

Eduqas Support Materials: Translation

Eduqas GCSE Latin Component 3A

Latin Literature (Verse) Virgil: Hercules and Cacus

For examination in 2026 – 2027

Using this Document

Each section of the Latin text is displayed in three columns.

In the left-hand column is the Latin text. Line numbers corresponding to the official examination text are indicated in square brackets.

In the centre column is an accessible interpretation of its English meaning (not a literal translation). This is to help students enjoy and engage with the meaning of the poem.

Where the interpretation in the central column is significantly different from a literal translation of the Latin, a literal translation is provided in the right-hand column. Where this occurs, the relevant words of the Latin text, English meaning and literal translation are all marked with a dotted line underneath. This is intended to form a bridge for the teacher between the Latin and the English interpretation, and to make it possible for any student who wishes to do so to see how the Latin gives rise to the English meaning.

Please note that students will **not** be expected to translate a section of text in this examination, although they are expected to show detailed knowledge and comprehension of the text throughout, and that they understand the meaning of any quotations they use.

Where a word in the English meaning column enhances readability, but is not explicitly included in the Latin, it is given in square brackets: [...].

There are also a number of occasions where, in order to make the passage read more naturally in English, Latin verbs in the (historic) present tense have been translated as if they were in a past tense.

N. B. The coloured passages in italics are summaries of events to support understanding of the narrative. They are not part of the prescription.

Hercules and Cacus

Virgil Aeneid 8 152-336

Virgil's epic poem the Aeneid was written, probably at the emperor Augustus' request, in the 20s BC. It tells the story of the Trojan nobleman, Aeneas who fled from Troy and after many adventures, arrived in Italy where he was destined to settle and be the forefather of the Roman people. The arrival of the Trojans in Italy sparked a war and Aeneas needed to have allies. He was told by the god of the river Tiber, to go to king Evander and he was received kindly by the king and his son Pallas, who were in the middle of a festival in honour of Hercules. Aeneas told the king that he already had a strong connection to him as their fathers were related through their common ancestor, Atlas, and he asked Evander to help him in the war against the Italian tribes.

A (lines 8.152-174)

Aeneas finished speaking and Evander had been watching him closely as he talked. Then he replied thus in a few words: “Bravest of Trojans, how gladly I welcome you and recognise you. How I remember the words of your father, and the voice and face of the great Anchises! I recall when Priam, the son of Laomedon, was heading to the kingdom of Salamis to see his sister, Hesione, he went straight on to visit the cold realm of Arcadia. At that time, I was in the first flush of youth, and I marvelled at the Trojan leaders, and I marvelled at the son of Laomedon himself, but Anchises walked taller than them all. My mind was ablaze with a young man’s enthusiasm to speak to him and to join my hand to his in friendship. I approached him and eagerly led him to the walls of Arcadian Pheneus. As he was leaving, he gave me a marvellous quiver full of Lycian arrows, a cloak interwoven with gold thread and two golden bridles which my son, Pallas, now has. Therefore, the hand of friendship which you seek has been joined in a treaty, and when dawn comes upon the earth tomorrow, I shall be glad to send you happily on your way with reinforcements and resources. Meanwhile, since you have come here as friends, celebrate wholeheartedly with us these annual sacred rites which it would be wrong to put off, and now you begin to feel at home at the tables of your allies.”

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B (Lines 8.175-189)

When he had said this, Evander ordered the food and drink that had been removed to be replaced; he himself showed the Trojan men to their grassy seats and took Aeneas, as his most important guest, to a couch with a shaggy lionskin as a cushion and entertained him on a maple-wood throne. Then some hand-picked 5 young men and the priest of the altar competed with each other to serve the roasted flesh of bulls, piled the baskets with well-made bread, the gift of Ceres, and they poured out Bacchus' wine. Aeneas and his Trojan young men feasted together on the whole side of oxen and sacrificial entrails. After their hunger had been 10 relieved and their desire for food had been satisfied, king Evander spoke: "These solemn rites, this established feast and this altar to such a great divine spirit have not been imposed upon us by some empty superstition and an ignorance of our ancient gods: we perform this sacrifice, my Trojan guest, because we were saved 15 from dreadful dangers and we repeat it as a well-deserved honour.

