BOOK REVIEW

Twenty Greek Stories Designed to Accompany Hansen and Quinn's "Greek: An Intensive Course". By H. PAUL BROWN. Mundelein, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2014. Pp. xiii + 222. Paper, $19.00. ISBN 978-0-470-86516-822-0.

Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers have published a companion book to their highly successful *Thirty-Eight Latin Stories Designed to Accompany Wheelock's Latin.* Both books share an admirable goal: to provide interesting supplementary readings to a grammar-based textbook that needs them.

Twenty Greek Stories offers an impressive range of readings. It begins with three fables from Aesop, two familiar ("The Race", "The Ant and the Scarab Beetle") and one less so ("The Statue Seller"). The rest of the book similarly intersperses the familiar (the legend of Perseus) with the unexpected (*The Battle of the Frogs and Mice*). Subsequent readings include myths adapted from Apollodorus, Hesiod, Homer, and Homeric Hymns; magical texts from curse tablets and the so-called Orphic instructions on the Underworld; Plato's legend of Atlantis; selections from Lucian; odes by Sappho; Herodotus's narrative of Candaules and Gyges; Appian's *Roman History,* and others. All of these are adapted into Attic prose.

Despite the "twenty" in the title, there are many more than twenty passages. The book contains twenty units, which contain from three to five passages each. The readings are broad enough to give the reader a sense of the variety of Greek literature, from serious to whimsical. They are carefully selected with a view to highlighting the grammatical topics as covered in the textbook. A curse tablet, for example, is the perfect vehicle for introducing the optative of wish. Including passages on the Second Punic War seems like an odd choice for a Greek reader, but it is good to know that Greek historians wrote about the Romans as well as their own people. Vocabulary help is abundant, and grammatical questions are included within the glosses from time to time (i.e. "Why is this in the genitive case here?) There are also reviews of forms at the end of each unit.

The collection has the same drawback (which some may nevertheless consider a strength) as the Hansen and Quinn textbook it is intended to accompany. As the title suggests, it is intensive and thus introduces huge amounts of complex

material within very few chapters. Accordingly, most of the readings in *Twenty Greek Stories* quickly become too difficult for all but the most rapidly-paced courses. The material becomes especially challenging when the passages depart from straightforward narrative into description or philosophizing. The readings on Atlantis in Units 5 and 6 are intriguing, but puzzling to one not already familiar with the details of the Platonic myth. According to this myth, there was an earlier (pre-classical) Athens brave in war and supremely well-organized, with very beautiful works of art, which defeated an arrogant foe marching against Europe and Asia. An inexperienced reader can easily miss that Plato is probably describing an early Athens of his own imagination, since his description so closely matches the familiar view of classical Athens. The adapted introduction to Lucian's *True History* is even denser. When Lucian announced he was directing his spoof at authors who told fantastic tales, he listed his targets thus: πρός τινας τῶν παλαιῶν ποιητῶν τε καὶ συγγραφέων καὶ φιλοσόφων. In the adaptation, the word for "philosophers" unaccountably becomes an infinitive: φιλοσοφεῖν.

The book is nevertheless a welcome addition to the Greek instructor's set of tools, since usable Greek materials are even more difficult to find than Latin. Hansen and Quinn's book is not as dominant in college Greek classes as Wheelock's is in Latin classes; nevertheless, it has its loyal devotees. A glance at the reviews on Amazon.com shows that for many, Hansen and Quinn is the best introduction to classical Greek. They should be especially receptive to these challenging but rewarding readings.

MARIANTHE COLAKIS

Townsend Harris High School, mcolakis@schools.nyc.gov