

## Remote Learning Packet

*There is no need to submit this packet at the end of the week. Enjoy your summer break!*

**Week 9: May 25-29, 2020**

**Course:** 10 Latin IV

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### **Monday, May 25**

Happy Memorial Day! No School!

### **Tuesday, May 26 - Friday May 29**

1. Check last week's work against the answer keys provided (*Aeneid* I. 157-158, 170-179 Translation, "*Aeneid* I.195-209 Questions" worksheet, and *Aeneid* I.195-209 Translation).
2. Read the excerpt from Anderson's "The Art of the Aeneid." In this excerpt, Anderson talks about the characteristics of an epic prologue that are found at the beginning of Vergil's epic, and he compares Vergil's prologue to Homer's prologues for the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, both of which you will read next year in Humane Letters. You do not need to write a reflection over this reading, in fact, **you will not submit any work from this week**. This excerpt is an interesting read and a good introduction to the epic genre. Enjoy!

## ***Aeneid* Book I.157-158, 170-179 Translation**

(Lines 157-158) The exhausted followers of Aeneas strive to head for the shores which [are] nearest on their course, and are turned towards the coasts of Libya. . . . (Lines 170-173) Aeneas enters this place with seven ships gathered from the entire number [i.e. of ships], and, having disembarked, with a great love for land the Trojans take possession of the hoped-for sand, and place their limbs dripping with saltwater on the shore. (Lines 174-176) And first, Achates struck a spark from a flint, and took up the fire with leaves, and gave around [i.e. scattered] dry fuel [i.e. kindling] and snatched up the flame with tinder. (Lines 177-179) Then the men, weary from their misfortune [lit. tired of the conditions], prepare the grain spoiled by the waves and the utensils of Ceres, and they prepare both to roast the recovered grains with flames and to crush [i.e. grind] [hem] with stone.

I. Choose the best translation by circling the appropriate letter.

1. *Vina bonus quae deinde cadis onerarat Aestes / litore Trinacrio dederatque abeuntibus heros / dividit* (lines 195-197)

a. the wines that good Aestes then had loaded in jars the hero divides on the Sicilian shore and gives to them as they depart

**b. he divides the wine that the good hero Aestes had then loaded into jars on the Sicilian shore and had given to them as they departed**

2. *Vos et Scyllaeam rabiem penitusque sonantes / accestis scopulos, vos et Cyclopa saxa / experti* (lines 200-202)

a. You yourselves have experienced Scylla's rage deeply and the crags resounding with your approach, and you tested yourselves with the Cyclops' rocks

**b. You have both approached the rage of Scylla and the deeply resounding crags and you have experienced the rocks of the Cyclops**

3. *forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit* (line 203)

a. by chance and someday this will be pleasing to have remembered

**b. perhaps someday it will be pleasing to remember even these things**

II. What figure of speech occurs in the following line?

*Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum / tendimus in Latium* (lines 204-205)

a. personification

b. polysyndeton

c. litotes

**d. anaphora**

III. What noun does each of these adjectives/participles modify?

1. *bonus* (line 195)      *Acestes* (line 195) or *heros* (line 196)
2. *passi* (line 199)      an implied *vos* referring to Aeneas' companions (*socii*, line 198)
3. *sonantes* (line 200)      *scopulos* (line 201)
4. *quietas* (line 205)      *sedes* (line 205)

IV. What two items does -que in line 208 connect?

the verb *refert* in line 208 and the verb *simulat* in line 209

V. What is the object(s) of these verbs/participles?

1. *dederat* (line 196)      *Vina* (line 195)
2. *passi* (line 199)      *graviora* (line 199) which is a substantive adjective "graver things"
3. *refert* (line 208)      *Talia* (line 208) which is a substantive adjective "such things"

## ***Aeneid* Book I.195-209 Translation**

(Lines 195-197) He [i.e. Aeneas] distributes the wine which the good hero Acestes had then loaded in jars on the Sicilian shore and had given to them as they were departing [lit. to the ones departing], and he [i.e. Aeneas] soothes their grieving hearts with words:

(Lines 198-199) “O companions (for neither are we ignorant of previous troubles), O men having suffered more severe things, god will give an end to these [things] too. (Lines 200-203) You have both approached the Scyllaeian rage and the deeply resounding cliffs, and you have experienced the Cyclopiian rocks: call back your spirits and send away your gloomy fear; perhaps at some time it will be pleasing to remember even these things. (Lines 204-207) Through various misfortunes, through so many dangers of things, we head into Latium, where the fates show [us] restful places; there it is right that the kingdom of Troy rise again. Endure, and save yourselves for favorable things.”

