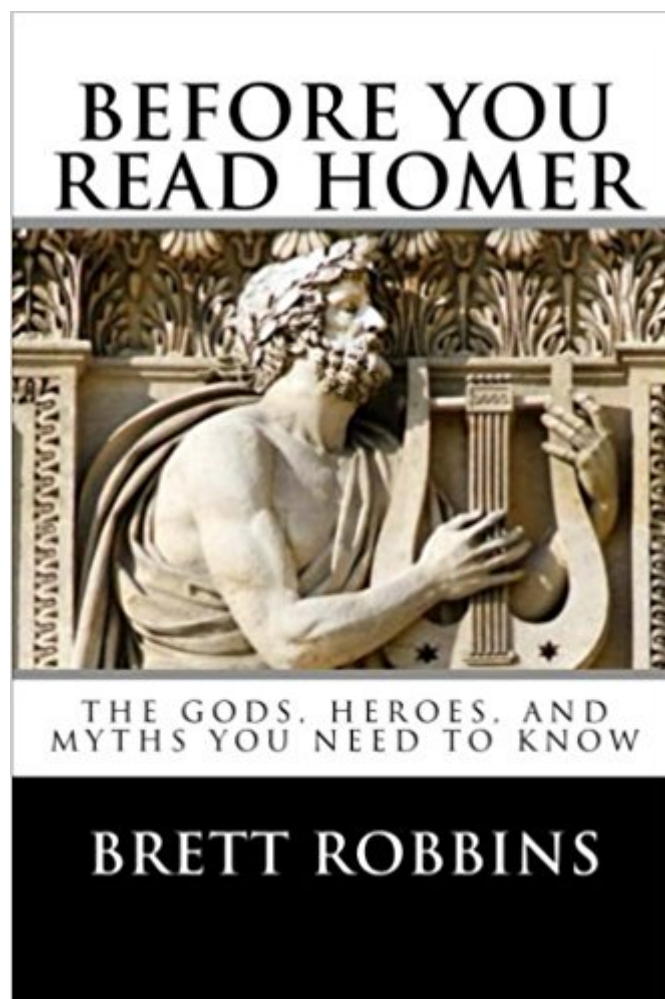




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Before You Read Homer: The Gods, Heroes, And Myths You Need To Know



Synopsis

This book takes you on a short journey – a weekend cruise, if you will – through ancient Greek myth, leading you up to Homer’s doorstep. It proceeds chronologically but it’s not dominated by chronology. It’s important to know when events occur but mainly in relation to one another, not because the numbers are themselves important.

We’ll be stopping off at the ports I find most intriguing, primarily from the standpoint of how myth informs various aspects of Greek culture. Many more trips remain to be taken, however, and this book is intended to be a launch-pad for your own. The ancient Greeks lived in a world before the Internet, before airplanes, before trains, before the telegraph. They had only myths to transmit through writing and images on vases and sculptures and buildings. Myths were their only mode of transportation and communication combined. There were no TVs, no newspapers. Just traveling bards singing songs so enthralling that their myths were absorbed by the bloodstream unconsciously, as the collective assumptions of society. Sometimes words and images were used to try to explain things, sometimes they served the interests of those who commissioned them to be propagated. How did everyone in Greece know to worship Zeus and Heracles? Myths. Myth linked otherwise disparate communities through the shared currency of the Greek language. Myth is a fungible cultural technology: its ability to be disseminated via various artistic media made it the most feasible way for distant poleis to communicate with each other in something like the way we do more efficiently today via the mass media. The myths, then, had to captivate their audiences as quickly and powerfully as possible. Hence the sensationalistic imagery they inspired, the outrageous actions perpetrated by larger-than-life characters. It all seemed so outlandish, so unrealistic, so overtly fictional. And yet, Theseus was both a king and a hero, Zeus was both a god and a king. There was overlap between these worlds. And there still is today.

Book Information

Paperback: 132 pages

Publisher: Aporia Press (August 22, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0692493204

ISBN-13: 978-0692493205

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.3 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #39,323 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #29 in [Books > History > Ancient Civilizations > Greece](#)

Customer Reviews

Brett Robbins earned his Ph.D. in Classical Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington (dissertation [2004]: *Framing Achilles: Narrative Space in the Iliad*), and his B.A. and M.A. in Classics at University of California, Santa Barbara. He has traveled extensively, e.g., visiting over 100 ancient Greek sites with the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, delivering talks onsite at the Temple of Zeus at Olympia and the Theater of Epidauros. He began teaching in the Department of Classics and Humanities at San Diego State University in 2005, where he teaches courses in ancient Greek and Latin languages, myth, culture, etymology, drama, and cinema.

as far as textbooks for school go, this is easily one of my favorites. it is written in a clear, concise, and somewhat irreverent style that makes it simple to follow and easy to read. the info is boiled down to the most important points with no fluff and very straight forward presentation. images are abundant and well chosen for the chapters they are used in. over all, a well done textbook and one i'll happily keep rather than the more traditional end-of-semester-bonfire :P

This is an amazing textbook written by an amazing professor! This is the easiest and most enjoyable textbook i have read so far. It is very simple and concise, yet full of information. This book is also very entertaining and relates the sometimes abstract world of mythology into modern terms and comparisons. i have had several friends urge me to borrow it for leisurely reading as well. Even if you are just looking for a book to understand myth and the lives of ancient Greeks, this is the best book i have read for it! would highly recommend to any student or otherwise interested in myth and Homer.

This book is simple and easy to read yet filled with details that really intrigue you. This is the book that made me want to study Classics and actually made me like learning. Whether it's for fun, school, and any other reason, I highly recommend this book. ^_^

Humorous book that gives detail to all of the myths you usually talk about in class.

Awesome book. Very easy to read for anyone not familiar with Greek Mythology.

Pretty much is the all you need to know about the gods, heroes and myths.

Very interesting book

Great quality, arrived fast. Easy to read. A few grammar mistakes in the book but not significant

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