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Introductions to the Study of the Greek Classic Poets Designed Principally for the Use of Young Persons at School and College by Henry Nelson Coleridge.

Pinterest Cambridge University students on graduation day. The ancient Greek inventors of democracy vigorously debated this issue, having painful historical experience of it – recorded by Thucydides – and theoretical solutions – discussed by Aristotle. Yet in Britain today, few secondary school students are ever given the opportunity to investigate the dazzling thought-world of the Greeks. This is despite the existence for half a century of excellent GCSE and A-level courses in classical civilisation, which have been a success wherever introduced, and can be taught cost-effectively across the state-school sector. The failure to include classical civilisation among the subjects taught in every secondary school deprives us and our future citizens of access to educational treasures which can not only enthral, but fulfil what Jefferson argued in Notes on the State of Virginia was the main goal of education in a democracy: History, he proposed, is the subject that equips citizens for this. To stay free also requires comparison of constitutions, utopian thinking, fearlessness about innovation, critical, lateral and relativist thinking, advanced epistemological skills in source criticism and the ability to argue cogently. All these skills can be learned from their succinct, entertaining, original formulations and applications in the works of the Greeks. The situation is aggravated by the role that training in the ancient languages, as opposed to ancient ideas, plays in dividing social and economic classes. One of the many ways in which the schism between rich and poor in Britain is reflected educationally is in access to Greek and Latin grammar. In the last year for which figures are available, 3, state-sector candidates took A-levels in classical civilisation or ancient history. High grades in the ancient languages – easily enough won by solicitous coaching – provide near-guaranteed access to our most elite universities. For those without Greek and Latin A-levels there are indeed Oxbridge opportunities: The chances of admission for these are in line with other courses such as English and history. But it is easier to get into Oxbridge to read the long-established classics courses, requiring an ancient language A-level, than any other subject: Instead of Greek ideas expanding the minds of all young citizens, Greek denotes money and provides a queue-jumping ticket to privilege. First, we need to support classical civilisation qualifications, campaign for their introduction in every school and recognise their excellence as intellectual preparation for adult life and university. Specifically, classical civilisation needs to be recognised in the English baccalaureate and given the same governmental support as Latin. Second, we need to expand the tiny number of teachers trained to teach classical civilisation via classics-dedicated PGCE courses, and also, crucially, encourage qualified teachers of other subjects in schools – English, history, modern languages, religious studies – to add classical civilisation to their repertoire. A committed philosophy teacher there, Eddie Barnett, was inspired by the enthusiastic response elicited by the small Plato element on the A-level philosophy syllabus; he has recently secured an agreement that classical civilisation will be rolled out at all three campuses of the college. Classical civilisation qualifications are embraced by most universities already, and this is the first year in which it has been possible for Open University students to graduate with single honours in classical studies, even if they have had no contact with the Greeks and Romans previously. But Oxford and Cambridge, with their fame and brand, now need to lead by example and offer challenging classics courses that do not fetishise grammar and consequently repel state-sector students who have been excited by reading classics in English. This means engaging with literary texts fearlessly in translation plus increasing the importance of critical thinking and lowering that of language acquisition. Undergraduate degrees are supposed to produce competent citizens. Traditional classics courses are not making the most of those ancient authors on their curriculum who enhance civic as opposed to syntactical competence.

