Hour 25: Using Perseus Digital Library, with Anna Krohn

CLAUDIA FILOS: Hi. This is Claudia Filos; I'm with the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, D.C., and I'm here today with two special guests who are going to walk us through an introduction of the Perseus website. So, Anna, can you introduce yourself?

ANNA KROHN: Hi. I'm Anna Krohn, and I work for the Perseus Digital Library at Tufts University, and I am a Digital Library Analyst, but also a Teaching Fellow.

CLAUDIA FILOS: Great. And could you talk a little bit about the projects you've been working on?

ANNA KROHN: Sure. In our teaching I have been teaching a Greek Literature in Translation course, wherein we are introducing students to Greek who do not know Greek, and allowing them to find the tools to get past translations, and be able to figure out the Greek for themselves.

CLAUDIA FILOS: That's really fabulous. Thank you so much. And Sarah, can you introduce yourself?

SARAH SCOTT: Yes. Hello: I'm Sarah Scott, and I have taken part in the HeroesX project, and I'm now currently part of the Hour 25 project. So I'm in the stage of getting past translated texts, and wanting to dip a toe into the Greek, so I think this is a really great opportunity to find out a little bit more about how to go about that.

CLAUDIA FILOS: So thank you so much, you both, for being here with us today, and helping us do this video. And Anna, thanks so much. I hope you can take us through — I think this will be fun. So can you just walk us through the site a bit, and show us?

ANNA KROHN: All right: let me bring up the Perseus homepage, and we'll start from there.
OK: so what I have here is our homepage for the Perseus Digital Library, and again we are based out of Tufts University, and we also have some colleagues in Leipzig University.
So, to begin to find a text, you're going to want to go to this link here, "**Collections/Texts**", and presumably you're going to be looking for a Greek or Latin text.

CLAUDIA FILOS: And for this exercise, we're going to assume we're looking for a Greek text, today.

ANNA KROHN: So, the Greek and Latin texts are located under "**Greek and Roman Materials**", and this will bring up a list of documents, arranged by author. So, for this example, I'm going to go down and find **Homer**, who's here, and click on the name: that brings a drop-down of the works. And we're going to go to the '*Iliad*' in **Greek**.

So here we have the main reading page, wherein we've got our Greek text, and then also a bunch of other things on either side, and above. There are a lot of very useful tools in this section.

First, I'll go through quickly how to navigate around the texts. There are a few different ways to do this.

If you just want to step forward a section, you can use the blue arrows at the top and at the bottom of

each piece of text.

You can also see a **Table of Contents** for the entirety of the work. In this case, the '*Iliad*' is broken up into **Books**, and **lines**. Other texts have different structures. But this will all be illustrated in the Table of Contents. And it allows you to jump to any particular point.

CLAUDIA FILOS: And that Table of Contents will always be on the lower left-hand side?

ANNA KROHN: Yes, it's always in the left side-bar.

CLAUDIA FILOS: Can you tell us about some of the resources over on the right? I'm looking at that "**English**", where I see "English"

ANNA KROHN: Yes. We have, as well as the Greek text, two different English translations, and we're able to bring them up actually, by clicking either the "**Load**", which will show you the English text side-by-side with the Greek text; or, if you want to just look at the English, or have that as your main text, you can click "**Focus**", which will shift you over. And then when you're on the English, you can also see the Greek in the side.

CLAUDIA FILOS: So, I see: when you changed focus, the Greek moved over into the margin on the right.

ANNA KROHN: Yes. And I'm going to go back to the Greek as the main text.
When you are investigating Greek — say you want to look into this word μῆνιν [*mēnin*] — all of the words in our Greek texts are hyperlinked to a definition: what we call our "**Word Study Tool**". It will provide you with the lemma, or the dictionary headword, that the form comes from, along with a simple definition. Sometimes these are not necessarily correct, because they're pulled out automatically — I can show you an example of that later, and how to get around that — but you will see here the form of the word that you clicked on, and next to it there's an elaboration of that form, the morphology of it. And if you don't necessarily know all of the terminology at the beginning, it does have a part of speech, which is, I think, useful for most people.

CLAUDIA FILOS/SARAH SCOTT: [speak together]

CLAUDIA FILOS: No, Sarah, go, please.

SARAH SCOTT: I was going to just ask for clarification: so all of the Greek words are likely to have different endings, to show whether they're the subject of the sentence, or the object of the sentence, or if it's a verb it will have a different ending depending on whether it's past or present, or what sort of person is doing it — singular or plural — that kind of thing. So you'd expect to see different endings?

ANNA KROHN: Yes. And those will all appear in this area. This headword will remain the same no matter what, because that is just the standard dictionary entry.

CLAUDIA FILOS: Actually, could you take a second to talk about the different dictionaries that are available right there, and what they look like when you click on them?