Latin		English	Literal Translation
<p>iam primum <u>saxis suspensam</u> hanc aspice <u>rupem</u>, disiectae procul ut moles desertaque <u>montis</u> stat <u>domus</u> et scopuli ingentem traxere ruinam.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">C (lines 8.190 – 212)</p> <p><i>Firstly, look at this cliff, <u>raised above the rocks</u>, how the huge boulders have been wrenched away, the <u>mountain home</u> stands deserted, and the crags have dragged down huge destruction.</i></p>	<p><i><u>suspended by rocks</u> <u>home of a mountain</u></i></p>
<p>hic spelunca fuit, vasto summotâ recessu, semihominis Caci facies quam dira tenebat solis inaccessam radiis; semperque recenti caede tepebat humus, foribusque adfixa superbis ora virum tristi pendebant pallida tabo.</p>	<p>5</p>	<p><i>Here there was a cave which reached back into a huge space, which the hideous form of the semi-human Cacus used to occupy and which was inaccessible to the sun's rays. The ground was always warm with freshly shed blood, and fixed to his proud doors were hanging the heads of men pale with grim decay.</i></p>	
<p>huic monstro Vulcanus erat pater: illius atros ore vomens ignes magna se mole ferebat. attulit et nobis aliquando optantibus aetas auxilium adventumque dei.</p>	<p>10</p>	<p><i>Vulcan was this monster's father: his were the dark fires that he vomited from his mouth as he moved his vast size around. At long last time , and the arrival of a god, brought help even to us who were longing for it.</i></p>	

Latin		English	Literal Translation
<p style="text-align: center;">nam maximus ultor, tergemini nece Geryonae spoliisque superbus Alcides aderat taurosque hac victor agebat ingentes, vallemque boves amnemque tenebant.</p>	15	<p><i>For the greatest avenger, proud from the killing of three-formed Geryon and his spoils, the descendant of Alceus was here, the victor, was driving his huge bulls this way and the cattle were occupying the valley and the riverside.</i></p>	
<p>at furiis Caci mens effera, ne quid inausum aut intractatum scelerisve dolive fuisset, quattuor a stabulis praestanti corpore tauros avertit, totidem forma superante iuvenças; atque hos, ne qua forent pedibus vestigia rectis, cauda in speluncam tractos versisque viarum indiciis raptos saxo occultabat opaco: quaerenti nulla ad speluncam signa ferebant.</p>	20	<p><i>But Cacus' mind was savage with fury, and so that there might not prove to have been any crime or trickery undared or not undertaken, he stole from their pastures, four bulls of outstanding condition, and as many heifers of surpassing beauty, and so that there would not be any tracks with feet pointing the right way, he dragged them by the tail into the cave and having switched around the signs of their tracks, he hid his plunder in the dark rock. There were no signs leading to the cave for anyone looking.</i></p>	

Latin		English	Literal Translation
<p>interea, cum iam stabulis saturata <u>moveret</u></p> <p>Amphytrioniades <u>armenta abiturumque pararet,</u></p> <p>discessu mugire boves atque omne querelis</p> <p><u>impleri nemus et colles</u> clamore <u>relinqui.</u></p> <p>reddidit una boum vocem vastoque sub antro</p> <p>mugiit et <u>Caci spem custodita fefellit.</u></p> <p>hic vero <u>Alcidae furiis exarserat atro</u></p> <p><u>felle dolor:</u> rapit arma manu nodisque gravatum</p> <p>robur et aerii cursu petit ardua montis.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">D (lines 8.213 – 232)</p> <p><i>And now, when his cattle had eaten their fill, the son of Amphytrion, <u>prepared to move his herd from their pasture, and leave; the cattle, at their departure, began to low and to fill the grove with complaints, and the hills with noise as they left.</u></i></p> <p>5 <i>One of the cattle lowed in answer from deep down in the cave, and <u>guarded as she was, she frustrated Cacus' intention.</u></i></p> <p><i>At this point, <u>the descendant of Alceus blazed up with fury, anger, and with black bile: he snatched up his weapons in his hand and his oak club heavy with knots and made his way at a run to the steep slopes of the lofty mountain.</u></i></p>	<p><i><u>moved the herds and prepared for departure ...</u></i></p> <p><i><u>and the grove to be filled ... and the hills ... to be left</u></i></p> <p><i><u>and the guarded one deceived the hope of Cacus</u></i></p> <p><i><u>the anger of the descendant of Alceus blazed up with fury and black bile.</u></i></p>	