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They formulated ideas about the nature of poetry, its effects, and its function in society. They also developed theories on the effective composition of prose texts, and they commented on the style of orators, historians, and philosophers. Four of these contexts are relevant, in particular: From its beginnings in the Homeric epics, Greek poetry reflected on its own nature, value, and function. Latin poetry was concerned with similar issues: Throughout Antiquity, poetry provoked all kinds of responses from philosophers. On the one hand, the relationship between poetry and philosophy was framed in terms of a conflict between competing traditions: On the other hand, philosophers made extensive use of poetic forms and developed theories of poetry: Rhetoric is another ancient discipline that is closely connected with literary criticism. In Greek and Roman teaching, students were continuously stimulated to read, study, and analyze the classical texts from the past, which formed the models of stylistic imitation and emulation. By consequence, the rhetorical treatises composed by such teachers as Demetrius, Dionysius, and Quintilian include numerous evaluative observations on specific passages of classical prose and poetry. Finally, there is the tradition of ancient scholarship that came to flourish in the Hellenistic period, most famously in Alexandria and Pergamum. The commentaries of Alexandrian scholars contained observations on literary stylistic aspects of the classical texts, which partly and indirectly survive in collections of scholia. This article offers a basic orientation to the study of ancient literary criticism. It lists general historical overviews, introductions to ancient criticism and related disciplines rhetoric, philosophy, ancient scholarship, aesthetics , essential literature on the most influential critics and schools of criticism including translations, commentaries, and studies , as well as important discussions of some general issues and concepts of ancient literary criticism. General Overviews Several surveys present a chronological history of ancient literary criticism from Homer to Late Antiquity. Kennedy includes contributions by a number of specialists who discuss a great variety of texts from Homer to the Neoplatonists and the Church Fathers. It is the successor of Grube , which is, however, still a very readable handbook and an excellent starting point for beginning students. The two volumes of Atkins are in many respects outdated, but they contain useful observations on specific critics. Russell is a very succinct account of the history of criticism in three pages. Fuhrmann concentrates on the criticism of poetry in three canonical authors, viz. There are several surveys that focus on a specific period. The archaic and classical periods of Greece are discussed in Ford , with a focus on the social contexts of early Greek criticism. The chapters on Antiquity in Habib are especially interesting for readers who approach the ancient texts from a modern critical perspective. Two recent monographs present a series of case studies in the Greek tradition. Hunter opens up new perspectives by drawing fascinating lines between various classical texts. Halliwell is a nuanced discussion for more advanced readers, as it argues that the poetic views of many critics are more complex than most traditional surveys suggest. Literary criticism in Antiquity: A sketch of its development. The two volumes deal with Greek criticism starting from Aristophanes and Greco-Roman criticism, respectively. Although in many respects out of date, this survey contains valuable discussions, including interesting juxtapositions of Greek and Roman critics Philodemus and Horace; Tacitus and Demetrius. Roman literary theory and criticism. It contains a useful discussion of Cicero as critic, but it pays insufficient attention to the Greek critics of the Roman Empire. The origins of criticism: Literary culture and poetic theory in classical Greece. This excellent discussion emphasizes the social contexts of early Greek criticism, which originated in the evaluation of song performance. In the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, formal poetics gradually emerged, through the efforts of Alcidamas, Isocrates, Plato, and especially Aristotle. Die Dichtungstheorie der Antike: The Greek and Roman critics. Grube offers informative introductions to all relevant critics and their theories, avoiding too much technical detail. A history of literary criticism and theory: From Plato to the present. Informative introduction for readers who are interested in the influence of ancient critics on later periods. Between ecstasy and truth:

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Interpretations of Greek poetics from Homer to Longinus. Oxford and New York: The tradition of poetics shows a continuous dialogue between two perspectives on poetry, one emphasizing its emotional impact, the other one its cognitive value. Critical moments in classical literature. Not an exhaustive survey, but an exploration of fascinating relationships between ancient texts and themes. The Cambridge history of literary criticism. Although some chapters are outdated, the volume remains indispensable for students and scholars working on ancient criticism. Literary criticism in Antiquity. In the Oxford Classical Dictionary. A good starting point for readers who need to find their way into the field. Originally published in , in the Oxford Classical Dictionary, rev. Users without a subscription are not able to see the full content on this page. Please subscribe or login. How to Subscribe Oxford Bibliographies Online is available by subscription and perpetual access to institutions. For more information or to contact an Oxford Sales Representative click [here](#).

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Chapter 3 : Ancient Literary Criticism - Classics - Oxford Bibliographies

