Eduqas GCSE Latin

Support Materials for Component 3A: Latin Literature (Narratives)

Virgil, Hercules and Cacus

For examination in 2026 and 2027

Acknowledgements

page 21 - Statue of Hercules and Cacus By Baccio Bandinelli in the Piazza della Signoria, Florence - Alamy (ID:KM3X2H)

page 22 - Map of Rome, showing the Aventine Hill and Forum Boarium - adapted from Wikimedia Commons by the WJEC for the purposes of this booklet

HERCULES AND CACUS

VIRGIL *AENEID* 8, 152-336

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

A note on the use of these resources

The notes and commentaries presented here have been designed to support both teachers in preparing their students for Eduqas GCSE Latin, component 3A, and potentially the students themselves during their initial reading and subsequent revision. The extent to which these notes are made available to the students is left to the individual preference of the teacher: there is no expectation that all or even some of these notes need to be learned by students. The examination requires no knowledge outside the text except when it is needed in order to understand the text.

The notes will provide help with linguistic complexities, which should be of particular assistance to those teachers with limited experience of Latin. Students may also find such notes helpful, though they will not be required to comment in the examination on matters of syntax or grammar, unless they are relevant to the discussion of a particular stylistic feature that the student may choose to comment upon. If an examination asks for discussion of the language of a piece of Latin, there is no expectation that an answer will include comments on syntax, but rather choice of words and word order, along with any wordplay.

The notes will also cover contextual matters, which are considered helpful for the development of a full understanding of Virgil's references to people, places and events that he himself does not immediately contextualise.

Finally, the notes will mention important stylistic features, since the examination will test students' ability to handle these in a meaningful way. It is important to point out that there will be no attempt to include every instance of alliteration or other minor stylistic devices; the expectation is that students will be encouraged to identify and evaluate these for themselves as they encounter them during their reading.

The notes for each section will conclude with a series of questions on context and style, which may be used or ignored by the teacher. Their aim is to test the student's understanding and appreciation of what has been read, while at the same time giving practice in handling the sort of questions that will be encountered in the examination.

Virgil: his life and works

Publius Vergilius Maro, or Virgil as we now call him, was born on a farm near Mantua in Cisalpine Gaul (now Northern Italy) on October 15th, 70 BC. Although he probably came from a poor background (his father was either a farm labourer or a potter), he was provided with a full education, firstly in the North of Italy and then in Rome. There he befriended many leading figures, which later proved to be helpful to his career and prosperity. He was driven by poor health and a preference for country life back to his father's farm. Unlike many educated Roman male citizens, he did not pursue a public career in the army, politics or law courts, preferring to focus on poetry.

His first poems were the *Eclogues*, ten pastoral poems written over the course of five years at Mantua and published in 37 BC. It was during the period of their composition (41 BC) that his family was dispossessed of their farm by the authorities in Rome who needed land to settle army veterans. As a result, Virgil moved to Campania (in the south of Italy), where he spent most of the rest of his life in properties that he owned, thanks to support of sponsors, including Octavian, the future emperor Augustus.

From 37 to 30 BCE Virgil occupied himself with composing the *Georgics*, a didactic poem in four books providing instruction in good farming techniques. Averaging only one line of composition a day, he ensured that the poem was perfectly constructed. He dedicated this poem to Maecenas, the close friend of Octavian, whose patronage he enjoyed from then on.

Virgil devoted the rest of his life to composing what most have considered to be his greatest poem, the *Aeneid.* The emperor Augustus (as Octavian called himself from 27 BC onward) certainly supported him in this project and may well have commissioned the work. When the *Aeneid* was more or less complete, Virgil sailed to the East, intending to visit some of the places that featured in his poem, but fell ill with a fever and cut short his travels, returning to Brundisium, in the heel of Italy, where he died. He had intended to spend the next three years revising the work, and so, in the state he left it, it was largely unrevised. So dissatisfied was he with a work that, in his own estimation, fell short of the high standards he had maintained in his earlier writings that he left instructions in his will for the manuscript of the *Aeneid* to be destroyed; Augustus, however, who had already been impressed by the extracts he had insisted Virgil read to him, overrode the will and saw to the publication of the poem.

The *Aeneid* in context

Virgil's ambition was to compose an epic poem recounting the fall of Troy at the end of the Trojan War (traditionally ascribed to 1184 BC though, if it happened at all, probably occurred many years before that); this would provide the impetus and motivation for Aeneas, the hero of the *Aeneid*, to lead all the survivors that he could muster to take to the seas in search of a new home; eventually, after several false hopes, the Trojans settled in Italy, close to the site of the future Rome, where they were forced to fight a bitter war to overcome local opposition to their settlement.

Virgil's model for this immense undertaking was the two epic poems of Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, composed orally probably in the 8th century BC. These two works formed the corner stone and springboard for all subsequent Greek literature, providing a sort of foundation myth for their culture. Homer's works retained their fame down through the centuries, being read and enjoyed by the Romans of Virgil's day. In one respect, therefore, Virgil was drawing on a well-established literary genre, together with an already highly evolved mythology; in another respect, however, he was taking a huge risk by composing a Latin epic that everyone would inevitably compare with the highly-acclaimed Greek ones of Homer. Because it was unrevised at his death, he must have considered it inevitably inferior and so deserving only of destruction.

Even in his lifetime, Virgil was held in awe by his fellow-citizens, and this reputation, attached to all three works and not just the *Aeneid*, lived on after his death. Many then and since have attempted to compare the *Aeneid* with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, often attempting to declare one poet better than the other. But the poets lived at different times, with different cultures, world view and linguistic traditions: temporally it would be like trying to compare Chaucer with Seamus Heaney. Homer's epics focus on the exploits of heroes, pursuing a simple storyline and characterisation. The *Aeneid*, while also focusing on the exploits of its hero, Aeneas, also pursues other, deeper themes, while portraying the characters as much more complex than those of Homer.