(Lines 208-209) He says such things with his voice, and [though] sick with huge cares he feigns hope on his face, [and] presses his grief deep in his heart.



## VERGIL BEGINS HIS EPIC

Vergil occupies a central position in the history of epic. On one side of him towers Homer, on the other Dante and other Renaissance epic poets until Milton. Whereas Homer mastered the art of oral composition and produced the most sophisticated poetry ever achieved in that challenging medium, Vergil lived in an era that knew only written or literary composition and had long utilized writing to examine, analyze, and defy the archaic principles of Homeric epic. The Age of Heroes had long ended when Homer attempted to capture their significance; by Vergil's day, Greece and Rome had experienced so much more history that the very concept of the hero was a near absurdity. For nearly a century, as a result of political troubles emanating from the Roman Forum, the Mediterranean world had been increasingly convulsed, and especially since Caesar had crossed the Rubicon, turmoil had prevailed. Vergil's contemporaries tended to flee from epic as a genre devoid of vitality, preferring such forms as elegy, lyric, drama, and satire. Or if they did attempt epic, they either adopted a mythological theme, such as the ever-successful story of Jason and the Golden Fleece, or they prostituted themselves to the ambitions of a politician and devised a "heroic" account of some military exploit or other.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the apparent obsolescence of epic and the disappearance of the heroic mentality, Vergil wrote the *Aeneid*, a work which is not only the greatest piece of Latin literature, but also the poem which endowed epic with a new vitality—so that it could survive until Florence and Dante produced another ideal combination which could begin a new epic under the guiding influence of Vergil.

Today, when we read an epic, we are dealing with a "dead" form. The word "epic" still possesses some power, especially for the advertisers of historical novels and the historical extravaganzas of Hollywood,

but epic poetry no longer attracts poets, no longer is written. To read an epic like the *Aeneid*, then, is to grapple with unfamiliar poetic conventions, a strange culture, and a complicated historical background: those are the immediate difficulties. But reading the *Aeneid* also leads to the discovery of a hero viewed with a penetrating and almost frightening understanding that makes him, despite his Roman armor, a man that we could easily recognize today. It is the purpose of this volume to assist the modern reader of the *Aeneid* to find underneath the dead form the living poetry of Vergil.

The first conventional element of an epic was the prologue; in the *Aeneid*, the prologue consists of the first thirty-three lines. Since the beginning of any work requires the utmost skill from a writer, a close reading of Vergil's prologue may help us grasp some of his basic methods and so facilitate our understanding of later portions of the *Aeneid*. I shall analyze the prologue in convenient units, each presenting an important aspect of Vergil's art.

## I

I am the man who once worked out my song on the slender reed-pipe; then, I left the woods and compelled the neighboring fields to obey the farmer, no matter how greedy he might be, in a poem that pleased the cultivators of the fields. Now, however, it is the horrible arms of Mars and the man which are my theme...

In the late fourth century, long after Vergil's death and the gradual disintegration of Roman civilization, the industrious amateur scholar Servius compiled a huge commentary on the *Aeneid*. Servius found information which he chose to believe, and he solemnly reported that Vergil began his epic not with the now famous words *arma virumque* ("arms and the man"), but with the four lines translated above. No reputable scholar today accepts Servius' word, preferring to believe that these lines were composed by some admirer to appear under a portrait-bust or picture of the dead poet. However, these lines are relevant to our interests for two reasons: they show what a poet would not insert in his prologue, or anywhere in a proper epic poem, and they report authentic details about Vergil's earlier poetic career.

