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Commentary Exercise Guidance Intensive Latin 2

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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Commentary and translation exercise

- The 1,500 word translation and commentary exercise must contain:
 - Your own independent translation of the chosen text passage.
 - Your own independent commentary on the chosen text passage.
 - A bibliography of works used, including ancient and modern sources.
- The bibliography does not contribute to the word count; however, any footnotes you may use, do.

Deadlines

- The suggestions for commentary source texts are based on *Aeneid* 1, so that you may draw on (slightly) more familiar vocabulary and supporting tools. You should pick one of the four passages below.
Vergilius *Aeneis* 1.479-487
 - Vergilius *Aeneis* 1.561-574
 - Vergilius *Aeneis* 1.663-675
 - Vergilius *Aeneis* 1.709-722
- In addition to these suggestions, you are very welcome to pick a text independently. Before beginning your work, however, do discuss your choice with me so that you tackle a reasonable amount of text and have access to relevant supporting materials.
- If you would like to select your commentary text independently, please confirm your choice with me no later than 12 April.

Choice of focus

- You may select your focus according to your own interest:
 - Some of you will be interested in the literary context, some in the grammar and syntax used, some in linguistic and metrical development
- State your focus clearly so as to manage reader expectation
 - Where appropriate, refer readers to other commentaries or scholarship that cover issues you won't deal with
- Issues any commentary must deal with:
 - Especially difficult and unusual phrases or content, serious problems in the text (e.g. missing lines or words)

Commentary writing

Published commentaries may be written on a range of different levels:

- for the learner, with a focus on getting through the text, *e.g.* details on how each sentence must be resolved, even if word order is different from what is natural in English or if there are multiple options
- for the advanced learner, adding further background and placing the text in a scholarly context – reporting rather than always adding to this context
- for the scholar, as a scholarly product with a consistent aim to add to scholarship

Choice of structure

- The typical commentary on a Greek or Latin text works through the text line by line by pulling out key headwords (*lemmata*) for commentary
- This emphasises the key function of a commentary: a guide to the text one can consult to resolve specific passages
- The lemmatic structure is especially useful if you are interested in many and varied aspects of the text

4-519. *While Aeneas marvels at the pictures (still invisible the mist that Venus has set round him), Dido comes into temple, beautiful as Diana, and presides over the business the city. Suddenly he sees some of his lost companions arriving asking for the Queen's favour.*

494. Dardanio : 'Dardan Aeneas' is deep in Dardan memories.
 uidentur : probably passive ('are seen in all their wonder'),
 as Conington takes it, rather than 'seem' (as Conway).
495. dum stupet . . . in uno : 'while he is rapt and motionless/
 rooted in one intent gaze'; cf. 7. 249 f. 'defixa Latinus ,
 obtutu tenet ora soloque immobilis haeret', where the mean-

Example of a lemmatic commentary

- Short introduction to a passage of one narrative section;
- Suggestions for interpretations of individual verb forms and comparison with other commentators' readings;
- Indication of parallels from the same and other texts.
- Excerpt from Austin, R.G. 1971, *Virgil Aeneid* 1, Cambridge, 166.

Key resources for writing any commentary

- Advanced dictionary – you may use the online version of Lewis and Short – to help find constructions and parallel usages
- Advanced grammar and syntax handbook – Gildersleeve and Lodge (available online) will continue to be useful – to help explain constructions; a useful source for metrical patterns
- Existing commentaries on your text
- Standard translations often also have notes on the text, either as footnotes or as an appendix

These basic resources will allow you to produce a valid, text-focussed commentary, particularly if you take into account the bibliographical references they contain

Resources

- The next step is to review scholarship on and around your text more generally: much of it will be quite specific so can easily be incorporated into a commentary
 - Cf. the role of the learner's commentary to provide guidance on other readings of the text
- Use the introductory texts on Vergil (e.g. Perkell) linked on Moodle to gain an overview of the Aeneid and its scholarship, as well as work relating specifically to Book 1
- You should also begin to work with search tools: access via UWTSD online library: <https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/>
- Your first port of call may be the Library Catalogue: it covers both hard-copy and - importantly for us! – online resources
 - To get the most extensive results, do log in with your student account before starting your search!