One major difference is the powerful ideal of *virtus* that underpins Aeneas' thoughts and actions throughout the *Aeneid*. Simply translating this word as 'virtue' loses much of its meaning. As well as moral goodness, it involves dutifulness towards all those to whom one has a burden of responsibility: the gods, of course, but also family, fellow-countrypeople, homeland and fate. It is this weight of responsibilities that defines Aeneas and promotes him above and beyond the heroes of Homer, whose main ambition, reflecting the Golden Age of legend in which they were located, was to achieve personal glory.

Another difference between the epics is that of patriotism. Although we think of Homer's main characters as Greeks, the idea of Greek nationhood was not to be applicable for several centuries after his death. The chief characters identified themselves with the cities or districts they ruled, which happened to share, more or less, the same language and gods; they were bound, not by ties of shared nationality, but by the oath they had sworn to rescue Helen if the need arose. Virgil by contrast saw Aeneas as the founding father of Rome, thereby endowing the city and its growing empire with a glorious origin, building to an even more illustrious present under the rule of Augustus. As Virgil saw it, Aeneas was the son of a goddess (Venus), and Augustus was the son of a god (Julius Caesar, deified after his assassination), thus providing a sort of ring-composition to the history of Rome. It was the constant reminding of the great future that would depend on his achieving success in his quest to found a new Troy that spurred Aeneas on to new efforts every time his strength of purpose weakened.

The design of the *Aeneid*

Virgil's basic plan was to link two Golden Ages: that of pre-classical Greece with the one he devised for the Augustan Age. Whilst Aeneas was the key link in this chain, another was his son, Ascanius, whom Virgil also called Iulus (where the I is consonantal, equivalent to Julus). It was a small step from that to suggest that the Julian *gens* (clan or family) traced its origin back to Iulus and so through Aeneas to the goddess Venus. Chief among the members of the Julian *gens* were Julius Caesar and his adopted son, Augustus (whose full name following his adoption was Gaius Iulius Caesar Octavianus). In this way Virgil could claim for the emperor a divine origin firmly grounded in the Greek Golden Age.

To overcome the chronological gap between Aeneas and the founding of Rome by Romulus (some four hundred years), Virgil decided to make Iulus the first king of a newly-founded city, Alba Longa (situated about 12 miles to the south-east of Rome). There Iulus' descendants would reign as kings until the last in the line, Romulus and Remus, left to found Rome.

The first six books of the *Aeneid* are devoted to the journey of Aeneas and his people westwards from Troy, in search of a new home. They called at various places along the way, several times in fact wrongly imagining they had found their promised land; each time prophecies directed them to move on and gave them more clues about their target destination. It is easy to see that this first

half of the poem is modelled closely on Homer's *Odyssey*, in which the Greek hero Odysseus, fresh from the capture of Troy, tries to sail home, undergoing numerous adventures along the way, including calling at some of the same places Aeneas and his people do.

The second half of the *Aeneid* is set mainly near the estuary of the Tiber, the river that flows through the heart of Rome. Here the Trojans, hoping to establish a new city for themselves, build a fortified camp, but incur the hostility of the local inhabitants, the Latins, who for various reasons decide to declare war on the immigrants. This war and its related activities take up Books VII-XII. Again it is clear that this half is modelled on Homer's *Iliad*, the theme of which is the battles that followed the breakdown of relations between the Greek champion, Achilles, and the commander of the Greek army, Agamemnon, together with the consequences of this rupture.

The Trojans quickly set about finding allies to support them; Aeneas first goes to visit Evander, the leader of a settlement occupying the site of the future Rome. Evander is delighted to help the newcomers, and sends his son, Pallas, at the head of a small army, to fight alongside the Trojans. Evander also advises Aeneas to call upon the Etruscans, who live to the north of the Tiber: they are enemies of the Latins, who inhabit lands to the south of the river. The Latins in turn gain support from other local peoples. The war that consequently breaks out brings together virtually all the inhabitants of the western side of Central Italy. At the very end of Book 12, Aeneas defeats the enemy leader, Turnus, and in a fit of anger kills him.

Book 8

In Book 8 the Trojans face a deadly war forced upon them by the Latins and their allies, chief among whom are the Rutuli, led by Turnus. Aeneas realises that his small band of Trojans will struggle to survive against superior numbers. As he wonders how he can find allies, Tiburinus, the god of the river Tiber, advises him to sail upriver to the city of Pallanteum, built on the Palatine Hill, which will in centuries to come be at the very heart of the city of Rome. There he has no difficulty persuading the king, Evander, to lend him an army under the command of his son, Pallas. Evander takes Aeneas on a guided tour of his city, pointing out places of interest; these are the very places that, unknown to the two men, will feature most prominently in Rome's subsequent history. The first feature Evander points out is a rocky crag on the neighbouring Aventine Hill, in which there was once a cave occupied by the monster Cacus. Interestingly the name Cacus (from the Greek kakos), means 'Bad', in contrast to Evander, whose Greek name means 'Good man'. Hercules, who happened to pass through the area, killed the monster and so became the object of worship for Evander and his people. Meanwhile Venus has a new shield made for her son by the god Vulcan. Aeneas admires the decoration on the shield, which contains many scenes of significant events from the future history of Rome. In this book, therefore, there are two subtexts: the glorification of Rome's principal monuments, intended to invoke nationalistic pride in the reader; and the portrayal of key moments in Rome's rise to prominence culminating in the triumph of Octavian at the battle of Actium, designed both to impress Aeneas with the glorious future that it was his duty and his destiny to initiate, and at the same time to present the emperor Augustus as the climax of Roman history.

