

## ANNUAL REPORT

March 20, 2012

Dear Friends,

We have created our first annual report in order to keep our growing community apprised of where we've been and where we are going. The contents of this report include:

- **Our Plans for 2012**
- **A Review of 2011**
- **How Can You Help Going Forward?**
- **Our Board**
- **Our Sponsors**
- **Our History and Mission**
- **More About Our Two 2012 Experiments**

In 2011, Reading Odyssey reached thousands of people around the world with our successful Marathon2500 program. Modeled on the Darwin150 program of 2009, Marathon2500 commemorated the 2,500-year anniversary of the Battle of Marathon with nine lectures from leading classicists. Professor Paul Cartledge chaired this program and—again, with no funding—Reading Odyssey showed how to engage the adult public with great interactive and thoughtful programs.

We also ran several reading groups through the year. Read on through the report for more highlights on Marathon2500 and our reading groups.

Most importantly, we developed a new marketing strategy to reach adults. We are testing that strategy in 2012 and are very excited about the possibilities.

Enjoy reading our first annual report and think about how you might like to be involved this year and in the future.

Thanks,

Phil Terry  
Founder and Chair, Reading Odyssey

**Reading Odyssey, Inc.**  
www.readingodyssey.com  
pterry@readingodyssey.com

### Board of Directors

**Phil Terry**  
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Cambridge University

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**So Young Park**  
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## Our Plans for 2012

Reading Odyssey has developed a new strategy to reach more readers for 2012, and I'd like to share it with you and invite you to help us test it (or to participate in one of our virtual reading groups).

**First, our mission.** Our mission is to redesign the experience of reading the classics—for adults. By creating group settings and by partnering with leading scholars, we seek to create the community and context to read these difficult but important books. We've always believed that adults don't need special qualifications to read the classics, important works from history, science, or great literature—nor does it require any expertise to lead a reading group focused on such books. For six years we have focused on building our peer-led reading group methodology and our relationships with leading scholars.

While that work is never finished, the challenge we now face is how to find more adults to read these terrific books. There are practical limits to how many potential readers Reading Odyssey can reach on its own and how many groups it can manage directly.

**What's our new strategy?** The Board decided last June to build a web platform to support partner organizations who would like to run Reading Odyssey reading groups. Who might these potential partners be?

I'm pleased to say we have come up with two possible answers: 1) schools that want to intellectually engage the \*parents\* of their students and 2) libraries that want to provide more learning (rather than entertainment) opportunities for their adult patrons.

**We are running two experiments in the first quarter of 2012.** The first experiment is a reading group led by parents of students in a leading independent school in New York City. The second is a group led by patrons of a public library system in Minnesota. Both groups reading Homer's *Iliad* meet in person and are peer-moderated with readers' questions and scripts provided by Reading Odyssey. (You can read more about these at the end of this report, including why these organizations are collaborating with Reading Odyssey.)

**Virtual reading groups continue to have a role.** Concurrent with the school and library experiments, we are running two virtual *Iliad* reading groups. Homer's *Odyssey* and Herodotus' *Histories* will run later in the year. Our virtual reading groups are our test beds for developing our readers' and moderator guides for our books.

**New web platform and downloadable guides.** While our two reading experiments move forward, we are also in the first stages of building a new web platform, including website, logo, and guides for both readers and

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moderators that can be accessed by anyone. When we send the 2012 year-end update at this time next year we hope to report success of our experiments, the rollout of an outreach campaign based on those successes, the launch of the new web site, and plans to develop Reading Odyssey content for many more books.

We hope that our mission and strategy succeed and that we create contexts that inspire curiosity and lifelong learning. Thanks for participating in our programs in the past—and for helping us in whatever way you can in the future.

## A Review of 2011

Thousands of people around the world participated in our Marathon2500 lecture series. Many thousands more read our blog posts and Facebook entries. Hundreds participated in our Herodotus' *Histories* and Arrian's *The Campaigns of Alexander* virtual reading groups.

### Highlights from Our 2011 Marathon2500 Program

**Lecture series.** The top classicists in the world delivered a series of lectures to commemorate the 2,500-year anniversary of the Battle of Marathon beginning with the kickoff lecture by the Chairman of Marathon2500, Professor Paul Cartledge.

