



Prifysgol Cymru
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Commentary Exercise Guidance Intensive Latin 2

2023

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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1,500 word commentary exercise

- This is a new type of assessment within the Intensive modules – but more familiar if you have taken non-linguistic modules
- The starting point is a selected, unadapted Latin text. You need to produce your own, independent, translation (annotating it where necessary) and provide a commentary discussing the language, content, and context of the text

Benefits of doing a commentary

- This is our first foray into working with unadapted, authentic Latin text
- It is essential preparation for both independent work with Latin and for Latin Advanced modules (where this assessment type is common)
- It allows you to consolidate skills in working with grammar, syntax and linguistic features using handbooks and dictionaries, while also beginning to work with the wider literary and historical contexts of Latin texts

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.

Suggested texts

The commentary source texts are all based on *Aeneid* 8, so that you may draw on (slightly) more familiar vocabulary and supporting tools. You should pick one of the passages below.

- Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.138-153
- Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.185-199
- Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.663-675
- Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.251-267
- Virgil, *Aeneid* 8. 313-327
- Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.615-629
- Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.678-690

Deadlines

The translation/commentary is 25% of the portfolio mark. Submission of this commentary exercise (via Turnitin) is due no later than 23.59 on Wednesday **03 May 2023**.

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 development or matters of meter.
 - You are strongly encouraged to follow what interests you!
- As long as you state your focus clearly at the beginning so as to **manage reader expectations**
 - Where appropriate, refer readers to other commentaries or scholarship that cover issues you won't deal with
- Issues a commentary must deal with:
 - Difficult and unusual phrases or content, serious problems in the text (e.g. missing lines, or emendations that might change the interpretation of the passage)
 - Explanation of the most salient elements of the passage.

General points on 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 (but it's hard to say something new about Virgil!)

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 can be 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 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 be useful – to help explain constructions; a useful source for metrical patterns (<https://archive.org/details/gildersleeveslat00gilduoft>).
- Allen and Greenhough's *Latin Grammar* (<https://dcc.dickinson.edu/grammar/latin/alphabet>).
- Existing commentaries on the text (use the Library to find out about existing commentaries of *Aeneid* VIII, if you are comfortable reading other languages you can also consult other commentaries from non-Anglophone commentators)
- 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. *Oxford Bibliographies Online* is also a great resource to begin.

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 introductory texts on Vigil (e.g. Perkell's *Interpretative Guide*) to gain an overview of the *Aeneid* and its scholarship, as well as works relating specifically to Book 8.
- 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 is 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!

The text

P. Vergili Maronis Opera Virgil, R. A. B. Mynors, 1969

OXFORD CLASSICAL TEXTS.

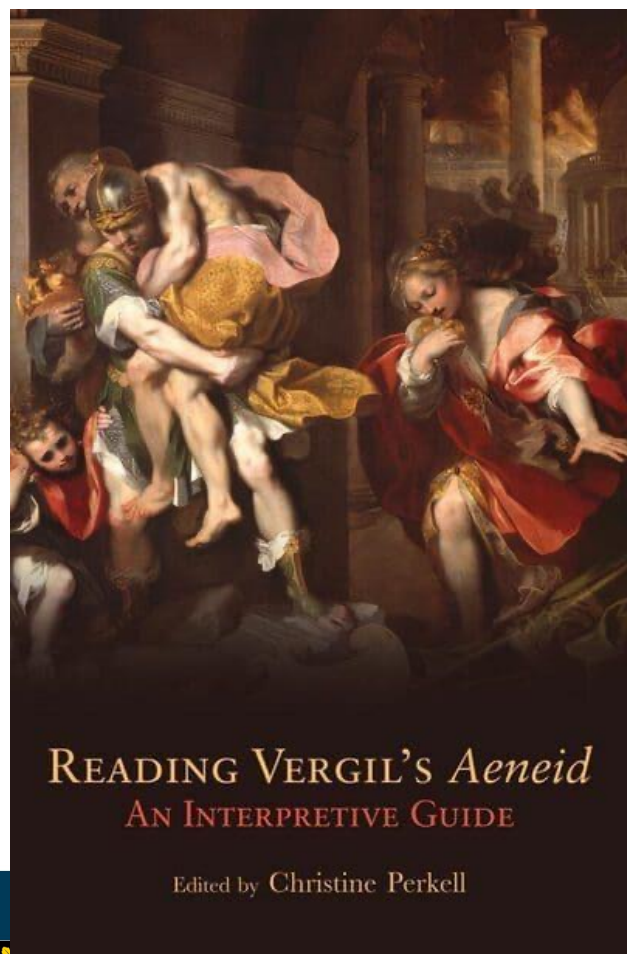
I will provide PDF scans of the passages, so you don't have to buy the book!

N.B. commentaries will slightly differ depending on the emendations of editors (some like to get *really* involved in conjectures, some primarily follow the manuscript tradition, or simply rely the Oxford Classical Text).

Reading Vergil's Aeneid : an interpretive guide

Perkell, Christine G.

University of Oklahoma Press, c1999



This book is available
ONLINE through the
UWTSD Library
catalogue.