The verse form: metre

Although students at GCSE level are not expected to know anything about metre, teachers may find it useful to give a brief overview of the topic, which adds another dimension to the reading of the poem.

Every line of the *Aeneid* has the same basic rhythm, common to all Greek and Roman epic poetry. This rhythm, or metre, is called the dactylic hexameter: each line consists of 6 ‘feet’, each of which is made up of two long syllables (called a spondee) or one long and two short syllables, called a dactyl); the exception to this is the last foot, which has only two syllables. Each syllable’s length is determined by its vowel. This may be long or short by nature, or by position: if followed by two or more consonants, it is treated as long (with certain exceptions). A vowel or vowel + m at the end of a word elides before a vowel at the start of the next word. A natural pause, called a caesura, occurs in the middle of every line, usually in the third foot.

It is the various combinations of dactyls and spondees that gives the lines variation. A majority of dactyls in a line often indicates speed or excitement, while a majority of spondees suggests slowness or solemnity.

The above rules are very simplified; if further detail is required, please refer to the bibliography for suggesed reading. The following two lines have been scanned to show their rhythm. The first (Passage C line 1) is almost entirely made up of spondees, marking the solemnity and awe in Evander’s opening words:

– – | – – | – || – | – – | – ◡ ◡ | – ◡

iam primum saxis suspens(am) hanc aspice rupem

The second example contains all dactyls, marking the speedy arrival of Hercules (line 13):

– ◡ ◡ | – ◡ ◡ | – ◡ ◡ | – || ◡ ◡ | – ◡ ◡ | – ◡

tergemini nece Geryonae spoliisque superbus

Virgil's style

Since the examination will contain questions that require candidates to identify and evaluate stylistic features, it is important that students be shown how to handle such questions from the outset.

Perhaps the most basic stylistic feature is the **choice of vocabulary**. Many Latin words are wholly or predominantly found in verse and are often more colourful or freer in meaning and use than their prose counterparts. When investigating a sentence or passage of Virgil, therefore, it is always worth considering his choice of certain words: are they more graphic, more intense, more suggestive than the possible alternatives?

The next issue to be considered is **word order**: where in the line Virgil places the key words: generally the beginning and end of the line are the places for key ideas. The degree of emphasis may be increased by the use of **enjambement** (running a phrase or sentence over into the next line). Also, by placing words next to each other, emphasis may be enhanced through the use of **alliteration**, **assonance** and, more rarely, **antithesis**. Another type of word placement is the **chiasmus**, where two parallel phrases have their order inverted (e.g. noun - adjective - adjective - noun); this links the two phrases more closely. Very commonly found is **hyperbaton**: the mixing up of phrases in a line; often this is no more than normal verse word order, but sometimes it reflects confusion or excitement.

Thirdly, figurative use of language has a large role to play, of which the most obvious examples are **metaphor** and **simile** (Virgil adopts Homer's frequent use of the extended simile). Related to metaphor are **metonymy** and **synecdoche**, which use a related word to stand for another.

Definitions of the above terms (and many others) may be found easily online. The commentary that follows will point out significant examples of each of these when they occur, but the listing will not be exhaustive: it is hoped that students will learn to identify common features for themselves. Students should also be reminded that the simple identification of a stylistc feature is not sufficient on its own: there needs also to be discussion of the purpose or effect of the feature.

Further reading

K. Quinn *Virgil's Aeneid*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968
W.A. Camps *An Introduction to Virgil,* OUP 1969
K. W. Gransden, *Virgil: The Aeneid* Cambridge 1990
W. S. Anderson and L. N. Quartarone *Approaches to Teaching Vergil's Aeneid,* New York 2002
J.Farrell and M. C. J. Putnam, eds. *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and Its Tradition* (*Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World*) Chichester 2010
S. E. Winbolt, *The Latin Hexameter*, Blackie and Son Limited, 1906
D. S. Raven, *Latin Metre: an Introduction*, Faber and Faber, 1965

Notes

Passage A

‘Aeneas finished speaking’: Aeneas has just explained in great detail how he and Evander are blood relatives, albeit distant. By claiming this connection he is hoping to earn the guest-friendship of Evander and so an obligation of mutual support. He tells Evander how they share the same enemies and so would benefit from joining forces.

‘The words of your father’: Aeneas’ father was Anchises, who died after the Trojan survivors left Troy.

‘Priam, the son of Laomedon’: Priam was the king of Troy who withstood the ten-year siege by the Greeks before being slain after the capture of the city. Laomedon was Priam’s predecessor as king.

‘The kingdom of Salamis’: Salamis was an island off the coast of Attica in Southern Greece.

‘Hesione’: Hesione had married Telamon, the king of Salamis. Their children were Ajax and Teucer, who were among the most successful Greek warriors in the Trojan War. Such intermarriage between Trojans and Greeks could not prevent the war.

‘The cold realm of Arcadia’: Arcadia was a very moutainous region of the central Peloponnese (Southern Greece), where the climate in the higher parts was cooler than in the lower areas. Evander himself lived in Arcadia before leaving to found the colony on the site of Rome. This explains how he came to see the visiting Trojans.

‘Pheneus’: a city or fortress in Arcadia.

‘Lycian arrows’: The Lycians were famous archers; they lived in the South-Western corner of Asia Minor and were allied to the Trojans.

‘Pallas’: it is his son, Pallas, that Evander will send to accompany Aeneas back to his encampment, at the head of a small army.