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See Article History Greek literature, body of writings in the Greek language, with a continuous history extending from the 1st millennium bc to the present day. Later, after the conquests of Alexander the Great, Greek became the common language of the eastern Mediterranean lands and then of the Byzantine Empire. Literature in Greek was produced not only over a much wider area but also by those whose mother tongue was not Greek. Even before the Turkish conquest the area had begun to shrink again, and now it is chiefly confined to Greece and Cyprus. Ancient Greek literature Of the literature of ancient Greece only a relatively small proportion survives. Yet it remains important, not only because much of it is of supreme quality but also because until the mid 19th century the greater part of the literature of the Western world was produced by writers who were familiar with the Greek tradition, either directly or through the medium of Latin, who were conscious that the forms they used were mostly of Greek invention, and who took for granted in their readers some familiarity with Classical literature. The history of ancient Greek literature may be divided into three periods: Archaic to the end of the 6th century bc; Classical 5th and 4th centuries bc; and Hellenistic and Greco-Roman 3rd century bc onward. Archaic period, to the end of the 6th century bc The Greeks created poetry before they made use of writing for literary purposes, and from the beginning their poetry was intended to be sung or recited. The art of writing was little known before the 7th century bc. The script used in Crete and Mycenae during the 2nd millennium bc [Linear B] is not known to have been employed for other than administrative purposes, and after the destruction of the Mycenaean cities it was forgotten. Its subject was myth – part legend, based sometimes on the dim memory of historical events; part folktale; and part religious speculation. But since the myths were not associated with any religious dogma, even though they often treated of gods and heroic mortals, they were not authoritative and could be varied by a poet to express new concepts. Thus, at an early stage Greek thought was advanced as poets refashioned their materials; and to this stage of Archaic poetry belonged the epics ascribed to Homer, the Iliad and the Odyssey, retelling intermingled history and myth of the Mycenaean Age. These two great poems, standing at the beginning of Greek literature, established most of the literary conventions of the epic poem. The didactic poetry of Hesiod c. The several types of Greek lyric poetry originated in the Archaic period among the poets of the Aegean Islands and of Ionia on the coast of Asia Minor. Archilochus of Paros, of the 7th century bc, was the earliest Greek poet to employ the forms of elegy in which the epic verse line alternated with a shorter line and of personal lyric poetry. His work was very highly rated by the ancient Greeks but survives only in fragments; its forms and metrical patterns – the elegiac couplet and a variety of lyric metres – were taken up by a succession of Ionian poets. At the beginning of the 6th century Alcaeus and Sappho, composing in the Aeolic dialect of Lesbos, produced lyric poetry mostly in the metres named after them the alcaic and the sapphic, which Horace was later to adapt to Latin poetry. No other poets of ancient Greece entered into so close a personal relationship with the reader as Alcaeus, Sappho, and Archilochus do. They were succeeded by Anacreon of Teos, in Ionia, who, like Archilochus, composed his lyrics in the Ionic dialect. Choral lyric, with musical accompaniment, belonged to the Dorian tradition and its dialect, and its representative poets in the period were Alcman in Sparta and Stesichorus in Sicily. Both tragedy and comedy had their origins in Greece. Comedy, too, originated partly in Dorian Greece and developed in Attica, where it was officially recognized rather later than tragedy. Both were connected with the worship of Dionysus, god of fruitfulness and of wine and ecstasy. Written codes of law were the earliest form of prose and were appearing by the end of the 7th century, when knowledge of reading and writing was becoming more widespread. No prose writer is known earlier than Pherecydes of Syros c. To Aesop, a semi-historical, semi-mythological character of the mid-6th century, have been attributed the moralizing beast fables inherited by later writers. Classical period, 5th and

