Strong Beginnings, Greater Ends: New Resources in Beginning Greek

Elementary language study is often approached by both teacher and student with a good deal of trepidation. So much depends on doing well in beginning courses from both sides of the desk that the anxiety level can become far too high for all persons concerned. This panel is designed to offer some new resources to all those who teach elementary Greek.

The first paper will present the most recent results of the College Greek Exam. These results help faculty to know where their students are succeeding and where they are struggling. This awareness of strengths and weaknesses can be extremely helpful for faculty who wish to make adjustments in the material presented in an elementary class. Faculty naturally tend to focus on areas that seem difficult to them (i.e. the faculty) but these College Greek Exam results provide the necessary information to focus on the areas that are difficult for students.

Our students are now so tech-savvy in all ways that one ignores computer resources at one's peril. Elementary Greek is no exception and this second paper offers some assistance with one such digital resource, the AGE (Ancient Greek for Everyone) program. The AGE program provides resource material that can be adapted to any textbook as it deals with fundamental concepts but is not tied to a specific book or method. One hopes that by providing increased awareness of the AGE program, others may be inspired to contribute the growth of on-line resources in Ancient Greek.

Digital resources provide the focus for the third paper as well. In keeping with the reality of how closely our students are tied to such sites as YouTube, the paper presents a series of videos designed to assist with some of the grammatical concepts of elementary Greek. This presentation also will show faculty how to produce such videos--a relatively simple process--and thereby again increase the amount of digital material available to students of beginning Greek.

The final paper also relies on technology but in a different way. Elementary textbooks always present some sort of reading for the student, and most often these readings involve passages that have been adapted from standard authors. This paper argues that the availability of inscriptions in an on-line format provides another source of Greek for elementary students. The author suggests a few specific inscriptions (and types of inscriptions) that lend themselves to comparatively easy reading and that can serve as gateways to discussions of culture as well. Since inscriptions are our only surviving contemporary texts from the Greek world, it is good that faculty introduce students to them early in their experience of ancient Greek.

The 2012 College Greek Exam

This paper reports on the fourth annual College Greek Exam (CGE), administered in March, 2012. It begins with a brief history of the exam and its origins. The exam began as a parallel to the National Greek Exam, but specifically for college-level students in their first year. Armed with a basic format, syllabus and vocabulary, a pilot exam was given in 2008 and the first regular annual exam in 2009. The report then goes on to describe developments in the 2012 exam and enumerates the high scores and averages. The results of the exam are then analyzed according to grammatical categories. Where the same or similar questions have been asked on previous exams, there is a comparison of how the students did on both exams. The report includes some general comments on how the exam and the results mesh with certain issues in teaching first year Greek at the college level, both pedagogical (textbooks, etc) and administrative (the need for external assessment tools, etc). Finally, the report provides updates on some changes to the exam's syllabus and the ongoing efforts to administer the exam online.

Teaching Beginning Greek on Digital Platforms

The impact of digital technology is still playing out across all fields and levels of education. While Classicists in general have been progressive in creating and using new technology, Major (2012) has argued that beginning Greek instruction lags behind other levels in available digital resources. This paper reports on the ongoing development of a digital resource for teaching beginning Greek.

Dubbed *Ancient Greek for Everyone* (AGE), this project is designed to provide the core materials for an instructor to teach beginning Greek. Adaptability is a chief goal of the design. Accordingly, AGE is not geared toward any existing textbook. Many popular print textbooks run hundreds of pages and grow larger (and consequently less flexible) with succeeding editions. The idea of AGE is to provide core materials which can be readily adapted, omitted or supplemented by any instructor. Toward this end, and to maximize accessibility, all the material is presented in Power Point slide shows, or pdf's if a sheet format is more effective. In place of a textbook, these materials are posted for students in the school's online course management system (with a more general version mirrored at www.dramata.com). Such materials can be printed if necessary, but are easy to access and use on nearly any computer, tablet, phone or other device.

The project further aims for coherence and flexibility in other areas, some of which are easier to achieve in digital formats. First, AGE builds up two overlapping core vocabularies: a core Classical Greek vocabulary (dcc.dickinson.edu/vocab/greek-alphabetical) and lemmas occurring thirty or more times in the New Testament. These lists mean that a student completing Beginning Greek will have a practical and high-frequency core vocabulary for intermediate reading. The two lists also reflect the two reading goals of AGE: Classical Greek and Biblical Greek. Each unit includes both Classical and Biblical reading passages, and the systematic

approach to vocabulary means that adding glosses is straightforward and consistent. The long term plan is to add parallel readings (Homeric, post-Classical, even Modern), but even now it is easy for an instructor to use, omit, or add readings of their choice and interest.

The most radical, but perhaps to be the most fruitful, feature of AGE is its arrangement of topics. After an introductory unit on the alphabet and sound combinations, each unit focuses a category of verb or noun/adjective/pronoun formation, alternating between the two. Only occasional units for other parts of speech (conjunctions, prepositions, adverbs) deviate from the pattern. Units do not sprinkle in specialized or random topics, as seems *de rigueur* in standard print textbooks. Grammatical and cultural notes are added for the readings as necessary, but the goal is the choose readings needing a minimum of annotation. Again, however, instructors can add material, readings and annotation which they feel are well suited to their class.