‘Has been joined in a treaty’: we must imagine Evander shaking Aeneas’ hand as he says these words. A handshake was used to seal agreements, then as now.

‘Annual sacres rites’: the annual festival was in honour of Hercules, as becomes clear later. In Virgil’s own time Hercules’ feast day was on the 12th August. By introducing the rite at this point, he is claiming that the worship of Hercules as a god could be traced back a thousand years.

Questions

1. Basing your answer on this passage, how would you describe Evander’s personality?

2. Why did he welcome Aeneas so readily?

Passage B

‘That had been removed’: Evander had prepared the banquet in honour of Hercules and was about to begin the libations and feasting when Aeneas’ ship appeared. Alarmed in case the people on the ship were hostile, Evander had ordered the feast to be suspended.

‘Couch, throne’: presumably the couch takes the form of a throne. While the rest sit on the grass, Aeneas is honoured with a special seat.

‘Hand-picked young men’: this coupling of words is a favourite of Virgil: young men are nearly always specially chosen to do a job.

‘The gift of Ceres’: Ceres (Demeter in Greek mythology) was the goddess of corn.

‘Bacchus’ wine’: Bacchus (Dionysus in Greek mythology) was the god of wine.

‘Sacrificial entrails’: either the animal they feasted on was of an age suitable for sacrificing to the gods (i.e. five years old), or these entrails had been burnt on the altar before being served to the Trojans.

‘Such a great divine spirit’: i.e. Hercules. He is divine because he was raised to the status of a god after his death.

‘Empty superstition’: it is possible that here Virgil is passing comment on the practice, current in his own day, of introducing the worship of foreign gods (for example Isis and Cybele). These foreign cults proved popular with the masses and with the many migrants who flocked to Rome from the provinces but displeased the more conservative nobility. The cult of Hercules, who was a Greek hero then god (called Heracles in Greek), might also have been criticised as foreign, but here Evander claims that Hercules had earned his place in the pantheon because of his deliverance of Evander’s people from the evil depredations of the monster Cacus, as he goes on to explain.

Questions

1. What can we learn from this passage about sacrifices and festivals?

2. How clear is Virgil’s description?

Passage C

1 Evander now begins the story of the monster Cacus and Hercules. One purpose of this is to account for the origin of the worhip of Hercules in Rome. **suspensam saxis ... rupem:** ‘cliff raised over the rocks’, i.e. ‘cliff that rises up above the rocks’.

2-3 **ut:** ‘how’. **disiectae:** supply *sunt*; the boulders have been torn from the cliff. **procul:** i.e. far from the cliff. **montis ... domus:** descriptive genitive: ‘a home of a mountain’, i.e. ‘a mountain home’, that is, a cave. **scopuli:** i.e. ‘falling rocks’. **traxere:** an alternative form of *traxerunt*: ‘have dragged’, i.e. ‘have caused as they fell’.

4 **hic:** ‘here’. **fuit:** ‘there was (and is no more)’. **vasto summota recessu:** lit. ‘removed in a huge recess’, i.e. ‘reaching back into a huge space’.

5-6 **quam:** to be taken first; the antecedent is *spelunca*. **semihominis Caci facies dira:** 'the dreadful form of the half-human Cacus', a poetic way of saying 'Cacus of dreadful, half-human shape'. **inaccessam:** this agrees with *quam*, i.e. the cave. **radiis:** ablative of instrument.

6-8 **recenti caede:** causal ablative. **foribus ... superbis:** probably dative dependent on the compound verb: 'the proud doorway (of the cave)'; this is an example of hypallage (the transfer of an adjective from the noun it naturally belongs with to another), in that it is Cacus who was proud (i.e. arrogant), not his doorway; Virgil imagines the doorway being proud to bear the trophies of his crimes. **ora ... tristi ... pallida tabo:** this is an example of hyperbaton; **virum:** an alternative form of *virorum.* **tristi ... tabo:** probably qualifies *pallida*: 'pale from the sad decay'.

9 **huic monstro:** dative of person concerned; translate as if genitive. **Volcanus:** the Roman god of fire (Hephaestus in Greek).

9-10 **illius:** i.e. of Vulcan; the word is emphatic because it begins the clause, and so should be translated not as 'his flames' but 'his were the flames that'. It was a poetic tradition to associate natural and man-made phenomena with the deity thought responsible for them. **atros ... ignes:** the flames were 'black' because they were accompanied by black smoke. **magna se mole ferebat:** ablative of manner: 'he carried himself with great bulk', i.e. 'he moved his great bulk around'.

11-12 The order is *aetas aliquando attulit et nobis optantibus auxilium adventumque dei*. **et nobis:** 'even to us'. **optantibus:** 'wishing (for help)', i.e. 'in answer to our prayers'. **aetas:** 'time', i.e. 'the passage of time'. **dei:** the god in question is Hercules, as soon made clear. Note the strong assonance of *a*, suggesting high emotion.

12-14 **maximus ultor:** 'the greatest avenger'; Hercules is called this because he was portrayed in legend as the greatest righter of human wrongs. **tergemini Geryonae:** Geryon was a three-bodied monster who lived in Spain. As his tenth labour, Hercules had been ordered to fetch Geryon's cattle, and to do this he had to kill Geryon. Hercules had to drive the cattle all the way across Europe, calling at Pallanteum on his way to Greece. **nece, spoliisque:** dependent on *superbus*: 'proudly returning from the killing ... and with the spoils' (causal ablatives). **Alcides aderat:** Alceus was Hercules' grandfather; note the enjambement which, together with the delay in naming the *ultor*, gives tremendous emphasis to the name.

