



An easy set-up, with tangible rewards

Sunday afternoon Greek classes meet varied needs

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During several semesters over the past 10 years I have offered Greek classes in my home every other Sunday afternoon for Latin teachers in western Massachusetts. We began with a year-long study of *Athenaze*, which worked well both as review for teachers who had had some Greek and for beginners. The availability of the teacher's handbook made the textbook ideal for the large amounts of independent study needed with class meetings only every other week. Other years we read selections from Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica* as background for the *Aeneid*, selections from Theocritus as background for Vergil's *Eclogues*, and selections from Greek lyric poetry as background for Catullus and Horace.

This year with a group of teachers different from those in the original class we are reviewing basic grammar and vocabulary with *Athenaze* and doing selected readings in New Testament Greek and in Plato's *Apology*, using Stephen W. Paine's *Beginning Greek: A Functional Approach* (Oxford University Press) for the New Testament (Gospel of John) and James J. Helm's excellent second edition of his *Plato's Apology* (Bolchazy-Carducci). Of the 11 teachers involved in fall 2001, six took it for one credit through University of Massachusetts Continuing Education, and the others attended without credit. One of the teachers was initiating a Greek class in his school, and another began teaching New Testament passages to students in her school as a special project. One brought quite a lot of Greek into her seventh and eighth grade English classes (*Iliad* and *Odyssey* respectively), having her

students learn the Greek alphabet, memorize the opening lines of the epics, and listen to passages read aloud in the original Greek, with significant vocabulary highlighted, especially insults like "dog-faced." Those taking the course for credit could earn Professional Development Points toward recertification. The class will continue in the spring semester, and next fall we plan to read selections from the *Iliad*.

The course has been very beneficial for the teachers involved, and they have enjoyed it thoroughly. It is also a significant social event, bringing together teachers who are often the only Latin teacher in their school. Our sessions lasted from 1:00–3:00, but there were so many things to talk about after class that it was often close to 4:00 before everyone left.

Logistically, this kind of class is easy to set up and requires minimal preparation on the part of the instructor. Participants were encouraged to correct their own written exercises from the teacher's handbook before handing them in. The benefits for the Latin teachers, however, can be enormous, allowing them to bring Greek into their Latin classes with confidence, and thus bringing a whole new dimension to their teaching of Latin and helping to open up the ancient Greek world to the minds of their students. I heartily encourage other classics professors or professors emeriti to offer Sunday afternoon Greek classes for the Latin teachers in their areas. I would be delighted to help with further details and advice, should anyone wish it.

Contact me at glawall@classics.umass.edu or telephone 413-549-3090. For a survey of Greek teaching in and out of the Latin class in American schools and a Greek Teachers' Corner, visit my web site: <http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~glawall>. ☞

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