An epic poet could not begin his poem with an autobiographical statement or discuss elsewhere his earlier poetry, because tradition had established—and would maintain firmly until Dante's epic—the convention that epic poetry was *impersonal*. This tradition of impersonality, beginning with Homeric epic and continued by later writers, sprang from several related sources. In the first place, no poet can honestly say that a poem is all his, created and finished by his conscious intelligence at every point. As poets have told us long before the Romantic era and many times since, poetry of the proportions of epic or drama is never fully explicable as a personal achievement. Therefore, the epic poet does not call attention to himself as he begins his narrative; instead, he invokes a Muse, the symbol of the inexplicable element in his marvelous creation. In the second place, the material of epic forces upon the poet an impersonal stance, for he stands removed from it by centuries.<sup>2</sup> Homer felt this distance with particular force, since his tenuous link with the past was oral traditions, and so he appealed to the Muse as the authentic source of historical fact. She was the daughter of Memory; she knew better than he what had really happened. Vergil, who undoubtedly realized better than Homer how little historical fact resided in his epic, nevertheless affected to be writing of events more than a thousand years earlier, over which he could claim no real control. So he too donned the mask of impersonality. What the audience expected to hear—and what he certainly wrote—was a brief account of the matter of the poem, along with an invocation of the Muse; it was the poem, not the poet that counted.

The impersonal stance of the epic poet is not something to which he reluctantly assents, as though, apart from the useless constraint of convention, he would immediately release his egoism. On the contrary, epic, like drama, gains from the seeming impersonality or objectivity of the poet. In epic the narrative progresses without obvious interventions of the poet, seeming to have a life of its own that, in the best poems, resembles life as we know it at the deepest level. Aeneas suffers at Troy what anyone who has lived in our own war-torn world can easily imagine; Aeneas does cruel things to Dido and Turnus which we all know are done all the time from necessity or from false arguments of necessity. The fact that Vergil offers no patent verdict on such events, but lets them impinge upon the reader with full potential ambiguity, shows how much can be done with this epic impersonality.



It is the poetic responsibility of the epic poet—and his opportunity—to shape his narrative so that his audience experiences and judges the events for itself. In the varying judgments on the *Aeneid* and its major characters we see evidence of Vergil's faithfulness to tradition and successful exploitation of the opportunity. Elsewhere we shall note how a certain subjectivity merges with this pose of impersonality; now let us turn to Vergil's earlier poetic career.

Born in 70 BC, the year that Pompey first became consul, Vergil grew up in an Italy that first dreaded, and later suffered the civil war that launched Caesar against Pompey, then Caesar's heir Octavian against a series of rivals, including at last Antony. Young Vergil apparently came to Rome in the troubled 50's in order to learn law and the art of public speaking; apparently, too, he found the environment intolerable and fled to the Bay of Naples and the comforting retirement of an Epicurean society. From forensic art he turned to poetry. Shortly after Caesar's murder (44 BC), he published his *Eclogues*, pastoral poems whose fictional stance assumed a shepherd playing on his pipe.<sup>3</sup> Some of these poems, as one might expect, express the poet's aversion to the present political chaos—always through an invented speaker—but most of them are nonpolitical. They talk of an ideal pastoral world, not quite Arcadian nor Sicilian nor Italian, where goats and sheep may freely graze and their herdsman may look forward to happy love and success in their musical contests. This lovely set of poems won the poet immediate fame.

Vergil's next work, a much more substantial poem, took him seven years to produce, and by the time the *Georgics* appeared (30 BC), Octavian had defeated his last and most serious foes, Antony and Cleopatra, and was ready, as Augustus, to begin his long reign of relative peace and reconstruction.<sup>4</sup> It was with the vision of this eventual peace that Vergil devised, during the many years of agricultural decline, his poem on the importance and moral value of farming. Unlike the writer of the lines above, he would hardly have claimed that he indeed successfully compelled the fields to yield to farmers; his theme, that men should perceive the importance of farming, hardly touched the farmers, but impressed the urban moralists and some gentlemen-farmers (from 30 BC to the present). Nevertheless, the artistry is evident, and the positive tone and the penetrating poetic vision of a

farmer's significance show how far he has left behind his largely negative Epicureanism. The farmer's intelligent, often violent struggle against adversity in order to raise his animals and crops—what Vergil at one point calls his "cruel toil" (*labor improbus*)—anticipates the heroic and compromised efforts of Aeneas.