14-15 **hac:** supply *via*: '(by) this way'. **ingentes:** qualifies *tauros*; note the enjambement again. **vallemque boves amnemque tenebant:** 'and the cattle were occupying the valley and the river', that is, the low ground at the foot of the Palatine Hill along the river Tiber. In Virgil's day this land was the Forum Boarium, or Cattle Market, where there was also situated the Ara Maxima, established for the worhip of Hercules.

16-17 **furiis ... mens effera:** Cacus' mind was 'savage with frenzy' (causal ablative). **ne quid:** 'lest anything', introducing a purpose clause. **inausum aut intractatum:** these two adjectives qualify *quid.* **scelerisve dolive:** partitive genitives dependent on *quid*: '(lest anything) either of crime or of trickery', i.e. 'lest any crime or trickery'; the repetition of *-ve* is an example of polysyndeton (more common with *et* or *-que*), which has the effect of linking the two nouns more closely. **fuisset:** 'might prove to have been'.

18-19 **stabulis:** either Hercules had fenced off the ground to create an enclosure, or the word simply refers to the pasture. **praestanti corpore:** ablative of description: '(bulls) of outstanding physical condition'. **forma superante:** this means the same as *praestanti corpore*.

20-22 **ne qua ... vestigia:** ‘lest any tracks’. **forent:** an alternative to *essent.* **pedibus ... rectis:** ‘with the feet pointing the right way’, i.e. towards the cave. **cauda:** ‘by the tail(s)’. **tractos:** agrees with *hos*. **versisque viarum indiciis:** ‘the signs of their path having been reversed’. Cacus tried to fool Hercules by dragging the cattle backwards into his cave, so that no tracks would appear to lead into the cave. **raptos:** this also agrees with *hos*, which in turn is the object of *occultabat*. **saxo ... opaco:** local ablative, showing where Cacus was keeping the cattle hidden; notice how the verb is framed by *saxo... opaco*, reflecting the reality; this is a common technique of Virgil’s.

23 **quaerenti:** supply *cuiquam*: ‘to anyone searching’, i.e. ‘to the eyes of anyone searching’. **ferebant:** ‘led’. Note the heavily spondaic rhythm.

Questions

1. How is the cave described? Is it easy to imagine its size, location and appearance?

2. How successfully does Virgil portray the character and appearance of Cacus?

3. How does Virgil emphasise the cunning of Cacus?

Passage D

1-2 **stabulis:** ablative of separation: ‘from the pasture’. **saturata ... armenta:** ‘his cattle when they had eaten their fill’.

3-4 **discessu:** ‘on their departure’, ablative of time. **mugire, impleri, relinqui:** historic infinitives, translatable as ‘began to...’. Virgil has made the last two passive to give variety of expression, even though logically it was the cattle that did all three actions. **querelis:** instrumental ablative dependent on *impleri.* **clamore:** ‘with clamour’, i.e. ‘amidst lowing’, ablative of manner. Note the position of *omni ... nemus*, enclosing *querelis impleri*, reflecting reality (just like Passage C, line 22).

5-6 **reddidit ... vocem:** ‘gave back a voice’, i.e. ‘lowed in response’. **sub:** ‘deep inside’. **Caci spem fefellit:** ‘deceived the hope of Cacus’, i.e. ‘frustrated Cacus’ intentions’, that is, to keep the stolen cattle secret. **custodita:** ‘having been guarded’, i.e. ‘although it had been guarded’. Note the positions of the three verbs, at the beginning and end of the lines, giving them maximum emphasis.

7-8 **hic:** ‘hereupon’. **furiis, felle, dolor:** all mean more or less the same thing, thus piling anger upon anger. **furiis:** ‘in his fury’, possibly an instrumental ablative alongside *felle*. **exarserat:** the pluperfect, followed by the historic present (*rapit*), is used to indicate a rapid sequence of events. **felle:** bile, particularly yellow bile, was one of the four ‘humours’ or vital fluids that were believed in antiquity to govern moods; yellow bile was thought to cause anger.

8-9 **rapit:** the first of a series of historic presents, used by both poets and prose writers to present key narratives as if happening before the reader’s eyes; they should be translated as normal past tenses. **nodisque gravatum robur:** ‘and his oak club heavy with knots’, i.e. ‘his heavily-knotted oak club’. Hercules famously wielded a massive wooden club in all his exploits; the knots at one end, where in life branches had split off from a main stem, made that end thicker and heavier and so a more effective weapon. **cursu:** ‘at a run’. (ablative of manner or instrument (lit. ‘by running’)). **ardua:** the adjective is used as a neuter plural noun: ‘the steep slopes’.

10-11 The rhythm of 10 is heavily spondaic: for the first time Cacus froze in fear. **nostri ... videre:** ‘our people saw’; *videre* = *viderunt*; **oculis:** ablative of respect: to be taken with *turbatum*: ‘agitated in (respect of) his eyes’, i.e. ‘showing agitation in his eyes’; *oculis* has been criticised as weak, which is why many scholars prefer the reading of most manuscripts: *oculi* (‘our eyes’).

11-12 **ocior Euro:** ‘swifter than the East wind’; the East wind is not a predominant wind in Italy, but can bring cold weather from Eastern Europe; possibly Virgil chose it because it fitted the metre. **petit, pedibus:** alliteration and assonance, accompanied by asyndeton, emphasise the rapidity of Cacus’ actions. **pedibus timor addidit alas:** a neat metaphor.

13-14 **ut:** ‘when’. **sese:** an alternative for *se.* **ruptisque catenis:** ‘and by breaking the chains’ (ablative absolute); apparently Cacus had devised a contraption for blocking the entrance to his cave: a boulder raised and lowered by chains, like a mediaeval portcullis; in his haste to hide, he broke the chains instead of running them slowly through his hands.

