The TLG and PHi Workplaces are Microsoft Windows programs which can view and search the TLG and PHI CD-ROM databases. The following is a review of the TLG Workplace. For more information please contact Silver Mountain Software, 1029 Tanglewood, Cedar Hill, TX 75104 email: 4407401@MCIMail.com.

TLG Workplace 2.0 - An Impression

Dr. Lucas Siorvanes, Dept. of Philosophy,
King's College, University of London
(June 1993)

John Baima's Silver Mountain Software has been established for a long time. In Biblical and Classical software he is known for the very powerful LBase (in version 6.0). Now he has produced a whole new range of fast and smart Windows programs for scholars in Ancient Greek, Coptic, PHI, and Biblical studies. I have been using the TLG Workplace. Its purpose is to aid reading and searching texts of the CD-ROM D. It is not aimed (directly) at word-statistics, parsing, or grammatical concordances (as is LBase).

MSWindows brings a graphical environment to PC users, and freedom to display and print non-Latin alphabets such as Greek across different applications. TLG Workplace comes with a matching font called Sgreek: it is a remarkable font that is set apart from anything comparable in the market both in Windows and Macintosh. More on it later.

TLG Workplace once installed occupies a mere 770 Kbytes, of which the essential program files occupy some 500 Kbytes. Such economy underlies its fast performance. It also makes it highly suitable for laptop users (provided there is access to a CD-ROM). Windows users will be relieved to see a program bucking the trend towards "Fatware" (cf. leader article in BYTE Magazine April 1993).

Using it is simplicity itself: Open Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, pick an author to browse; or enter the word(s) to Search. Sophisticated options for searching include Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT), limitation or expansion with wildcard, searching directly from the word Index of TLG CD-ROM D, and searching by author Classification and Date range. Custom author lists can easily be compiled with the Make list option: just pick the authors one by one (from the list as is presented when first opening the TLG) and the Workplace puts their details in a separate file with the suffix ".aut".

For those who prefer only to read through a text, the Workplace provides the Open At option. This presents a series of boxes to enter Volume, Book, page and line numbers, within the range and convention of that book (beginning and end references appear too). Moreover with the "Current Book..." option, one still has the powerful search options at hand (viz., logical operators).

Where TLG Workplace really flies is in its ability to turn the computer screen into a true working desk: a book opened at a page here, another book there, a list terms here, a pile of index notes there. It supports multiple windows, each of which can be "minimised", expanded, cascaded or tiled, etc. All these windows carry their own descriptive title, and it is exceptionally easy to go from the one to the other. With a display resolution of 1024x768 or higher, two pages can fit side-by-side. Size of letters can quickly be controlled with the Text larger or smaller options. Further, several Bookmarks (global and local) can be set. Do you want to see the full TLG Canon bibliographical reference? Click on the "cannon" button, and jump to it. So, one can have in one window a text opened for simple browsing; in another window the list of one lot of search hits; in another, the list of another lot of search hits; in another, view of the text surrounding the find of one of these search lists; and so on. The

paperless desk is a reality.

TLG Workplace itself runs fast: search speed from the TLG disk is mainly determined by the capability of the CD-ROM drive. That the program can contain frugally so many powerful features and present them in a simple and intuitive manner, in a graphical environment notorious for its sluggishness and size, is little short of astonishing.

The thoughtfulness that is pervasive in the program design can be discerned even in the way that search results are handled. Of course there is an option to send to printer, and copy to Windows Clipboard (with or without hard-return at line end): the latter is one of the ways Windows can transfer data from one program to another - say, from the Workplace to a wordprocessor. But the copy (to Clipboard) here has *two* options. Let me explain. The results of a search are presented in a list (indicating the authors). But this is no plain list: every noted hit is the visible tip linked to the author-work-page-line, that "lies" underneath. A plain Copy just takes what is marked on that window and places it the Clipboard. An Extended Copy takes not only what is marked but also what is linked to that hit: viz., the text (no. of lines determined by the configuration file). However, even the plain Copy is intelligent: when used on a screenful of text it also transfers the full ref. of the extract, including the start and end line numbers. A great contribution to the accurate citation of quoted passages.

The Workplace comes with a Greek font, Sgreek, supplied in TrueType and Adobe ATM (for Postscript). What sets it apart from all others (both in Windows and Macintosh) is that it is based entirely on the TLG's own "Beta" ASCII as it is implemented on the CD-ROM disk itself. This is yet another example of the thoughtful design of the program as a whole in addressing the needs of those who will use it. The chief difference is in the keystrokes for vowel + iota subscript, because it has so far proved impossible to place such floating diacritic underneath in a consistent manner. The other difference (actually an improvement) is that it does not employ an asterisk for upper case letters. Lower case TLG Beta-ASCII keystrokes produce lower case Sgreek; upper case TLG Beta, upper case Sgreek. All other diacritics are floating, so for example)/ adds smooth breathing+acute accent on the preceding letter.

The importance of such a move towards TLG compatibility in Ancient Greek fonts cannot be emphasised enough. In the Macintosh world there are many elegant Greek fonts, but all of them require different codes and keystrokes. In the PC, there is the WordPerfect Table 8, and a growing number of "international" wordprocessors and font sets. All of them lack one essential thing: *compatibility with the ASCII code of the TLG*. The Beta ASCII scheme was deliberately devised to ensure long-term viability of the data, and readability by diverse hardware and software. TLG Workplace utilises it now.

Finding programs to cater for scholars in Ancient Greek studies has always been difficult: we expect high specifications that are not standard to software purchasers at large. Developers have little material profit to gain. So the good programs tend to be very expensive. TLG Workplace is an excellent program, designed with care to meet the needs of the majority of scholars. At the price it is value for money; with the TLG-compatible Sgreek font, it is a bargain.