In 30 BC the times seemed right for a positive epic about Rome, now that the long period of civil war had ended and the immediate future under the young, energetic Octavian promised much. And Vergil himself, at forty, had grown enough in artistic capacity and poetic vision to dare this demanding task. For the remaining eleven years of his short life, until his premature death in 19 BC, Vergil worked at the poem. That last year, still not entirely satisfied with it, he decided to retire for three years to Greece and devote the entire period to meticulous revision. Once he reached Athens, however, he changed his mind; he started back to Italy, but the fever he had picked up in Greece grew worse, and shortly after the ship landed at Brundisium, late in September, he died. The poem was not finished. In fact, Vergil felt so unhappy about publishing the *Aeneid* in its incomplete condition that he called for the sheets of manuscript, as he lay dying, in order to burn them up. Fortunately his friends refused to grant that last wish. Two of them, able poets themselves, were commissioned by Augustus to edit the work. Exactly what their editorial efforts amounted to is not entirely certain. Later commentators like Servius and Donatus report theories of earlier scholars that modern students of the *Aeneid* still accept in general, namely, that the two editors worked with the greatest fidelity to Vergil's text. They may have eliminated some unfinished passages or lines, but not many, for they left a large number of incomplete hexameters in each book, including one at 3.340 which is incomplete in sense. It is in this context that Servius tells us that the four lines cited above, which had been written by Vergil and placed at the beginning of the epic, were removed. Scholars do not accept this statement, as I mentioned above: it seems incredible that an editor had better taste than Vergil or knew the poetic conventions of impersonality more exactly. Vergil began his poem conventionally and powerfully with the words which we shall now consider: *arma virumque*.

## II

## Arms and the man I sing

The two epics of Homer, which determined subsequent epic conventions, began as follows: "Anger sing, goddess, the anger which possessed Peleus' son Achilles" (*Iliad*); "The man describe to me, Muse, the versatile person who wandered far" (*Odyssey*). I have deliberately translated the Greek in a way to preserve the original word order, for it is important to see that the epic poet began with a noun that introduced the main subject of his poem immediately. Although any audience would inevitably react to the artistic techniques employed in epic, although oral and literary poets obviously must devote great care and skill to the means by which they narrate events, nevertheless all that was taken for granted in the tacit agreement between poet and audience, and he began by satisfying curiosity about the story. Homer drew a sharp distinction in his two openings between the two heroes and the way he chose to emphasize them; and Vergil, keenly aware of his predecessor's genius, adapts what he can of the two different emphases. In the *Iliad* Homer focused attention on the anger of Achilles, not on Achilles the total hero; for the inhuman passion negated the hero, brought ruin upon the Greek army, and finally crushed Achilles beneath an unbearable personal tragedy. In the *Odyssey*, on the other hand, Homer presented the man Odysseus in all his versatility; the integrated man, achieved after long years of misery before the epic begins, wins his return home and then recovers family and political status as he richly deserves. Homer illustrates two of the principal emphases in Classical heroic epic: the poet could pursue an essentially tragic vision and describe the passion which conquers the man, or he could work out a hopeful picture of life by creating a hero stronger than his passions and the sufferings imposed upon him from without.

After stating the main theme of the poem in a single noun, Homer used verbs referring to the poetic narrative process: "sing," "describe." Both of these verbs, we note, are imperatives. Imbued as he was with a feeling of the impersonality and irrationality of poetic composition, Homer instinctively avoided the personal and instead appealed or prayed to the Muse to perform the narrative *through* him. It might

be argued that Homer's "prayer" is so perfunctory as to be nothing more than a vestige, even in his day, of what once was a meaningful invocation. Certainly Homer expected to and did do a great deal of work on his own for the success of his epics. Even so, he respected the convention that minimized his personal achievements, that regarded the cooperation of the Muse as a close second in importance to the interest of the audience.

Vergil alters the Homeric pattern in two significant ways: he uses a double-noun construction to account for his theme and he dismisses the appeal to the Muse until line 8, meanwhile emphasizing his own personal achievement as the poet ("I sing"). The choice of two nouns to define the material of the epic has often been explained as simply an attempt to remind the reader of the *Aeneid* that the one poem of twelve books would vie with the twenty-four books of the *Iliad* (with its concentration on warfare) and the twenty-four books of the *Odyssey* (with its concentration on a man). Vergil was inevitably vying with Homer; he was attempting to write for Rome an epic that would summarize the genius of the nation and the modern spirit, just as Homer so well captured the spirit of Greece at the end of the eighth century BC. Much important work has been done in recent years to demonstrate the artistry of Vergil's competition with Homer.<sup>5</sup> There is one constructive pattern which most ancient readers detected; modern readers can also benefit by following it. During the first half of the *Aeneid*, Vergil takes his hero through a series of wanderings and modernized temptations which aptly parallel many of Odysseus' experiences before he reached home; during the second half, Aeneas goes through a war which Vergil deliberately compares with the Trojan War, and event after event finds its prototype in the *Iliad*.