14-15 **quod:** to be taken first: ‘which’, referring to *saxum*. **ferro ... et arte paterna:** ‘by means of iron and his father’s skill’, i.e. ‘with his father’s skill with iron’, a sort of hendiadys; his father, Vulcan, was also the blacksmith god; either Vulcan had made the chains, or Cacus had learned the skill from his father. **fultos ... emuniit ... postes:** ‘fortified the secured door posts’, i.e. ‘secured and fortified the entrance’; Virgil often uses *postes* to mean the whole doorway, an example of synecdoche. **emuniit:** the subject is *quod*, i.e. the *saxum*.

16 **ecce:** Evander tells Aeneas to ‘look’, as if the events were unfolding before their eyes. **furens animis:** ‘raging with fury’. **aderat:** ‘was right there’. **Tirynthius:** Hercules had grown up in Tiryns, near Mycenae in Greece.

16-18 **omnemque:** the final syllable elides before the vowel at the start of the next line; it is called a hypermetric syllable; it has the effect of making the strongly dactylic line appear even faster (in constrast with 18, which is heavily spondaic). **ora ferebat:** ‘cast his eyes’. **dentibus:** redundant as *infrendens* includes the concept; the instrumental ablative is best translated as if it were the object.

18-20 **ter ... ter... ter:** this particular anaphora is one of Virgil’s favourites. **fervidus ira:** ‘seething with anger’. **Aventini montem:** the Aventine Hill is one of the seven hills of Rome and was the traditional site of Cacus’ cave. **saxea ... limina:** i.e. the giant boulder Cacus had lowered. **valle:** local ablative. **lustrat, temptat, resedit:** the two historic presents are followed by a perfect, the idea being that his attempts continued over some time, but his giving up in defeat was a single act (though of course repeated *ter*).

Questions

1. How does Virgil contrast Hercules with Cacus in this passage?

2. Can you describe the entrance of the cave?

3. Can you find three examples of alliteration in this passage and then evaluate their function?

Passage E

‘Carrion birds’: probably these were either vultures, kites or ravens.

‘Towards the river on the left’: the pinnacle of rock leaned over towards the river; Hercules pushed it in that direction.

‘The vast heavens thundered’: when the rock fell, it would have made an almighty crash.

‘The riverbanks leapt apart’: when the rock fell into the river, it would have sent waves across the river, flooding the banks.

‘The terrified river flowed backwards’: the falling rock would have also sent a wave back up the river. The river is personified, because in Greek and Latin mythology all rivers were identified with gods, in this case Tiberinus.

‘Huge cave ... palace ... caverns deep within’: Virgil uses hyperbole to exaggerate the size of Cacus’ lair, thereby making Hercules’ achievement in taking the roof off all the more astonishing.

‘It was as if ... inflicted on them’: the rest of this passage takes the form of an extended simile, a stylistic feature that Virgil adopted from Homer. He compares Cacus’ cave with the underworld, the home of all dead souls. This also serves to exaggerate the size of the cave and Hercules’ achievement.

‘Pale kingdoms’: plural for singular; the realm of the dead is ‘pale’ because the souls of the dead are pale shadows of their former living bodies.

‘Hateful to the gods’: the god of the underworld (Pluto or Dis, in Greek Hades), though the brother of Jupiter, was hated by mortals and this hatred was projected onto the other gods; Virgil borrows the idea from Homer.

‘A huge abyss could be seen’: this still refers to the underworld simile.

‘The dead panicked’: although in Book 6 Virgil describes the underworld as having its own sun, we must suppose that this gave weaker light than that of the upper world.

Questions

1. Can you describe the ‘sharp point of rock’ and its relationship to Cacus’ cave?

2. How does Virgil use hyperbole in this passage?

3. How effective is the extended simile?

Passage F

1-3 **deprensum:** supply *Cacum*, as object of *premit*, of which the subject is *Alcides*. **insperata ... luce:** ablative of instrument: 'by' or more naturally 'in' the unexpected light. **cavo saxo:** local ablative. **inclusum:** to be taken with *Cacum*, as is *rudentem.* **insueta rudentem:** 'roaring unaccustomed things', and so 'bellowing strangely'; the verb is usually used of animals. **premit:** the first of many historic presents. Note that line 1 is heavily spondaic.

3-4 **omnia ... arma:** 'all sorts of weapons'. **advocat:** 'he summoned to his aid'. **molaribus:** lit. 'with mill-stones', and so 'with rocks the size of mill-stones'.

5-7 **ille:** i.e. Cacus, the subject of *evomit*. **super:** this is an abbreviation for *superest*: 'remains'. **pericli:** 'from danger' (an objective genitive). **faucibus:** 'from his throat'. **ingentem fumum:** 'a huge cloud of smoke'. **dictu:** the rare second supine, dependent on *mirabile*: 'amazing to relate'. **caligine caeca:** instrumental ablative; the fog is 'blind' in the sense that it causes blindness, and so perhaps 'blinding fog' is more appropriate.

8-9 **prospectum eripiens oculis:** 'removing the ability to see from (Hercules') eyes'; *oculis* is a dative of disadvantage, as frequently with a verb of abstraction. **sub antro:** 'down in the cave'. **commixtis igne tenebris:** ablative absolute: 'mingling darkness with fire', an example of antithesis.