Latin		English	Literal Translation
<p>tum primum nostri Cacum <u>videre</u> timentem <u>turbatumque oculis</u>: fugit illicet ocior Euro speluncamque petit, pedibus timor addidit alas.</p> <p>ut sese inclusit <u>ruptisque</u> immane <u>catenis</u> deiecit saxum, ferro quod et arte paterna pendebat, <u>fultosque emuniit obice postes</u>,</p> <p>ecce <u>furens animis</u> aderat Tirynthius omnemque accessum lustrans huc ora ferebat et illuc, dentibus infrendens. ter totum fervidus ira lustrat Aventini montem, ter saxea temptat limina nequiquam, ter fessus valle resedit.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>15</p> <p>20</p>	<p>Then, for the first time, our people <u>saw</u> Cacus afraid and <u>confusion in his eyes</u>. Immediately he fled, swifter than the east wind and he made for his cave, the fear added wings to his feet.</p> <p>When he had shut himself in, <u>he broke the chains</u> and dropped down a huge rock which was hanging by his father's skill in iron-working and <u>he secured and fortified the</u> <u>doorposts</u> with a barrier.</p> <p>Look! There was the hero from Tiryns, <u>raging with fury</u>, scanning every access point, turning his face this way and that and grinding his teeth. Three times, seething with anger, he examined the whole Aventine mountain, three times he made an attempt on the rocky doorway, in vain, three times, exhausted he sat down in the valley.</p>	<p><u>videre = viderunt</u></p> <p><u>confused as to his</u> <u>eyes</u></p> <p><u>the chains having</u> <u>been broken ...</u></p> <p><u>... fortified the secured</u> <u>doorposts with a</u> <u>barrier.</u></p> <p><u>raging in his mind</u></p>

E (lines 8.233 – 246)

There stood a sharp point of rock with sheer cliffs on all sides, rising up at the back of the cave. It was immensely high and a convenient home for the nests of carrion birds. Hercules strained at this from the right where it leaned over the ridge towards the river on the left, he shook it, loosened it and tore it up from its roots, then, suddenly, he 5 gave it a mighty heave and with that heave from which the vast heavens thundered, the riverbanks leapt apart, and the terrified river flowed backwards. Cacus' huge cave and palace were uncovered and exposed to view and the shadowy caverns deep within appeared. It was as if the deepest parts of the earth split apart by 10 force, unbarred the chambers of the underworld and opened up their pale kingdoms, hateful to the gods. From above a huge abyss could be seen, and the spirits of the dead panicked as light was inflicted on them.

Latin		English	Literal Translation
<p>ergo insperata deprensum luce repente inclusumque cavo saxo atque insueta rudentem desuper Alcides telis premit omniaque arma advocat et ramis vastisque molaribus instat.</p> <p>ille autem, neque enim fuga iam super ulla pericli, faucibus ingentem fumum (mirabile dictu) evomit involvitque domum caligine caeca, prospectum eripiens oculis, glomeratque sub antro fumiferam noctem <u>commixtis igne tenebris.</u></p>	<p>5</p>	<p>F (lines 8.247 – 267)</p> <p><i>And so, [Cacus], caught unawares by the unexpected and sudden burst of light, was trapped in his rocky cave and bellowing strange cries, while the descendant of Alceus (Hercules), from above, attacked him with missiles, summoning to his aid all sorts of weapons and attacked him with huge branches and rocks the size of millstones.</i></p> <p><i>Since there remained no escape from any danger for him, [Cacus] vomited up thick smoke from his throat (amazing to relate) and enveloped his home in a blind fog, snatching the sight from Hercules' eyes, and down in his cave, he gathered up a smoke-filled night <u>mixing the darkness with fire.</u></i></p>	<p><u>... the darkness having been mixed with fire.</u></p>