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4th centuries bc True tragedy was created by Aeschylus and continued with Sophocles and Euripides in the second half of the 5th century. Aristophanes, the greatest of the comedic poets, lived on into the 4th century, but the Old Comedy did not survive the fall of Athens in 404 bc. The sublime themes of Aeschylean tragedy, in which human beings stand answerable to the gods and receive awe-inspiring insight into divine purposes, are exemplified in the three plays of the Oresteia. The tragedy of Sophocles made progress toward both dramatic complexity and naturalness while remaining orthodox in its treatment of religious and moral issues. Euripides handled his themes on the plane of skeptical enlightenment and doubted the traditional picture of the gods. Corresponding development of dramatic realization accompanied the shift of vision: The Old Comedy of Aristophanes was established later than tragedy but preserved more obvious traces of its origin in ritual; for the vigour, wit, and indecency with which it keenly satirized public issues and prominent persons clearly derived from the ribaldry of the Dionysian festival. This phase was followed toward the beginning of the 4th century by the New Comedy, introduced by Menander, which turned for its subjects to the private fictional world of ordinary people. Later adaptations of New Comedy in Latin by Plautus and Terence carried the influence of his work on to medieval and modern times. In the 5th century, Pindar, the greatest of the Greek choral lyricists, stood outside the main Ionic-Attic stream and embodied in his splendid odes a vision of the world seen in terms of aristocratic values that were already growing obsolete. Greek prose came to maturity in this period. Earlier writers such as Anaxagoras the philosopher and Protagoras the Sophist used the traditional Ionic dialect, as did Herodotus the historian. His successors in history, Thucydides and Xenophon, wrote in Attic. The works of Plato and Aristotle, of the 4th century, are the most important of all the products of Greek culture in the intellectual history of the West. They have formed the basis of Western philosophy and, indeed, they determined, for centuries to come, the development of European thought. This was also a golden age for rhetoric and oratory, first taught by Corax of Syracuse in the 5th century. The study of rhetoric and oratory raised questions of truth and morality in argument, and thus it was of concern to the philosopher as well as to the advocate and the politician and was expounded by teachers, among whom Isocrates was outstanding. The orations of Demosthenes, a statesman of 4th-century Athens and the most famous of Greek orators, are preeminent for force and power. Hellenistic and Greco-Roman periods In the huge empire of Alexander the Great, Macedonians and Greeks composed the new governing class; and Greek became the language of administration and culture, a new composite dialect based to some extent on Attic and called the Koine, or common language. Everywhere the traditional city-state was in decline, and individuals were becoming aware of their isolation and were seeking consolidation and satisfaction outside corporate society. Artistic creation now came under private patronage, and, except for Athenian comedy, compositions were intended for a small, select audience that admired polish, erudition, and subtlety. An event of great importance for the development of new tendencies was the founding of the Museum, the shrine of the Muses with its enormous library, at Alexandria. The chief librarian was sometimes a poet as well as tutor of the heir apparent. The task of accumulating and preserving knowledge begun by the Sophists and continued by Aristotle and his adherents was for the first time properly endowed. Through the researches of the Alexandrian scholars, texts of ancient authors were preserved. The Hellenistic period lasted from the end of the 4th to the end of the 1st century bc. For the next three centuries, until Constantinople became the capital of the Byzantine Empire, Greek writers were conscious of belonging to a world of which Rome was the centre. The genres Epic narrative At the beginning of Greek literature stand the two great epics, the Iliad and the Odyssey. Some features of the poems reach far into the Mycenaean age, perhaps to 1500 bc, but the written works are traditionally ascribed to Homer; in something like their present form they probably date to the 8th century. The Iliad and the Odyssey are primary examples of the epic narrative, which in antiquity was a long narrative poem, in an elevated style, celebrating heroic achievement. The Iliad is the tragic story of the wrath of Achilles, son of a goddess and richly endowed with all the qualities that make men admirable. With his readiness to sacrifice all to honour, Achilles embodies the Greek heroic ideal; and the contrast between his superb qualities and his short and troubled life reflects the sense of tragedy always prevalent in Greek thought. Whereas the Iliad is tragedy, the Odyssey is tragicomedy.

