

**FLORILEGIUM TIRONIS  
GRAECUM; SIMPLE PASSAGES  
FOR GREEK UNSEEN  
TRANSLATION CHOSEN WITH A  
VIEW TO THEIR LITERARY INTEREST**

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~~Excerpt~~  
~~Book 24~~

# Florilegium Tironis Graecum -

Simple Passages for  
Greek Unseen Translation chosen with  
a view to their Literary Interest

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## PREFACE

CAN passages be chosen for Unseen Translation from Greek that are at once simple and beautiful? The question leads to another. How can the average boy and the average pass-man be given some idea of the greatness of Greek literature? The set books he reads are isolated, and carry him over but a small part of the field. Can we utilize another part of his training—his Unseen Translation—to give him a connected idea of the whole? Can it be made possible for him, while reading as a set book a single play of Euripides or a single book of Homer, to form a conception of Euripides as a poet, or of the general outline of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*? The present book is an experiment in this direction.

If, however, ours was to be a practical book of Unseens for those who have not read Greek widely or long, we had to adopt a bold policy. The great things of literature could only be presented in this form at some cost: difficulties, irregularities, all that was not normal and straightforward, had to be avoided. We have, therefore, wherever necessary, omitted lines and phrases; we have occasionally adopted the *facillima lectio* without regard to the weight of evidence; in a few cases (for having frankly accepted the principle, we have but rarely had resort to it in practice) we have preferred making some slight simplification or modification in an important piece to omitting it altogether.

These are drastic measures: we are fully alive to it. We believe that the object to be attained is worth the sacrifice, and we ask those who are inclined to criticise, whether, in point of fact, the interesting side of Classics has not too often been exclusively reserved for candidates for scholarships and advanced honours. Attention has been concentrated on the irregular; what is simple and normal has been hurried over. Not enough effort has been made to widen the range of the average boy's or man's reading, or to call forth his taste and appreciation. It is not his fault if he has little conception of what Greek literature means. The short set books chosen for him are probably from the great writers;<sup>1</sup> but when his progress in the language is to be tested, as it should constantly be tested, by Unseen Translation, there is little to be found for him but insipid "Aesop" and second-rate Arrian, which are not only remote in style from what he is reading in class, but fill him with a just contempt for a literature that is so barren. Nothing should be set as an Unseen which is not valuable enough—for its style, or its subject-matter, or both—to be learnt by heart. This is the principle we have tried to apply.

It is interesting to note that an experiment on similar lines to ours has been made by Professor Sonnenschein in arranging the Degree courses of the University of Birmingham. The student reads part of an author as

<sup>1</sup>It will be clear from what we have said that we do not suggest that our volume of selections should be used as a substitute for set books, but rather as auxiliary to them. For a valuable discussion on the possible dangers which exclusive attention to Unseens may produce, see the *Proceedings of the Classical Association for Scotland*, pp. 55, 56-63, 66-69, 93-96, 105-112. Our dangers, however, in England at any rate, are at present mainly on the other side.



a set book, but is expected to be acquainted with the subject-matter of the whole.<sup>1</sup> It is significant, too, that the dominant note struck at the first general meeting of the Classical Association of England and Wales, was a widely expressed hope that greater stress would be laid on the literary side of classical teaching.

The authors we have chosen are the great staple authors—those who are most widely read, and yet exist in such bulk that they can only be read by the beginner in part. Pindar and Aristotle we have regretfully rejected, as outside the beginner's range: the fragments that survive of Sappho's poems ought to be studied together as a set book, not broken up into still smaller pieces. Only one writer to whom the tradition has not been generous has been included. Aeschines deserves at least some notice as a necessary corollary to Demosthenes.

Our aim throughout has been to choose characteristic passages, so that they may be used to illustrate a simple course of literary lectures on the author. In the case of Homer it has been possible to do still more, and it will be seen that in practically all its essentials the story is told in the selections. The same has been to a large extent possible with the dramatists: the selections are meant to illustrate, not only the poetry, but the plot, of a play. If it is desired to make the piece easier, a summary of the plot can be given to the class before they begin translating: a variation is to get the class to work out the plot from the selections.

We have thought it wiser to print no headings or lists of rarer words, but to leave it entirely to the teacher whether to give such help or not. The book can thus

<sup>1</sup> See *The Classical Review*, October, 1901, p. 337.

be used for various standards of attainment. Though we have adapted it for 'tirones,' those who are trying Unseens actually for the first time will probably need some help, either from dictionaries—a commoner practice in Germany than with us—or from the teacher. On the other hand, the book contains enough matter and variety of style to cover several years' work, and after the first year no help should be needed. Dialect we have not altered: our passages from Homer and Herodotus are meant to be used only when these authors are already being studied as set books. For the spelling of our text of Herodotus we have made use of H. W. Smyth's "Ionic Dialect."

The authors follow each other in historical order, except in so far as it has not been thought worth while to break the continuity of the dramatists by laying stress on the priority of Herodotus to Aristophanes. Within the limits of each author, too, so far as is possible, the same method has been followed; in some cases—that of Sophocles, for instance, or Plato—the data for determining exact sequence do not always exist, and we have had to rest on probabilities.

The *Rhesus* we have printed as the first of Euripides' extant tragedies: it is either that, or an archaistic work of the fourth century, and the evidence for rejecting it does not seem to us adequate. The selections from the *Cyclops* and the *Alcestis*, though early plays, are printed by themselves at the end of all the tragedies: it is in this way that the true significance of the Satyric play in the evolution of the drama can best be appreciated.

The *Respublica Atheniensium* we have not taken out of its place in the body of Xenophon's works, but have marked what we believe to be its early date by the use

of the conventional literary spelling of the Fifth Century. We have adopted the same device for the beginning of the *Hellenica*, where Xenophon is not only continuing the narrative of Thucydides, but is attempting to imitate his manner.

The verse selections have been primarily made by Professor Burrows, the prose by Professor Walters, but both editors are responsible for the general plan and composition of the book.