The following lectures were delivered and are now archived on Reading Odyssey's Marathon2500.org web site: <http://www.marathon2500.org>

**The Context and Meaning of the Battle of Marathon**

Professor Paul Cartledge

**The Battle Itself**

Professor Peter Krentz

**The Life of a Soldier: Persian and Greek**

Professor Victor Davis Hanson

**The Persian Version: Battle of Marathon from the Persian Perspective,**

Professor Thomas Harrison

**Marathon and the Moderns**

Ultra-Marathoner Dean Karnazes and Professor Paul Cartledge

**War and Sports**

Professor Tom Scanlon

**Herodotus and the Invention of History**

Independent Scholar Robert B. Strassler

**Epilogue: What happened after the Battle of Marathon**

Professor John Marincola

**The Context and Meaning of the Battle of Marathon: Why We Have Celebrated**

Professors Paul Cartledge, Thomas Harrison, John Marincola, James Romm, and Independent Scholar Robert B. Strassler

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**Remote lecture network builds on Darwin150.** The remote lecture network for Marathon2500, inspired by the success of our 2009 Darwin150 program, consisted of hundreds of outposts at libraries, colleges, high schools, workplaces and other institutions. At these outposts—for example at Oxford University—groups of people gathered to listen live and ask questions of our lecturers. Here’s just a sampling of the groups:

American School of Classical Studies at Athens (Greece)	Marshall-Lyon Library System, (Marshall, MN)
Bard High School Early College (Queens, NY)	Newington High School (CT)
Cambridge University (England)	Oxford University (England)
Edinburgh University (Scotland)	Pitt County Schools (Greenville, NC)
Fairfax County Public Schools (Falls Church, VA)	ShIPLEY School (Bryn Mawr, PA)
Kent State University (Kent, OH)	Tuskegee Institute (AL)
La Guardia Community College (NY)	The University of Bologna (Italy)
	Youngstown State University (OH)

The full list can be found at <http://www.marathon2500.org/remote>

**NYU and Georgetown.** NYU Center for Ancient Studies hosted the kickoff lecture with both a physical and virtual audience. Professor Paul Cartledge gave the address and it was very successful. Georgetown University hosted the second lecture of the series by Professor Peter Krentz. This, like the NYU kickoff lecture, was also presented in front of an audience and teleconferenced live around the world.

**Press.** Marathon2500 got some great press around the world, including from *The Times* of London, Ancient World Online, and the *New Zealand Herald*.

**Thermopylae2500.** We are beginning to work on the 2,500th anniversary of the battle of Thermopylae. In 10 years video technology will be far in advance of what it is today. We are imagining the marvelous possibilities of what we can do for that lecture series and remote lecture network.

**Herodotus Reading Groups.** As part of Marathon2500, we ran several virtual sections of Herodotus. Reading Odyssey moderators Andre Stipanovic and Bruce Upbin ran these sections and we received great feedback from the participants. The interplay of the reading and the lecture series strengthened the Marathon2500 program and enriched the experience for both.

### Alexander the Great Reading Groups

Reading Odyssey also inaugurated our first reading of Arrian’s great history of Alexander. Reading Odyssey virtual groups read and discussed the newly published *The Landmark Arrian: The Campaigns of Alexander*, edited by Professor James Romm of Bard College and Robert B. Strassler.

Forbes.com sponsored a series of six online conversations with Professors



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Paul Cartledge and Romm as well as a four-part video series of discussions between filmmaker Oliver Stone and Professor Romm.

For Alexander reading questions, posts, and podcasts, visit:  
<http://readingodyssey.com/tag/alexanderthegreat>

A series of six weekly conversations at Forbes:  
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/booked/2010/12/12/two-great-historians-on-alexander-the-great-part-one>

Oliver Stone, filmmaker, interviews with Professor James Romm video series:  
<http://video.forbes.com/fvn/booked/oliver-stone-alexander-booked-part-one-rev>

## How Can You Help Going Forward?

**Get a Reading Odyssey test reading group going at a school or library.** If you are involved with a private school or a public library and you'd like to get a Reading Odyssey test reading group running on Homer's *Odyssey* (starting in May) or Herodotus (starting in September), then please get in touch with us. We can help you get started and supply guides for both the volunteer moderator and the readers. Note that these are free programs.

**Join one of our virtual reading groups in 2012.** Participate as a reader in one of the two virtual reading groups we will run centrally later this year:

**Homer's Odyssey (starting in May)**  
<http://odyssey2012.eventbrite.com>

**Herodotus' Histories (starting in September)**  
<http://herodotus2012.eventbrite.com>

**Help us launch more books.** We are looking for scholar partners and volunteer coordinators who can help us launch more books. For downloadable pdf files of our *Iliad* guides, visit:

<http://readingodyssey.com/pages/iliad-moderator>

Scholar partners help us develop the content-related questions and flow of the reading group. Volunteer coordinators manage the process.

