

BOOK REVIEW

Lucian's The Ass: An Intermediate Greek Reader. Greek text with running vocabulary and commentary. EVAN HAYES and STEPHEN NIMIS, eds. Oxford, OH: Faenum Publishing, 2012. Pp. xii, 230. ISBN 978-0983-2228-28. \$14.95 (pb).

Hayes and Nimis have self-published five intermediate Greek readers since January, 2011, as part of a series funded by the Joanna Jackson Goldman Memorial Prize through the Honors Program at Miami University. These include: *Lucian's A True Story* (2011); *Plutarch's Dialogue on Love* (2011); *Lucian's The Ass* (2012); *Lucian's On the Syrian Goddess* (2012); and *Hippocrates' On Airs, Waters, and Places and The Hippocratic Oath* (2013). The editors should be commended for their dedication and daring to provide relatively cheap textbooks of less mainstream works for the undergraduate Greek student.

The intended audience for these textbooks is the student who has completed the first year sequence of ancient Greek and is embarking on the often daunting task of reading either their first work *in toto* or selections of a work. Commonly, a student's first intermediate course is in the fall term after a summer that may have miraculously removed all knowledge of both simple and more difficult grammatical constructions as well as a good portion of their vocabulary. Students, therefore, will frequently require a comprehensive review of grammatical and syntactical constructions.

The advantages of the all-inclusive reader are manifold, and the student will have nearly everything s/he will require at her/his fingertips, thus allowing and encouraging them to read a fair amount of Greek at a steady pace. The instructor, therefore, is free to offer whatever reviews s/he deems necessary. One of the best aspects of the all-inclusive textbook is that it requires little or no need to consult a lexicon. I acknowledge that knowing how to use a lexicon is an important skill for students to have, but perhaps the intermediate level is not the ideal time to introduce it.

Another helpful feature of the all-in-one textbook is that students will rarely have to refer to their introductory Greek text or a Greek grammar, such as Smyth, for grammatical explanations. Admittedly, knowing how to use Smyth or any

Greek grammar is fundamental for the success of language students beyond a certain level. But I would argue that the intermediate student does not need this additional challenge. Finally, graduate level and scholarly commentaries tend to provide too much information for the undergraduate's needs and often bring about an understandable frustration to the student. For an undergraduate to be required to not only read through extensive explanations but also determine what is useful for their primary purpose is not the goal of an undergraduate reading course, and this process often discourages students. At the intermediate level, we want to do all we can to help the student read as much Greek as possible while reviewing grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. The all-inclusive reader makes this possible for intermediate Greek students.

Hayes and Nimis, in their very short introduction (IX-XI), include a discussion on the aims of the work, a brief summary of the story itself, its connection to Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*, a "How to use this book" section, their use of "translationese," and a disclaimer concerning its "Print on Demand" status. The editors make sure to point out how appropriate Lucian's *The Ass* is for the intermediate level, citing its fast-paced, relatively easy vocabulary as well as its comedic topics and tales. And I would agree.

Although the connections between *The Ass* and Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* are only mentioned briefly, a few sources are included for those interested in further reading. The editors then explain how to use their book, which sets forth what is and what is not included in the page-by-page glossary, e.g. particles, common nouns, and adjectives are omitted. These vocabulary items, however, are included in the full glossary at the end of the book. Verbs, though, are treated more fully than any other part of speech, and there is a list of verbs with unusual forms in an appendix. The editors caution readers that they have employed "translationese" in their commentary in order to keep as close to the original grammatical constructions as possible. The text itself is based on C. Jacobitz's Teubner (Leipzig, 1907), and the editors indicate that they have made only slight modifications to the text.

Finally, the authors explain the text's "Print on Demand" status, and this may be one of the more important aspects for instructors to keep in mind. "Print on Demand" texts often have a number of typographical errors since the editorial stage is omitted. While many might consider this a negative feature, I suggest that instructors turn this into a teaching moment. By inducing students to become typographical detectives, they will be compelled to examine the text very closely. In my experience, the majority of Greek (and Latin) students get a thrill out of pointing out incorrect breathing marks, accents, or forms (sometimes to our chagrin).

By urging students to keep a list of errors that they can submit to the editors at the end of the term, we are teaching them a valuable lesson in proofreading and editing, and including them in the larger community of classical scholars. In fact, the editors themselves suggest and encourage users to share any corrections to the text.

The Greek text of Lucian's *The Ass* is found on pages 3–147; Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* on 151–194; a list of irregular verbs on 199–207; and the full glossary on 211–230. The pages with the Greek and Latin texts are divided horizontally into three or four sections. The topmost register is reserved for the original text, which ranges from 2–10 lines of text, but is usually between 5–8 lines; vocabulary is just below this, divided into two columns and listed alphabetically; and the bottom third is reserved for the grammatical commentary in the order that they appear in the text. If there is a specific grammar review (such as those found on pages 5, 7, 16, 19, 24, 30, 41, 70, and 85), it is placed beneath the commentary. The only exceptions to this are pages 9 and 36, which include full-page grammar reviews (Defective Verbs and Indirect Statement).