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Odysseus too represents a Greek ideal. Though by no means inadequate in battle, he works mainly by craft and guile; and it is by mental superiority that he survives and prevails. Both poems were based on plots that grip the reader, and the story is told in language that is simple and direct, yet eloquent. The Iliad and the Odyssey, though they are the oldest European poetry, are by no means primitive. They marked the fulfillment rather than the beginning of the poetic form to which they belong. They were essentially oral poems, handed down, developed, and added to over a vast period of time, a theme upon which successive nameless poets freely improvised. The world they reflect is full of inconsistencies; weapons belong to both the Bronze and Iron Ages, and objects of the Mycenaean period jostle others from a time five centuries later. In the ancient world the Iliad and the Odyssey stood in a class apart among Archaic epic poems. Of these, there were a large number known later as the epic cycle. They covered the whole story of the wars of Thebes and Troy as well as other famous myths. A number of shorter poems in epic style, the Homeric Hymns, are of considerable beauty. A subgenre was represented by epics that recounted not ancient mythical events but recent historical episodes, especially colonization and the foundation of cities. Examples include Archaeology of the Samians by Semonides of Amorgos 7th century bc; in elegiac couplets, Smyrneis by Mimnermus of Colophon 7th century bc; in elegiac couplets, Foundation of Colophon and Migration to Elea in Italy by Xenophanes of Colophon 6th century bc; metre unknown, none of which are extant. Epic narrative continued and developed in new forms during the Classical, Hellenistic, and Greco-Roman periods; works represented both subgenres. Notable mythical epics included the lost Thebais of Antimachus of Colophon 4th century bc, the surviving Argonautica in 4 books by Apollonius of Rhodes 3rd century bc, and the surviving Dionysiaca in 48 books by Nonnus of Panopolis 5th century ad. The historical epics do not survive, but among them were Persica, on the Persian Wars, by Choerilus of Samos 5th century bc; an epic on the deeds of Alexander the Great by Choerilus of Iasus 4th century bc; an epic on the deeds of Antiochus Soter 3rd century bc by Simonides of Magnesia; and Thessalic History, Achaean History, and Messenian History by Rhianus of Crete 3rd century bc. As the greatest epic poet, however, Homer continued to be performed in rhapsodic contexts and was read in schools through the Classical, Hellenistic, and Greco-Roman periods. Didactic poetry was not regarded by the Greeks as a form distinct from epic. Yet the poet Hesiod belonged to an altogether different world from Homer. He lived in Boeotia in central Greece about bc. Lyric poetry Hesiod, unlike Homer, told something of himself, and the same is true of the lyric poets. Except for Pindar and Bacchylides at the end of the Classical period, only fragments of the works of these poets survive. There had always been lyric poetry in Greece. All the great events of life as well as many occupations had their proper songs, and here too the way was open to advance from the anonymous to the individual poet. The word lyric covers many sorts of poems. On the one hand, poems sung by individuals or chorus to the lyre, or sometimes to the aulos double-reed pipe, were called melic; elegiacs, in which the epic hexameter, or verse line of six metrical feet, alternated with a shorter line, were traditionally associated with lamentation and an aulos accompaniment; but they were also used for personal poetry, spoken as well as sung at the table. Iambics verse of iambs, or metrical units, basically of four alternately short and long syllables were the verse form of the lampoon. Usually of an abusive or satirical "burlesque and parodying" character, they were not normally sung. If Archilochus of Paros in fact was writing as early as bc, he was the first of the post-epic poets. The fragments reflect the turbulent life of an embittered adventurer. Scorn both of men and of convention is the emotion that seems uppermost, and Archilochus was possessed of tremendous powers of invective. Of lesser stature than Archilochus were his successors, Semonides often mistakenly identified with Simonides of Amorgos and Hipponax of Ephesus. Like the iambic writers, the elegiac poets came mostly from the islands and the Ionian regions of Asia Minor. Chief among them were Callinus of Ephesus and Mimnermus of Colophon. On the mainland of Greece, Tyrtaeus roused the spirit of the Spartans in their desperate struggle with the Messenian rebels in the years after His martial poems are perhaps of more historical than literary interest. The same is to some extent true of the poems in elegiac, iambic, and trochaic the latter a metre basically of four alternately long and short syllables metres by Solon, an Athenian statesman, who used his poetry as a vehicle for

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propaganda.

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Chapter 4 : Classics - Wikipedia