Latin		English	Literal Translation
<p>non <u>tulit Alcides animis</u>, seque ipse per ignem praecipiti iecit saltu, <u>qua plurimus undam</u> <u>fumus agit nebulaque ingens specus aestuat atra.</u></p> <p>hic Cacum in tenebris incendia vana vomentem corripit <u>in nodum complexus et angit inhaerens</u> <u>elisos oculos et siccum sanguine guttur.</u></p> <p>panditur extemplo <u>foribus domus atra revulsis</u>, <u>abstractaeque boves abiurataeque rapinae</u> <u>caelo ostenduntur,</u></p>	<p>10</p> <p>15</p>	<p><i>Hercules, in his fury, <u>did not tolerate this</u>, he threw himself through the fire in a headlong leap, <u>where the smoke billowed thickest</u>, and the huge cavern seethed with the black mist.</i></p> <p><i>Here he seized Cacus who was still spewing useless fire in the gloom, and caught him up, <u>knottng his arms around him and clinging to him</u> [Hercules] <u>squeezed his throat until his eyes started from their sockets</u> and his throat was drained of blood.</i></p> <p><i>Then immediately <u>he wrenched off the doors</u> and the dark house was opened up. <u>The cattle which had been dragged away, and the theft which had been denied on oath were revealed to the heavens</u></i></p>	<p><i>... did not bear [these things]</i></p> <p><i>... where the most smoke billowed [in a] wave ...</i></p> <p><i>having embraced him into a knot ...</i></p> <p><i>he squeezed out his burst out eyes and his throat dry of blood.</i></p> <p><i>the doors having been wrenched off</i></p> <p><i>the dragged away cattle and the theft denied on oath were revealed to heaven ...</i></p>

Latin		English	Literal Translation
<p style="text-align: center;">pedibusque informe cadaver protrahitur. nequeunt expleri corda tuendo terribiles oculos, vultum villosaque saetis pectora semiferi atque extinctos faucibus ignes.</p>	20	<p><i>and the deformed corpse was dragged forth by the feet. Our hearts could not be satisfied with gazing at his terrible eyes, the face and chest of the half-beast, shaggy with bristles, and at the fires now extinguished from his throat.</i></p>	

G (lines 8. 268 – 279)

From that day, Hercules has been honoured, and generations after him have joyfully celebrated this day. Potitius the first founder with the house of Pinarii as guardians of the sacred rites of Hercules, set up in the grove this altar which is always called by us the Greatest Altar and will always be the greatest. Therefore, young men, in appreciation of such great and praiseworthy actions, wreath your hair with leaves and hold out your cups in your right hands. Call upon him who is the god of us all and offer him wine willingly.” He stopped speaking and then the green and silver leaves of Hercules’ poplar tree covered his hair, hanging down on all sides, and a sacred cup filled his right hand. Soon, everyone was happily pouring libations and praying to the gods.

Latin		English	Literal Translation
<p>devexo interea propior fit Vesper Olympo, iamque sacerdotes primusque Potitius ibant, pellibus in morem cincti, flammasque ferebant.</p> <p>instaurant epulas et mensae grata secundae dona ferunt cumulantque oneratis lancibus aras.</p> <p>tum Salii ad cantus incensa altaria circum populeis adsunt evincti tempora ramis, hic iuvenum chorus, ille senum; qui carmine laudes Herculeas et facta ferunt: ut prima novercae monstra manu geminosque premens eliserit angues,</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">H (lines 8.280 – 305)</p> <p><i>Meanwhile, the Evening Star drew nearer to the slope of lofty Olympus, and now the priests were coming, Potitius was first. They were robed in animal skins, according to custom, and carrying torches.</i></p> <p><i>They were starting the feasts anew, and bringing welcome offerings for the second course, and they heaped the altars with loaded dishes.</i></p> <p><i>Then the Salii [priests of Mars], approached to sing around the altar fires, their brows wreathed in poplar boughs. This was a chorus of young men, that of old men, who were praising Hercules and his deeds in song: how grasping his stepmother's first monsters in his hand, he throttled the two snakes;</i></p>	