If you are interested in helping us launch more books, get in touch. We are in particular need of leading scholars to help with:

- **literature** (such as the plays of Shakespeare, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, and other great works of literature)
- **science** (such as Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, Galileo's *Starry Messenger*, and other landmark works of science)

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**Thermopylae2500.** We have big plans for this event in 10 years and would love your help in shaping it. Get in touch now if you are interested.

**Marketing efforts.** Reading Odyssey spreads around the world via the efforts of volunteers. Social media and online marketing are especially critical to our past success and our future plans. Are you interested in helping us build our global community? We need volunteers to help with marketing and social media efforts, with designing and building our web site, and with myriad other activities.

We have openings for some of the following volunteer roles:

- **Facebook manager**—a volunteer who manages our Facebook presence and develops our strategy for our pages.
- **Twitter manager**—a volunteer who manages our Twitter presence and builds relationships with key bloggers and Twitter leaders around the world.
- **Web manager**—a volunteer who manages our website (which is going to be significantly changed in the coming year).

**Donate.** Reading Odyssey is one of the most effective nonprofits. We produce a lot of programming with almost no money. We are, however, raising funds to build our new website and develop our new distribution strategy with school parents and library patrons. You can donate online here—your contributions are tax-deductible:

<http://www.readingodyssey.com/pages/donate>

**Our board and sponsors.** I'd like to make special mention of sponsor Kim Llewellyn, the talented designer who is dedicating significant time to helping us redesign Reading Odyssey and launch our new strategy. I'd also like to especially thank Professor Paul Cartledge who dedicated many hours of his time to run the Marathon2500 program and continues to be one of our most important supporters. We are grateful for all of your help, Professor Cartledge.

Happy reading in 2012!

Thanks,

Phil Terry  
Founder and Chair, Reading Odyssey, Inc.

P.S. Look to the end of this report to learn more about our two experiments, and why each group decided to collaborate with the Reading Odyssey.



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## Our Board

We thank the volunteers—scholars, readers, and sponsors—who are on the Board and help to make all of the programs of the Reading Odyssey possible.

### SCHOLARS

**Paul Cartledge**

A. G. Leventis Chair of Ancient Greek Culture,  
Cambridge University

**John Dowling**

Llura and Gordon Gund Professor of  
Neuroscience, Harvard University

**John Marincola**

Leon Golden Professor of Classics,  
Florida State University

**Barry Schwartz**

Dorwin Cartwright Professor of Social Theory  
and Social Action,  
Swarthmore College

**Robert B. Strassler**

Independent scholar and businessman; founder  
and editor of The Landmark Ancient Histories  
series: Arrian, Herodotus, Thucydides, and  
Xenophon

### READERS

**Tim Albright**

Senior Director, Jive Software

**Brett Caine**

President, Citrix Online

**Kendall Crolius**

Partner, Sulevia Group  
(former VP, General Manager, Forbes)

**Jerry Goldman**

Partner, Anderson Kill

**So Young Park**

Executive Vice President, HarteHanks

**Phil Terry**

Founder and Chair, Reading Odyssey

**Bruce Upbin**

Managing Editor, Forbes

**Pat Wictor**

Co-founder, Reading Odyssey; Musician

### SPONSORS

**Citrix Online** provides all the webinar and teleconference technology that makes possible the lectures and reading groups of all of the Reading Odyssey programs. They deserve our big thanks and support! Sign up for a free trial. You won't regret it. They do a great job.

<http://www.citrixonline.com>

**Campaign Monitor** provides all of our newsletter and email database services and email-based communications. Go try Campaign Monitor. You'll be pleased.

<http://www.campaignmonitor.com>

**Kim Llewellyn Design** provides art direction, design, editorial, and web-related materials for Reading Odyssey. Designer of The Landmark Ancient Histories series, and works by Shel Silverstein, Matt Groening, and others.

[LlewellynDesign@gmail.com](mailto:LlewellynDesign@gmail.com)

**National Humanities Center** supports the Reading Odyssey by helping us provide our free program resources to all of their many members. We thank them. They deserve all of our support and more.

<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org>

**Phillips Data** provides hosting, domain and development services to the Reading Odyssey and all of our programs. One of the friendliest "vendors"—get in touch with Phillips Data if you want some hosting or web application programming. Tell them Phil Terry sent you.