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The earliest known Greek writings are Mycenaean , written in the Linear B syllabary on clay tablets. These documents contain prosaic records largely concerned with trade lists, inventories, receipts, etc. Within poetry there were three super-genres: The common European terminology about literary genres is directly derived from the ancient Greek terminology. Although the works as they now stand are credited to him, it is certain that their roots reach far back before his time see Homeric Question. It centers on the person of Achilles , [8] who embodied the Greek heroic ideal. Penelope was considered the ideal female, Homer depicted her as the ideal female based on her commitment, modesty, purity, and respect during her marriage with Odysseus. During his ten-year voyage, he loses all of his comrades and ships and makes his way home to Ithaca disguised as a beggar. Both of these works were based on ancient legends. The Homeric dialect was an archaic language based on Ionic dialect mixed with some element of Aeolic dialect and Attic dialect , [10] the latter due to the Athenian edition of the 6th century BC. The epic verse was the hexameter. He was a native of Boeotia in central Greece , and is thought to have lived and worked around BC. Works and Days is a faithful depiction of the poverty-stricken country life he knew so well, and it sets forth principles and rules for farmers. Theogony is a systematic account of creation and of the gods. It vividly describes the ages of mankind, beginning with a long-past Golden Age. Greek lyric A nineteenth-century painting by the English painter Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema depicting the poetess Sappho gazing on in admiration as the poet Alcaeus plays the lyre Lyric poetry received its name from the fact that it was originally sung by individuals or a chorus accompanied by the instrument called the lyre. Despite the name, however, the lyric poetry in this general meaning was divided in four genres, two of which were not accompanied by cithara , but by flute. These two latter genres were elegiac poetry and iambic poetry. Both were written in the Ionic dialect. Elegiac poems were written in elegiac couplets and iambic poems were written in iambic trimeter. The first of the lyric poets was probably Archilochus of Paros , circa BC, the most important iambic poet. The few remnants suggest that he was an embittered adventurer who led a very turbulent life. Lyric poems often employed highly varied poetic meters. The most famous of all lyric poets were the so-called " Nine Lyric Poets. In antiquity, her poems were regarded with the same degree of respect as the poems of Homer. The poetry written by Alcman was considered beautiful, even though he wrote exclusively in the Doric dialect , which was normally considered unpleasant to hear. The tragic plays grew out of simple choral songs and dialogues performed at festivals of the god Dionysus. In the classical period, performances included three tragedies and one pastoral drama, depicting four different episodes of the same myth. Wealthy citizens were chosen to bear the expense of costuming and training the chorus as a public and religious duty. Attendance at the festival performances was regarded as an act of worship. Performances were held in the great open-air theater of Dionysus in Athens. The poets competed for the prizes offered for the best plays. The authorship of Prometheus Bound , which is traditionally attributed to Aeschylus, [30] and Rhesus , which is traditionally attributed to Euripides, are still questioned. Although the plays are often called a "trilogy," they were actually written many years apart. The most well-known of these plays are Medea , Hippolytus , and Bacchae. At Athens , the comedies became an official part of the festival celebration in BC, and prizes were offered for the best productions. As with the tragedians, few works still remain of the great comedic writers. The only complete surviving works of classical comedy are eleven plays written by the playwright Aristophanes. He poked fun at everyone and every institution. In The Birds , he ridicules Athenian democracy. In The Clouds , he attacks the philosopher Socrates. In Lysistrata , he denounces war. When it was performed for the first time at the Lenaia Festival in BC, just one year after the death of Euripides, the Athenians awarded it first prize. A commercially successful modern musical adaptation of it was performed on Broadway in Although the genre

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was popular, only one complete example of a satyr play has survived: Herodotus is commonly called "The Father of History". Xenophon also wrote three works in praise of the philosopher Socrates: Although both Xenophon and Plato knew Socrates, their accounts are very different. Many comparisons have been made between the account of the military historian and the account of the poet-philosopher. Among the earliest Greek philosophers were the three so-called " Milesian philosophers ": Thales of Miletus , Anaximander , and Anaximenes. Some of the best-known of these include: However, none of these exist today. The body of writings that has come down to the present probably represents lectures that he delivered at his own school in Athens, the Lyceum. He explored matters other than those that are today considered philosophical; the extant treatises cover logic, the physical and biological sciences, ethics, politics, and constitutional government.

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Chapter 5 : Introductions to the Study of the Greek Classic Poets

Introductions to the study of the Greek classic poets: designed principally for the use of young persons at school and college; containing I. General introduction. II. Homer by Henry Nelson Coleridge starting at \$