As mentioned above, the Greek text is based on Jacobitz (in the public domain and accessible online) and, therefore, warrants no further discussion. The editors, however, have included short English headings that alert the reader to the upcoming events in the story. The vocabulary is listed alphabetically except for page 144 where they are listed in the order in which they appear in the text. Noun entries include the nominative singular form and gender, while those with stem changes also include the genitive form: e.g. ἵππος, ὄ/ῆ vs. ἀνήρ, ἀνδρός, ὄ. Adjectives are listed with all their nominative forms: e.g. πλήσιος, -α, -ον: παράδοξος, -ον, while adverbs and prepositions are simply listed with a definition. Particles and conjunctions are not listed in the running vocabulary but can be found in the full glossary (starting on page 211).

No parts of speech are included in the running vocabulary, but students should know the difference between an adverb and a preposition by this point in their studies. Finally, verbs are listed with their first principal part only. Definitions are limited to 1–3 possible choices: e.g. πάγος, ὄ: a rock; συμπόσιον, τό: a drinking-party, symposium; and ὁδός, ῆ: a way, path, road.

The majority of errors in the vocabulary section are minor: e.g. Δεκριανός, ὄ should have an acute not a grave accent (6); λόγος is missing its definite article (10); and a sprinkling of missing commas between nominative and definite article: ἰμάτιον τό (11); μάγος ὄ (13).

One noteworthy item in the vocabulary section for instructors is that a word is included every time it occurs no matter how often it has arisen in the text, e.g. “γυνή, γυναικός, ἡ: a woman, wife” is listed on pages 5, 6, 11, 13, 15, 30, 54, 76, 87, 88, 103, 104, 131, 132, 134, 135, 136, 137, and 141. While some might argue that a vocabulary item should be removed after its third entry, thus compelling the student to learn the word, I would venture to guess that the authors chose to include a vocabulary item every time it occurs because that would allow an instructor to pick and choose passages and not be concerned that a vocabulary item would already be excised due to its earlier frequency.

On the whole, the commentary is sufficient for the needs of intermediate students, helping them with both forms and translations. Again, a number of errors are found, the majority being accentuation: e.g. ἤμεν: impf. of ἔμι (breathing on wrong vowel in diphthong) (3); and ἀσπασάμενοι: ao. part. of ἀσπάζω (should not have hard breathing) (4); but also an inconsistency in listing the verb a form is from: συνέκερτο: impf. (but no verb is listed) (19); and ἔστεφανούμεθα: imp. mid. (no verb listed) (29). The only other critique for the commentary I offer is that imperfect and aorist tenses are both translated as the simple past with no distinction between the two.

In the ten grammar reviews, I also found a number of minor typographical errors. In the review of αὐτός (5), the heading has αὐτόξ listed with a grave instead of an acute; in the review of Defective Verbs on page 9 has the Aorist of λέγω as ἔλεξα (should be a smooth breather); in the Future Conditions review on page 16, the more vivid example includes an extra “.” in the ellipsis; in the review of Potential ἄν (70), ἄν is listed with a grave in the heading and throughout the English explanation, but correctly in the Greek examples and in the full glossary (212); and in the final grammatical review on Indirect Statement in Secondary Sequence (85), φημι is lacking its acute accent on the ultima.

Following the Greek of *The Ass* are ten passages from Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, which highlight the striking parallels between the texts. The Latin selections, as I mentioned above, are divided similarly into a three-part register: text; vocabulary; and commentary. The inclusion of selections of Apuleius is one of the most useful and exciting aspects of this textbook, for it is extremely rare that students are provided with Greek and Latin textual parallels, especially at the intermediate level. Students reading Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* will certainly know its literary background and expansion on a now-lost Greek original. Hayes and Nimis have provided us with a textbook that allows this comparison to be evaluated with relative ease.

The “List of Verbs” (199–207) is useful for students as it lists verbs with irregular forms as well as its common compounds. The list is based on that from Smyth’s *Greek Grammar*. One glaring error is the spelling of Smyth with an “e” (199). Other very minor errors include an extra colon after the definition of δέω and δέομαι; a missing space between the definition of ἔπομαι and the future form; and a missing comma after the definition of χέω.

Overall, I would highly recommend this textbook for instructors of intermediate Greek. Despite some minor issues (mainly typographical) the edition put forth by Hayes and Nimis provides a unique opportunity for students to read a highly entertaining story with relative ease. For those instructors whose students are familiar with Apuleius and/or have completed an equivalent level of Latin, this all-in-one textbook is a rare find and should be seriously considered for an intermediate Greek class.

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