Latin		<i>English</i>	<i>Literal Translation</i>
<p>ut bello egregias idem disiecerit urbes, Troiamque Oechaliamque, ut duros mille labores rege <u>sub Eurystheo</u> fatis lunonis iniquae pertulerit.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“tu nubigenas, invicte, bimembres Hylaeumque Pholumque, manu, tu Cresia mactas prodigia et vastum Nemeae sub rupe leonem. te Stygii tremuere lacus, te ianitor Orci ossa super recubans antro semesa cruento;</p>	15	<p><i>how he scattered in the same way, the cities of Troy and Oechalia, both famous in war; how he endured a thousand hard labours <u>at the hands of king Eurystheus</u>, because of the fate [laid on him] by unjust Juno.</i></p> <p><i>[They sang:] ‘You, unconquered [Hercules], slew with your own hand, the cloud-born, half-man, half- beast centaurs, Hylaeus and Pholus; [you slew] the Cretan monster and the huge Nemean lion under his rock. The pools of the [river] Styx trembled at you, as did the guardian of Orcus lying on half-eaten bones in his bloody cave;</i></p>	<p><i>under king Eurystheus</i></p>

Latin		English	Literal Translation
<p>nec te ullae facies, non terruit ipse Typhoeus, arduus arma tenens; non te rationis egentem Lernaeus turba capitum circumstetit anguis.</p> <p>salve, vera Iovis proles, decus addite divis, et nos et tua dexter adi <u>pede</u> sacra <u>secundo</u>.”</p>	<p>20</p>	<p><i>no appearance has ever frightened you, not towering Typhoeus himself bearing his weapons, nor did you lose your reason in fear when the Lernaean hydra circled around you with its crowd of heads.</i></p> <p><i>Greetings, true son of Jupiter, an added glory to the gods, approach both us in a fitting way and your sacred rites with <u>your favourable presence</u>.</i></p>	<p><u>on fortunate foot.</u></p>
<p>talia carminibus celebrant; super omnia Caci speluncam adiciunt spirantemque ignibus ipsum. consonat omne nemus strepitu collesque resultant.</p>	<p>25</p>	<p><i>They celebrated such deeds in songs; above all, they included [in their songs] the cave of Cacus and he himself breathing fire. The whole grove rang out with the sound and the hills re-echoed it.</i></p>	

I (lines 8.306 – 336)

After the divine rites were performed, everyone returned to the city. The king weighed down by age, kept Aeneas and his son beside him and shortened the journey with varied conversation. Aeneas was amazed, constantly looking around, taking in the places, and joyfully asking questions to hear about the history of the place. Then, king 5
Evander, the founder of the citadel of Rome said: “These woods were once inhabited by native fauns and nymphs and a race of men born from the hard wood of oak trees, who had neither established customs nor civilisation, nor did they know how to yoke bulls or gather wealth or look after what they had gathered; but fruit trees and 10
the harsh diet of the hunt sustained them. Then it was that Saturn first came down from heavenly Olympus, fleeing the weapons of Jupiter, an exile from his lost kingdom. He gathered from the high mountains this untamed and scattered people, gave them laws, and decided that the place should be called Latium, because he had lain 15
hidden safely within its borders. Men call this the Golden Age for he ruled his people kindly and in peace, until gradually, a worse and basely coloured age took its place along with the madness of war and the desire for possessions. Then bands of Ausonians and Sicanian tribes arrived, and the land of Saturn changed its name 20
many times. After that there were kings, and Thybris, harsh and huge in size, after whom we Italians named the river Tiber, and the old

river Albula lost its name. I had been driven from my homeland and was seeking the furthest reaches of the ocean when all powerful Fortune and Fate which no one can escape, set me in this place 25 driven by fearsome warnings from my mother the nymph, Carmentis and the authority of the god, Apollo.”