Introduction to the poetry research Introduction to the poetry research Lorna Hardwick Recent poetry in English has a special role to play in researching the role of the past in the human experience of the present and in redirecting investigation to the classical texts and contexts and their interaction with those of the present. Poetry both stands independently as a strand in the Project and contributes to the drama research because of the significance of theatre poetry. It also enables comparison of poetry written for both public and private readings and readerships. The poetry strand of the research project considers the treatment of Greek and Roman texts and themes in poetry in English in the last part of the twentieth century and the early part of the twenty first. As with drama, we are not rigid about dates but will follow the evidence and the argument where it leads. Material analysed so far suggests that we need to consider poetry written from about onwards. As with drama, the importance of the creative response is evident at all levels and ranges from Nobel Prize winners such as Derek Walcott and Seamus Heaney to regional and community poetic activity. The variety of poetic registers and genres suggests a paradoxical relationship to the modernist poetry of the earlier twentieth century as well as to earlier classical receptions, thus provoking research questions about the intersections between different literary and cultural traditions and the relationship of classical referents to the sometimes partly classicized traditions in which the modern writing is embedded for discussion of this in relation to earlier poetry in English, see K. How Greek and Roman culture has been introduced, reworked and rewritten in contemporary poetry is not confined to the reception of the Greek and Latin texts themselves but also includes ancient artistic and material culture, themes, figures and myths. Genres include epic, lyric, parody, satire, dramatic monologues, film-poems, performance poetry and theatre poetry. The project has used two main forms of publication for the results of the research. First is the preparation of detailed case studies that examine the formal, discursive and contextual relationships between specific ancient and modern texts. The case studies are useful in enabling combination of diachronic and synchronic analysis. The project studies are published in conventional print media and on this website. This includes details of the major classically-related poems and analytic typologies for selected major poets. The database allows searching by ancient or modern poet, title of work, mythological or historical figure, genre and other key elements of comparison and we hope it will suggest topics for future research. At this point in the research , two main areas have emerged which require further research. The first is the relationship between ancient and modern poetic techniques and language at times of cultural change. The philological and contextual analysis undertaken so far has suggested further research questions in relation to target readership, reader response and the working practices of poets. The second main area for further research arises from this and concerns the extent to which, for the modern reader who lacks classical knowledge, the ancient ante-text may, initially at least, be absent from the poems. We acknowledge with thanks the research grant from the British Academy which funded the pilot stage of this research and the support of the Open University in allowing information about the research and its progress to be made freely available to other researchers via this website.

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Chapter 6 : Classics for the people – why we should all learn from the ancient Greeks | Books | The Guardian

Loading Introductions to the study of the Greek classic poets: designed principally for the use of young persons at school and college / by Henry Nelson Coleridge ; Part I containing, I. General introduction.

Greek Lyric Poetry Anyone who has an ear for verse or song today will hear echoes of modern music in what the ancient Greeks called lyric poetry. After the age of epic when stately poems of extraordinary deeds and length reigned supreme, Greek tastes changed radically. An Introduction to Lyric Poetry: The Lyric Age For all his genius and narrative gifts, Homer composed in only one meter ever. Besides telling a coherent story of great length and complexity based on the use of oral formulas and composed spontaneously in performance, are we also to require of him a mastery of many poetic forms? It would be unfair and unnecessary. But as the pre-Classical Age began to dawn after BCE, the Greeks opened their eyes to the larger world around them. With that, oral poetry, illiteracy and nostalgia for the heroes of yore yielded to lyric poetry, writing and the love of innovation per se. In consequence, the Greeks of this age in many ways, their "Generation Xi" lived in one of the headiest times ever in history. Where Homer had served up two voluminous tales, lyric poets wrote short, direct poems and many of them. This change resembles in some way the transition from opera to rock-and-roll in the modern world. Long, dramatic compositions focusing on heroes and tragic encounters gave way to poems embracing quick and pointed reflections on daily life and love. Modern poetry has moved in much the same direction. And just as the guitar has fueled the rock-and-roll revolution, the lyre was the instrument driving the shift to lyric poetry in pre-Classical Greece. Both arts also reflect their changing times. As Greece expanded, a restless crowd of enterprising merchants emerged. Like modern audiences, too, their moods tended to center around love: Lyric poetry swells with the excesses of erotic yearning, and like many a modern rock star, more than one of its poets was famous in antiquity for excessive behavior and drunken escapades. That history has handed down to us none of the music which accompanied this genre is a terrible loss – think how effective most songs today would be without their music and it is to the great credit of its artists that much of their original power still comes through the words of Greek lyric poetry even without the sound track. Sappho He seems to me, that man, almost a god the man, who is face to face with you, sitting close enough to you to hear your sweet whispering And your laughter, glistening, which the heart in my breast beats for. For when on you I glance, I do not, not one sound, emit. But my tongue snaps, lightly runs beneath my flesh a flame, and from my eyes no light, and rumbling comes into my ears, And my skin grows damp, and trembling all over racks me, and greener than the grass am I, and one step short of dying I seem to myself. Sappho, the greatest of the lyric poets, lived on the island of Lesbos in the northwestern Aegean. She flourished sometime around BCE, that is, about a century or two after Homer. Little is known about her life. The rare truth that shines out among all these later tales is that Sappho ran a sort of finishing school for girls who were in training to be the companions of men, since most of her poems are addressed with great affection to young ladies. As few others in western civilization have she stands shoulder to shoulder with Petrarch, Shakespeare and Keats – Sapphic verse explores the intensity of emotions surrounding love, of which the poem above is a premier example. Artists of this genre often bring to bear that sort of density of expression on the most consuming of human emotions, Eros "Love" in Greek which the ancients saw as the strongest force in the universe. Personified as Aphrodite, Eros was to them a drive which could be thoroughly satisfying or utterly destructive, something no one says or has ever said better than Sappho herself in her famous "Ode to Aphrodite. Lovely they that lead you the swift sparrows above the darkling earth wings whirling countless from heaven sent amidst us here, And in a flash appear and you, blessed goddess, the smiling face that never dies, asked me what was wrong this time and why this time I called her And what most of all my heart wished to have in my troubled way. Who hurts you now, Sappho dear? And you, fight here beside me. In the end, history has been unkind to Sappho. What little has survived the ravages of such deplorable bias consists of incomplete poems and scrappy fragments, an unspeakable

