly value the annotator’s
strenuous and anticipatory didaxis. What of the texts themselves?

Brown’s choice of passages is a sound one and begins with three select fables of Aesop (Unit 1) and the prose theogony from Apollodorus’ *Library of Greek Mythology* (Units 2–3). These initial stories are particularly welcome to beginners, as the ‘Readings’ sections in H&Q commence only at the end of Unit 4. Units 4–6 will not fail to appeal to today’s learner with their focus on magic (‘The Pella Curse Tablet’ and ‘Orphic Instructions for the Afterlife’) and the wonders of the mythical city of Atlantis, for which Brown draws from those famous portions of Plato’s *Timeus* and *Critias*. Hardly less enchanting are his selections from Lucian, the *Dialogues* and *The True History*, (Units 7–9). Lucian’s dialogues are substantially easier than most of Plato’s, which make them ideal choices for an introductory reader, while Zeus and Prometheus are perhaps more universally recognizable interlocutors than, say, Socrates and Ion. The *True History* selections (Units 8–9) likewise prove an excellent choice, as they include epic *Odyssey*/Argonautica–like adventures and elements of ancient science-fiction (‘The War in the Sky’), all in minimally altered ancient prose. As most students of introductory Greek are familiar with mythology and Homer’s *Odyssey*, these passages will provide some useful exposure to ancient literary genres and reception. The author is to be commended here for his judicious choice of Lucian, full of fantasy and a rich parodic style, over an altered version of Odysseus’ wanderings.

Brown shifts to poetry for the first time with Units 10 and 11, which feature the resolution of the conflict in *Iliad* 1 (including sacrifice and prayer scenes) and the *Hymn to Apollo* respectively. While these passages require substantially more editorial effort to ‘Atticize’ the epic poetic dialect (by adding temporal augments, Attic forms: ‘κλῦθί μου’ instead of epic ‘κλῦθί μευ’, etc.), the overall effect is salutary. As the complete omission Homer from this reader would have been highly lamentable, the editor’s extra efforts are to be applauded. Similar claims for inclusion may be made for the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* with its establishment of the Delphic oracle. The narratives of ‘Hera’s Anger’ and Apollo’s slaying of the dragon are at the core of Greek culture and modern scholarship on historical linguistics. In terms of thematic continuity (one of Brown’s stated aims), the figure of Apollo ties both sets of narratives together nicely. Apollodorus’ *Library* provides material for the Perseus narratives in Units 12 and 13, before Brown returns to Hesiod’s *Theogony* for more Prometheus material. Given the earlier treatment of Prometheus and Zeus in Lucian’s dialogue, one might have expected something thematically different here.

The most unusual choices in *Twenty Greek Stories* are certainly the two which are excerpted from Appian’s *Roman History* and narrate Hannibal’s military tactics
in Italy during the Second Punic War (Units 16 and 17). Grammatically appropriate and dramatically satisfying though these episodes may be, one wonders why Brown did not choose an historical text featuring Hellenes as protagonists (from Xenophon, Polybius or Arrian) or at least as keenly interested observers. Indeed Appian’s other works (Mithradatic Wars, Syrian Wars) provide fertile sources of intense dramatic Greco-Roman conflict set in the wider Hellenistic world.

Twenty Greek Stories finishes strongly, in any case, as the final four units (17–20) are divided evenly between poetry (Sappho’s lyrics and the epic ‘Battle of the Frogs and the Mice’, 17 and 20) and history (Herodotus’ Kandaules and Gyges tale, 18 and 19). The two Sappho poems, which include ‘The Hymn to Aphrodite’ and ‘The Lover’s Lament’ are especially well done, as Brown has included full versions of both the Aeolic original (including boldface Aeolic forms) and Catullus’ Latin adaptation with an English translation. The final mock-epic passage from the Frogs and Mice provides a solid ending and serves, like the aforementioned passage from Lucian, as a rich entry into the worlds of literary reception and satire.

Beyond the texts and review materials, the four illustrations are well placed and integrated into their respective texts. Of these I single out only the first, which features a golden Orphic prayer leaf. The image is quite clear for grayscale and is accompanied by a complete transliteration along with some interesting orthographic notes and questions. The charms of magic are always an attractive element and Brown has wisely positioned these ‘Two Magical Texts’ and illustration at a strategically early place in the reader.

Some final indications of the quality of this reader are the Appendices, of which Appendix B contains a full list of proper names (people and places), the likes of which one finds in the back of gems like Woodhouse’s English-Greek Dictionary. The 38-page Greek to English Vocabulary is a final piece of compelling evidence of the great care which the author has invested in every page of this work.

In the end, one gains an inescapable impression—from the depth of engaged annotation as much as by the thoughtful choice of passages—that H. Paul Brown knows intimately the needs and interests of today’s Greek student and has striven very hard to meet them. Thus I consider this 222-page reader a giant pedagogical effort, full of that old πόνος so prized by the Greeks and worth much more than the modest price suggests.

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