As with any work in progress, there is sure to be much correction, revision and improvement to come, but the hope is that teaching Beginning Greek can now enter the 21st century instruction on a stable, but flexible, foundation.

WORKS CITED

Major, Wilfred E. 2012. “Teaching and Testing Greek in a Digital World.” *CO* 89: 36-38.

Lights, Camera, Greek!: Creating and Using Video Tutorials in Beginning Greek

A crucial factor in retaining students from beginning Greek through intermediate and advanced courses is the level of academic support available to students. Some types of auxiliary material are available online (e.g., Mastronarde's on-line exercises [socrates.berkeley.edu~ancgreek], Peurifoy's New Testament worksheets [www.rpeurifoy.com/Greek/ClassHandouts.aspx], a range of videos on YouTube), but while these sites provide valuable resources for students, integrating these into their studies can be difficult for any number of reasons, such as software compatibility, opaque instructions, or explanations geared to different texts.

We present a type of instructional support distinct from what is otherwise available, geared for a classroom environment using Anne Groton's *Alpha to Omega*. Several principles determined the properties and character of these materials: (1) that the ideal format for support tutorials is a brief video; (2) that the video should be in a format that students can watch on their computers without worrying about software compatibility; (3) that in order to avoid the sense that these are "lectures," the image of the instructor should not appear on-screen; and (4) that the video should incorporate elements of hand-drawn animation into the presentation of the Greek, in order to give the videos a "fan vid," or home-made quality, which makes the material less threatening and more engaging. We found that all these requirements could be satisfied by using a combination of a smart-board and screen-capture software.

The presentation will discuss how we created these "screen caps tutorials" and present selections from them, including a brief "documentary" that shows the real-time production of a "screen caps tutorial" video. We will also provide a handout detailing the programs and hardware necessary for the creation of similar "screen caps" videos, along with how-to

instructions. Finally, we will have had a semester to receive feedback from students regarding their experience with the tutorials, so these responses, as well as our own reflections on the project, will allow us to discuss the future directions and applications, as well as the adjustments to technology and pedagogy we will be making in "version 2.0."

Stoned Classes: Carving Out a Place for Inscriptions in the Elementary Greek Classroom

Many of those who teach elementary Greek are not necessarily well-trained in epigraphy, even though they may use inscriptions for research purposes. Inscriptions, however, are the only really first hand documents we have from the ancient world. Although we often bemoan the lack of original Greek in elementary textbooks, at the same time we overlook the remarkably rich source of short, readable inscriptions. Winters (2003) discusses the use of the dedications from the Athenian Acropolis as useful texts for the early stages of learning Greek, but this paper proposes to direct the audience's attention to some groups of inscriptions that provide a bit more content, while at the same time remaining accessible to learners still in their first year. Many of the once expensive corpora of Greek inscriptions are now available on-line and this makes their use by students even more attractive.

The age of college students coincides roughly with the age of a young Athenian male who was a part of the Ephebeia. This connection in age creates an automatic touchstone for students who are interested in the activities of ancient persons who were their age-mates. Sections of the ephebic inscriptions are quite accessible with some help from the instructor in terms of vocabulary. Reinmuth's volume of Ephebic Inscriptions of the Fourth Century is now a part of the material available on-line through the Packard Humanities Institute's web site (epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/). Lines 26 to 35 of Reinmuth's number 2 provide a good example of the sort of text accessible to students at the beginning level, and many similar examples could be adduced.

Curses are almost second nature to students and numbers 34; 35, 42; 43; 44; 45; 49; in the Wuensch volume of Defixionum Tabellae provide a range of very brief curse texts that students

can easily work out and then emulate as a homework assignment. Even number 64, although it would require perhaps a bit more time to explain its fragmentary nature, would be manageable.

Attic decrees hold peculiar difficulties for students and scholars alike, but it was long ago demonstrated that their openings are formulaic. Since that is so, the first eight lines of Agora 16.48, for example, would not pose too difficult a challenge to the elementary student, and an inscription such as IG I.3.6, a decree concerning the proper sacrifices for the Eleusinian mysteries, is accessible with only a few lexical aids.

If we turn to areas outside of Athens, Delphi makes a great place to search for usable texts. FD III.2:32 is one example of an easy text that could be worked out either as a homework assignment or an in-class exercise. Likewise the opening distich of CEG II.630, a funerary poem from Boeotia, is quite a manageable text. Finally IG IX.2.106 provides another example of a curse that students could tease out with a few vocabulary glosses and whatever grammar may be needed depending on the time at which the piece is introduced.

Practically any text from any writer requires some glosses both grammatical and lexical. Since this is so, why not put students in touch with some really original texts, the corpus of Greek inscriptions?

WORKS CITED

Winters, Timothy F. 2003. “Using Inscriptions in Elementary Greek.” *CJ* 98: 289-94.