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tragedy to humankind. The failure of our predecessors to preserve her poetry is, simply put, the single most horrendous blunder in all of literary history. In this climate, Greeks started asking, "Why listen to two books of Homer just to hear ten famous lines you love? Distill for me, poet, the whole thing into one moment! Give me the wine without the pulp! Homer himself had done much the same thing when he focused his attentions on only a part of the Trojan War. His lyric successors in Greece extended that custom by honing in on certain specific passages in the traditional tales—"sometimes just a moment here or there"—seeking the essence which embodies the whole or a comparison encapsulating the entire thing. MTV, sit-coms and many other successful commercial art forms operate on the same principle today. The following is an example of this kind of critical focus, a carefully constructed poem in which Sappho has distilled the whole Trojan War into one emotion and moment: Sappho 16 One man has his cavalry, another has his legions, yet another has his ships, on all the earth most beautiful to him. But to me it is the single thing one loves. How easy it is to make this understood to anyone, for, far outstripping mortal loveliness, Helen left her man—and a good man too! This poem called today "The Ode to Anactoria" was only recently recovered on a papyrus a type of ancient paper found in Egypt. In content, for instance, the poem overtly denounces the military values which structure The Iliad, where cavalry, ships, and martial pageantry rule. At the same time, however, the Ode to Anactoria deploys the very pattern of "ring composition" underlying so much of Homer: To her, this is what the whole story of the Trojan War comes down to, love. Without it none of the rest would have happened. In sum, Sappho treats Homeric myth not as a collective cultural phenomenon embodying a heroic ideal but as her personal property, an adornment to garnish the special moments in her life. Where Homer makes myth an end-unto-itself and creates a world into which listeners project themselves, Sappho brings the world of myth to us here and now, its tales serving as a vehicle by which to achieve our desired ends, not an end-unto-itself. In other words, Homer takes us to Achilles, whereas Sappho leads Helen to us. This immediacy gives lyric poetry a radiant vitality that glamorizes the world around it, a luminosity that would change Greek literature forever. Ancient audiences henceforth would demand of authors a sense of proximity to the fiction, a core of reality in the lie, and, most of all, a role in the fantasy which in some way should focus on the company present, not live only in some distant world where epic heroes meet towering walls. Thus, the gods and traditional myth come to represent in Sappho forces to be studied, lured to our side and made to make us happy in this age right here, right now. The Legacy of Lyric Poetry Sappho 2 Here to me from Crete to this temple here this shrine, where you have this graceful grove of apples, and the fragrant altars fume with frankincense. In here the meadow horses graze flourishes in spring with flowers, and the winds soothing breathe. So much more realistic, more pragmatic than the fantastical tales of Troy, the writer sets out to seduce the goddess of seduction herself—"Aphrodites Apatē? This Sapphic Aphrodite is a far cry from the impersonal Homeric goddess who symbolizes Desire and lends out girdles. But all in all, another even more earth-shaking change underlies lyric poetry. At least to judge from the widespread appeal of some lyric poets, their poems probably circulated in written form, too. This new literature, in the truest sense of the word "written text," looked ahead to the next stage in the evolution of ancient narrative arts when drama would dominate public attention. Terms, Places, People and Things to Know lyric poetry.