The early Vergilian critics, who swarmed over his epic almost as soon as it was published, seem to have spent much of their efforts vainly attempting to elucidate Vergil's relation to Homer. For some, eager to depreciate the Roman before the Greek, Vergil could be dismissed as nothing more than an awkward plagiarist. Others felt the originality of Vergil and recognized the general principle of *creative imitation*, but they lacked the language to explain adequately their positive evaluation of the Roman achievement. More often than not, they could only point to an imitation and assert, without adequate critical argument, that it was better than Homer. Throughout this

study I shall comment on the fruitful way in which Vergil utilizes Homer—we are no longer interested in saying who was “better” or “worse”—but I should like to suggest here some features of his creative imitation. When we compare Aeneas to Odysseus, we immediately recognize important differences. Vergil deliberately referred to the known heroic stature of Odysseus in order to bring out the special qualities of his hero and his hero’s experiences. Odysseus sails from victory at Troy, Aeneas from utter defeat. Odysseus heads for wife and home, and for every delay is culpable and receives eventual punishment; Aeneas loses wife and home but learns from a vague series of prophecies that a new wife and home await him in a distant land, all so vaguely put that his delays and half-hearted commitment to his destiny win our sympathy. Odysseus enjoys Circe and Calypso and honorably flatters Nausicaa, then goes home to rejoin Penelope with little express embarrassment; Aeneas, a widower, falls in love with Dido, but his love leads to disaster for himself and suicide for Dido, a symbolic victim of the ruthless Roman quest for national greatness. Similarly, when we deal with the second half of the *Aeneid* and consider its use of the *Iliad*, we should be able to perceive how sharply the Italian war differs from the Trojan. Perhaps the most intriguing problem which Vergil presents us is to decide which of his characters parallel which of Homer. Is Aeneas Paris, Hector, Agamemnon, Menelaus, or Achilles? What about Turnus? Is he another Menelaus, as he claims to be? The fact is, of course, that the parallels are inexact; Vergil uses the Homeric prototype here, as earlier, to bring out the un-Homeric aspects of his personages.

It is not enough, however, to describe Vergil’s opening as a skillful allusion to inevitable rivalry with Homer. To be sure, he used two nouns of different orders, one referring to a person, one to a thing, and the nouns suggest main elements of the two Homeric narratives. Two nouns together, however, interact; they cannot be absorbed separately as mere equivalents to separate Greek epics. When George Bernard Shaw entitled his comedy *Arms and the Man*, he knew exactly what he was doing and exactly what Vergil meant with his pair of nouns: they affect each other. Shaw humorously explores some of the paradoxical ways in which warfare affects the personality of the warrior. One appreciates the comedy all the more if he has read the

*Aeneid* and grasped the near-tragic vision which Vergil presents of Aeneas the man of arms. Homer knew that warfare can turn a man into a beast, but in the *Iliad* war remains a fact with which men must deal; within the limited context of battle, men can become heroes. It is part of Achilles' tragedy that he can no longer accept the war as a necessary fact for himself. Vergil goes beyond Homer, since he does not present war as a necessary or desirable fact, and furthermore he shows not only that war brutalizes men, but also that men alter the meaning of war. Note, however, that he does not define Aeneas from the beginning as a tragic warrior, as Homer does Achilles. Instead of the negative term "anger" (later elaborated for its ruinous effects), Vergil uses the neutral word "arms," which he explains in the next lines as crucially important for the establishment of Rome. Together, "arms and the man" could be viewed as positive words, interacting creatively to make possible the good that undoubtedly existed in Rome. So from the beginning Vergil has started a theme of rich ambiguity, a theme which runs through the poem and remains provocatively rich even after the last lines.