<http://www.phillipsdata.com>

**Squarespace** provides website building and hosting services for the programs of the Reading Odyssey. If you have a website to build, then go to Squarespace. Their easy-to-use tools are great for individuals, small business, nonprofits, and projects of all kinds.

<http://www.squarespace.com>

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## Our History and Mission

Through making it possible for adults to read together some of the most important texts of humanity, Reading Odyssey ignites curiosity and lifelong learning.

Reading Odyssey was formed when Phil Terry, a businessman and passionate reader, asked his longtime friend, Pat Wictor, a musician and equally passionate reader, for help. Phil had decided to read the three hundred or so great books of the human tradition over the remainder of his lifetime but knew he could not and would not be able to do it alone. So in 2005 he asked Pat to join him on a reading journey—and the odyssey began.

While reading their first book together, Homer’s *Odyssey*, they learned they could work through it without any special expertise. Contrary to reading in school, there was no “correct” way to read these texts, no teachers, no grades. They found that as adults with a variety of life experiences they could bring meaning and insight to the text on their own.

While reading their second book, Herodotus’ *Histories*, along with Pat and several more friends who joined the odyssey, Phil decided to reach out to scholars to see if they would be willing to join the conversation. Phil first contacted Professor John Marincola, editor of the Penguin edition of Herodotus, to ask if he would be willing to participate in a conference call at the end of their reading. Professor Marincola agreed without hesitation. He called in and was delighted (maybe even surprised) at the high level of conversation and quality of the questions. As a result, he began to introduce Reading Odyssey to other scholars. Thus began the partnership with scholars that has come to define a core part of the Reading Odyssey experience.

Reading Odyssey is peer-led so each adult can share responsibility for creating the conversation that makes the learning and reading possible for everyone. The assistance and participation of scholars from leading universities such as Cambridge and Harvard, among many others, make Reading Odyssey’s programs richer and the individual’s experience deeper. Reading Odyssey today combines the passion ignited by adult readers who discover the joy of reading these texts with the delight of scholars who love the experience of talking to—and supporting—interested, curious adults.



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## More About Our Two 2012 Experiments

### A New York City High School's Parents Will Read Together

**Paul Burke**, the incoming head of school at Nightingale-Bamford, a leading independent school in Manhattan, has decided to run reading groups with and for the parents of his students. Starting now, parents are leading and participating in three Reading Odyssey-style peer-led reading groups on Homer's *Iliad*. Reading Odyssey has created and supplied a reader's guide, a moderator guide, and assistance from our scholar partners, particularly Professor Paul Cartledge, who will deliver a webinar at the end of their reading, and Professors James Romm and John Marincola, who are advising us throughout.

#### • Why is the Nightingale-Bamford School participating?

"Reading Odyssey will give our parents a chance to connect via intellectual discourse while discovering (or reconnecting with) a classical text. From all that I can tell, Reading Odyssey is far more than a reading group; there is an intentionality to it that will inspire interest, understanding, and community."

—Paul Burke, Head of Nightingale-Bamford

This is a very exciting development for Reading Odyssey. First, because it's a joy to work with the team at Nightingale, a school that has always focused on the classics. Second, if the parent reading groups prove successful there, then we plan to roll these out to other independent schools—first in Manhattan and then across the country. And, if we succeed with independent schools, we will then evaluate the possibility of bringing our program to public school parents around the world.

### A Minnesota Public Library Group Joins Reading Odyssey

**Holly Martin Huffman**, the Director of the Marshall-Lyon Library System in southwestern Minnesota, is running a Reading Odyssey reading group for library patrons. Like Nightingale-Bamford, Marshall-Lyon will be running *Iliad* reading groups with our guides and with scholarly support from board members like Professors Paul Cartledge, James Romm, and John Marincola.

#### • Why is the Marshall-Lyon Library participating?

"Too long, public libraries have undercut their value by trying to be cool meeting spaces or entertainment centers. To provide an opportunity for (dare I say—second chances and lifelong) learning gives a library 'substance'—more value to its community."

—Holly Martin Huffman, Director,  
Marshall-Lyon Library System, Marshall, MN

Like the experiment with the Nightingale School, this experiment with Marshall-Lyon Library is also very exciting for Reading Odyssey. Dependent upon its success, we will either re-tailor our methods or be able to set out a plan immediately for Reading Odyssey reading groups across library systems in the U.S. and around the world.