10-12 **non tulit:** supply *haec*: 'did not tolerate this'; note the switch from historic present to perfect, to mark the sudden decisive action. **animis:** 'in his fury' (a sort of local ablative). **ipse:** this simply reinforces *se*, and can be omitted. **qua:** 'where'. **plurimus undam ... agit:** 'most (smoke) produces a wave', and so 'billowed the thickest'. **nebula ... atra:** ablative; note how these two words frame the *ingens specus*, reflecting the image of smoke engulfing the whole cave; note also the assonance, making this a particularly powerful poetic image.

13-15 **hic:** 'here'. **incendia vana vomentem:** 'vomiting useless (flames)', qualifying *Cacum*; note the alliteration, and the antithess of *tenebris incendia*. **in nodum complexus:** 'having embraced him into a knot', and so 'knotting his arms around him'. **inhaerens:** 'maintaining his grip'. **elisos oculos:** lit. '(he strangled) his prised-out eyes'; logically *angit* belongs only with *guttur*, and so *elisos oculos* is generally understood to mean '(he squeezed his throat) until his eyes started from his head'. **siccum sanguine:** 'dry with blood', and so 'drained of blood'; note the sibilance in the line.

16 **foribus ... revulsis:** ablative absolute: 'the doors having been torn off', that is, the boulder that formed the door having been pushed out from the inside.

17-18 **abiuratae rapinae:** 'the theft Cacus had sworn he had not committed'.

18-19 **pedibus:** 'by its feet'. **informe:** Cacus' corpse is 'shapeless' either because Hercules broke his body, or because his body was not human to start with. **protrahitur:** a strong enjambement.

19-21 **nequeunt:** take *corda* as the subject: 'our hearts could not be satisfied'. **tuendo:** 'by looking at'; the overall meaning is that the onlookers could not get enough of observing the dead monster. **saetis:** instrumental ablative. **semiferi:** 'of the half-beast'. **faucibus:** local ablative.

Questions

1. How does Hercules defeat Cacus?

2. How effectively does Virgil use words indicating blackness and darkness in this passage?

3. What makes this an effective account of the battle?

Passage G

‘Generations after him’: according to Greek mythology, Hercules lived three or four generations before Evander; however, in the *Aeneid* they are portrayed as contemporaries. Thus these words lack sense in the mouth of Evander. It is possible that Virgil inserted the comment in his own voice, meaning all the generations down to his own day. As they stand, these words are evidence of the unrevised nature of the *Aeneid.*

‘Potitius, Pinarii’: according to Livy, these two *gentes* were historically associated with the cult of Hercules in Rome. Whether there were actual founders of the cult with these names is unknown, but Virgil imagines a Potitius leading the celebration in Pallanteum (Passage H, line 2).

‘The Greatest Altar’: the *Ara Maxima* stood in the Forum Boarium at the foot of the Palatine Hill. In Virgil’s day this was the ancient site of the worship of Hercules.

‘Young men’: Evander addresses either his own people or those accompanying Aeneas, or both groups together.

‘Such great and praisworthy actions’: it is unclear whether he is referring to the establishment of the altar and worship of Hercules, or Hercules’ defeat of Cacus.

‘Wreathe your hair with leaves’: this was standard practice at religious rites.

‘The god of us all’: Evander assumes that the Trojans either already acknowledged Hercules as a god, or were happy to do so after hearing of his exploit.

‘Hercules’ poplar tree’: according to Greek mythology, Hercules wore a wreath of poplar leaves when he visited the underworld; the tree was considered sacred to him thereafter. Poplar leaves have different colours on each side.

‘A sacred cup’: i.e. one that was kept for libations to the gods.

Questions

1. Why do you think Virgil wrote these lines?

2. What can be learnt about religious rites from these lines?

Passage H

1 **devexo ... Olympo:** dative dependent on *propior*: 'sloping Olympus'; Olympus, the highest mountain in Greece, was the traditional home of the gods; many editors however interpret the two words differently: 'when the sky moved down' (ablative absolute), taking Olympus to mean 'heaven', i.e. the sky. **Vesper:** capitalised to suggest the Evening Star, i.e. the planet Venus, which for half its cycle sets in the West after the sun. **propior fit:** 'came closer'; the whole line is a poetic image, clearly meaning 'it was getting late'; the logic underpinning the words, however, is far from clear.

2 **primusque Potitius:** ie. 'led by Potitius'; this is the character mentioned in Passage G.

3 **pellibus:** instrumental ablative. **in morem:** 'in the traditional way'. **flammas:** here 'torches'.

4-5 **instaurant epulas:** the feast had been interrupted by the arrival of the Trojans (see Passage B). **mensae ... secundae ... dona:** 'the gifts of the second course'; the 'gifts' are the food and drink, which are handed to everyone. The second course in Virgil's day usually comprised wine and dessert. **aras:** the altars probably served also as tables from which to serve the food and wine.

6-7 **Salii:** these were dancing priests (from *salio*, 'I dance'); according to Livy they were established by Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome (following Romulus), to assist in the worship of Mars. Either Virgil chooses to ignore the historical tradition and, for his poetic purposes, imagines that Evander has already brought them into being centuries before the foundation of Rome, or had invented another, earlier version of them to be involved in the cult of Hercules. **ad cantus:** 'for singing', and so 'to sing'. **circum:** here follows its dependent noun (*altaria*). **altaria incensa:** *altaria* is an alternative for *aras*; they are *incensa* because the meat of the sacrificed animals is being cooked on them. **evincti:** qualifies *Salii*. **tempora:** accusative as if *evincti* were an active verb, to be translated either as 'their temples (having been) bound' or 'having bound their temples'; this retained accusative is a favourite idiom of Virgil's, which he borrows from Homer, whose Greek contains a third voice, the middle, which looks like a passive verb but is treated like an active one, the idea being that the subject is doing something to or for himself. **populeis ... ramis:** ablative of instrument; note how the two words enclose the rest of the line, just as the poplar fronds surrounded the priests' temples.