ANNA KROHN: Yes. So, for Greek we have actually four different dictionaries; one of them doesn't

appear in this list. We have **Liddell, Scott, and Jones** [**LSJ**]; the **Middle Liddell** , which is a condensed version of Liddell, Scott, and Jones; and the **Autenrieth**, which is a Homeric dictionary, specifically; and then we also have **Slater's Dictionary**, but that's geared towards the author Pindar.

The **LSJ** will give you the most detailed entries, and this is what it looks like. It will just load right below when you click on the link. And there is a lot of information here. Most of it is giving references for various forms, but you can find the actual definition, which for μῆνις [*mēnis*] is "wrath".   And you get further clarification of "wrath of the gods".

CLAUDIA FILOS: And those references that we see: those are actually linked right to the texts that are available on Perseus — is that correct?

ANNA KROHN: Correct. For example, this is another instance of the word *mēnis*. It doesn't look like it's highlighted here, but it does appear again in this portion. And then you can also see it in other places.

Another way to find other instances of the word, is this "**Word Frequency Statistics**" portion down here. When you click on a word in a text, it will, by default, show you the statistics for that text. So you can see that the corpus, or the work, that it's pulling from is Homer's '*Iliad*', that there are that many words in the actual text, and then   μῆνις [*mēnis*]**,** in its various forms, appears 28 times. And to see where all those 28 times are, you can click on the "**28**", and it will pull up a listing of all of the instances. And to see it in context, you can click on the "**book, card**" reference, and it will take you to it. And it will actually highlight where that word appears, which is very handy.

CLAUDIA FILOS: And now, let's say you had a word that occurred maybe 100 times. I see you clicking that link up at the right-hand corner, before, that said "**More**". Is that where you would keep going to get more, if there were more than, let's say, 25 or so?

ANNA KROHN: Yes. By default, when you get this elaboration of words in a text, it will condense it down to one entry, and then you have to click "**More**" to get the full for that particular author and work. If you're looking for a word across works, in multiple things, it would then list the other authors and works down here, in a similar format, and you would have to expand them to see all of the examples.

CLAUDIA FILOS: Great, thank you.

ANNA KROHN: Let's see: after the dictionaries, if you have a word that you know of, that you want to search for, that's not associated with a particular text,

CLAUDIA FILOS: Or maybe you don't know, yet, where it occurs.

ANNA KROHN: Exactly.

CLAUDIA FILOS: Or you're reading another text, and it occurs, and you want to see...

ANNA KROHN: ...where else it is. You can go to "**All Search Options**". This appears at the top, in the header, of all of our pages, so it's nice and easy to find. And when we go there, we get a list of various search tools, that include other various functionalities, and the ones we're most interested in are the "**English-to-[Language] lookup**"   and the "**Dictionary Entry Lookup**", but also the "**Word Study Tool**". So these have three very different functions.

"**English-to-[Language]**" allows you to search for a particular word in English, and find a dictionary definition in Greek, or Latin, and I believe we have Arabic, and Old Norse, as well.

CLAUDIA FILOS: That's amazing! So let's say you're looking up all the words for — any Greek dictionary entry that contains the word "anger", or something like that, right?

ANNA KROHN: Yes. So if you do that, and you "**Search**", you get a LOT of entries!

CLAUDIA FILOS: Isn't that amazing! I love moments like that, because I always have that thought: someone spent nearly a year, or six months, at one point, doing their research project, and it was doing just what you just did in a click!

ANNA KROHN: Yes! And the also nice thing about this, is that you can go to the further dictionary entry from this place, to get the full definition of the word, and you can also go straight to the dictionaries, as opposed to the Word Study Tool, which we saw earlier. You can also go straight to the listings of the words, and where they appear, in Aristophanes, and Apollonius, Lucian, Aelian.

CLAUDIA FILOS: So now we see just what you were saying before, about how it was going to be broken up by author, right?

ANNA KROHN: Yes. There aren't multiple examples in these, but you can see the multiple authors, at least.

CLAUDIA FILOS: So I have a question about the last screen, but Sarah, do you have any questions at this point?

SARAH SCOTT: I think that's very clear. I'm just astounded at how many different kinds of anger there are in Greek!

CLAUDIA FILOS: It's a beautiful moment! OK, Anna, can you say a word about the difference between "**Max. Inst**(ance)" and "**Min. Inst**(ance)"?   Is that anything we should be thinking about?

ANNA KROHN: No...

CLAUDIA FILOS: Don't worry about that?

ANNA KROHN: No, don't worry about it. The Max. Instance is what you're interested in to actually get to the various appearances.

CLAUDIA FILOS: Great, thank you. So we just looked at this wonderful tool that allows us to go from English to Greek. What other tools were on that page?

ANNA KROHN: So we'll go back to the "**Search Tools**", and take a look now at the "**Dictionary Entry Lookup**" tool. With this, you can enter in parts of words, and it will take you to the matches for dictionary headwords.

So to enter Greek into these "**Dictionary Entry Lookup**" and "**Word Study**" tools, there is a handy guide

up here in the right top of the site, and it also appears wherever there is a Word Study tool search box. Since we do not have Greek characters, and some Greek characters might potentially overlap with English letters, there are specific mappings for the non-intuitive characters, such as η [ēta], θ [theta], ω [omega], and all of that. It also gives you the option to add in diacritical marks, but it's not necessary.

CLAUDIA FILOS: So I can see a little example underneath the key, right — so that's the first line of the '*Iliad*' and you can see how it's getting translated into that Beta Code.

ANNA KROHN: Yes. And it looks a little funny, but you get used to it after a while.

SARAH SCOTT: So this is where there are characters that appear in Greek that we don't have an English equivalent of. You were using the example of η [ēta], which we've seen perhaps with a letter "e" with a line across the top, and that would be that character. And you would enter that on our keyboards as a letter "h" and it would map onto that η [ēta] character.

CLAUDIA FILOS: And that's how you would search when you were typing in "in Greek". You're not going to type in Unicode Greek when you're searching in Perseus — you're going to type in this Beta Code.

ANNA KROHN: Mm-hmm.

CLAUDIA FILOS: Thank you.

ANNA KROHN: And to show you the "**Dictionary Entry Lookup**" versus the "**Word Study Tool**", they have two very different uses.

The Dictionary Entry Lookup is there to search through the dictionary headwords, or the lemmas. You can do the various "**Search for**" parameters: you can do "starting with", "ending with", "containing", that sort of thing.

Let's see: I think at this point, I'd be happy to answer any questions, or do any clarification, because I believe I have explained, at least in overview, the different search tools that we have.

CLAUDIA FILOS: Sarah, do you have any questions? I think it's amazing.

SARAH SCOTT: Yeah, I think that's given a very good sense of all the different ways you can search and sort of start at different points and get into it in different ways. So, yeah, thank you very much — that's wonderful!

CLAUDIA FILOS: So, Anna, if you want to just turn off your screen-sharing, perhaps?

ANNA KROHN: Right...

CLAUDIA FILOS: So, we're so grateful. Thank you so much for sharing your expertise. It really means a lot. It makes a huge difference to have someone who's so familiar with the content, and the website, and walk you through, because it can feel intimidating, right?

ANNA KROHN: Yes, definitely, especially when you get those long dictionary entries that look like a bunch of gibberish, because it's all abbreviations! But there is content there!

CLAUDIA FILOS: But everyone really sort of starts there, right? And so could you maybe say a couple of words about the class that you're teaching, about why you're helping students move beyond the translations — and you're using these exact tools, right?

ANNA KROHN: Right, yes. We're using the Perseus Digital Library, and we're also using tools developed by the Alphaeus Project. They're partners of ours, and they developed some very neat tools. But back to the class: we wanted to do more than just a Greek literature in translation class, because there are frequently words, and concepts, that get translated into English that can't really be fully captured by the English language. And so this process of providing our students with projects that point out to them the differences and give them the ability to research these words, and the differences between them and their English translations really helps to flesh out some cultural concepts that just haven't carried over into English. For example, the concept of *mēnis* — it's translated as "anger", but it's not just anger. It's godly wrath. And if you look at the instances of it in the '*Iliad*' — I believe there are only eight — it's used to describe either Achilles, or the gods, and so that definitely locates that word in a very specific context that otherwise would be completely lost in English.

CLAUDIA FILOS: And if other people are interested in learning more about that cosmic anger, that mean really a sanction, I would recommend actually a book by one of the people who we work with at the Center for Hellenic Studies; his name is Leonard Muellner, and he wrote a book called '*The Anger of Achilles*'. It's on *mēnis* in Greek epic. Sarah, did you have a question? Or did you want to say anything about our approach, and about that looking at words in context?

SARAH SCOTT: That would fit very well with where we've come from with the Heroes project, where we were introduced to various concepts that are not just a one-to-one translation with an English word, and you were giving an example of "anger", and we know that *mēnis* is this cosmic anger, but we've got the same word in English but there are lots of different Greek words for anger, and they would have a different meaning, a different context. And so it's going to be really interesting for us to be able to use these tools to look at "what's the Greek word that's being used here?" and "where else is it being used?" and "what's the context where that's being used?", as opposed to another word for anger, or whatever it might be we're looking at. So it's going to be really, really useful. And having those different ways to do the search is also going to be really, really helpful. It's a fantastic site, so thank you very much!

CLAUDIA FILOS: Thank you so much, and thank you to the two of you. We're so appreciative of your time, and energy, and care, that you put into these projects and into your work, and into making all this material accessible to as wide an audience as possible. I know I benefited from that for years and years in between my undergraduate career and my graduate school. I would not be here if it weren't for Perseus. It gave me access to texts and tools, freely available, so: I am a child of Perseus!

ANNA KROHN: Yeah! I am too!

CLAUDIA FILOS: Thank you so much. I hope you'll come back and join us again.

ANNA KROHN: Yes, I'd love to.

CLAUDIA FILOS: Take care. Bye-bye.