8 **hic ... ille:** both words qualify *chorus*, meaning that the Salii formed two choruses or choirs, one of young and one of old men.

8-9 **laudes Herculeas et facta:** 'Herculean praiseworthy acts and deeds, i.e. 'the praiseworthy deeds of Hercules'; *laudes et facta* can be seen as an example of hendiadys. **ferunt:** 'they celebrate'.

9-10 **ut:** 'how', followed by the subjunctive. **prima novercae monstra:** according to the myth, Jupiter was the real father of Hercules, having disguised himself as Amphitryon, who was supposed to be his father. Juno (Jupiter's wife), out of anger and to gain revenge, sent two serpents to kill the baby Hercules, but the child strangled them both. The two serpents were the first of the many monsters dealt with by Hercules. Note how *monstra* and *angues* (defining the *monstra*) begin and end the line for maximum emphasis.

11-12 **egregias ... urbes:** named in the next line. **idem:** lit. ‘the same man’, and so more naturally ‘he also’. **Troiamque Oechaliamque:** Hercules sacked Troy (several generations before the Trojan War) to punish its king, Laomedon, for failing to give him the reward promised for killing a sea monster that threatened to destroy the city and take Laomedon’s daughter. Oechalia (in Thessaly, Northern Greece) was sacked for a similar reason: its king, Eurytus, promised to give his daughter in marriage to Hercules if the latter beat the king’s sons in an archery contest; Hercules won the contest, but Eurytus refused to hand over his daughter. Note the polysyndeton, tying the two towns closely together.

12-14 **duros mille labores:** hyperbolic, as the actual number of labours was twelve; these are the famous Twelve Labours of Hercules, that formed the core of his myth; they were imposed on him by Juno, who still blamed him for her husband’s infidelity. **rege sub Eurystheo:** Juno forced Hercules to spend ten years as a slave to king Eurystheus of Mycenae, who assigned the labours to him. **fatis Iunonis iniquae:** lit. ‘because of the fates of unfair Juno’, i.e. ‘because of the fate imposed on him by unfair Juno’. **pertulerit:** note the powerful enjambement.

14-16 **tu:** this example of apostrophe shows that Virgil here puts words into the mouths of the Salii as they sing the praises of Hercules. **invicte:** vocative, coming immediately after *tu* to emphasise the fact that Hercules was never beaten throughout the course of his labours. **nubigenas ... bimembres:** named in the next line (parallel to 11 and 12, with similar polysyndeton); the ‘cloud-born creatures of two shapes’ are the mythical centaurs, creatures with the head and torso of a man and the body and legs of a horse; they are ‘cloud-born’ because, according to one version of the myth, Ixion (the father of the race) tried to make love to Juno, who replaced herself with a cloud shaped like her. **Hylaeumque Pholumque:** the killing of these two centaurs was not one of the Twelve Labours; in fact nothing is known of the reasons or occasions when Hercules killed them. **manu:** ‘by hand’ and so ‘with your own hands’, to be taken with *mactas*. **mactas:** present because he killed them and is still venerated as the killer; the verb is given three different objects. **Cresia ... prodigia:** this is the Cretan bull (plural for singular); capturing it was one of the Twelve Labours; the bull was sent by Poseidon to terrorise the land around Knossos on Crete in a fit of rage against the king; it also became the father of the Minotaur. According to the most common version, Hercules did not slay the bull, but carried it on his shoulders back to Eurystheus. **vastum ... leonem:** this is the Nemean lion that was terrorising the land around the city of Nemea (in Southern Greece); killing it was Hercules’ first Labour.

17-18 **tremuere:** an alternative to *tremuerunt*; here the verb, normally intransitive, is used transitively (‘tremble at’), with *te* as its object. **Stygii ... lacus:** ‘the lakes of the Styx’ (probably plural for singular): the Styx, variously referred to by Virgil as a river, a marsh and a lake, was traditionally one of the five rivers of the underworld (three of these, the Styx, Acheron and Cocytus, are apparently interchangeable in the *Aeneid* and other versions of the legends). The last and most hazardous of the Twelve Labours was to descend to the underworld and carry off the monstrous three-headed dog, Cerberus, which acted as gate-keeper to the underworld (*ianitor Orci*). **te ianitor Orci:** supply *tremuit* from earlier in the line; *Orcus* was one of the names of the underworld. **super:** here a preposition governing *ossa semesa*; it is uncertain who the monster’s victims might be, as only disembodied souls got as far as his cave; perhaps Virgil imagines living beings straying into the underworld, though they should have been prevented from crossing the Styx by the ferryman, Charon. **antro ... cruento:** local ablative.

19-20 **ullae facies:** i.e. any monstrous shapes; supply *terruerunt*. **Typhoeus:** he was a giant killed by Jupiter in the battle between the gods and giants; here his name stands for all the giants, one of whom (Antaeus) was actually killed by Hercules, according to the myth. **arduus arma tenens:** the alliteration and assonance give great emphasis to these words; the idea is that he was not only gigantic but also fully armed, doubling the threat he posed.

20-21 **non te rationis egentem:** lit. 'not you lacking good sense (did the serpent surround you)', and so 'you were not lacking good sense when...'; *egeo* takes a genitive. **Lernaeus ... anguis:** the Lernaean 'serpent' was better known as the Lernaean Hydra, a monster with nine heads in the form of fire-breathing serpents, that dwelt in a marsh at Lerna, near Argos in Southern Greece. If one head was cut off, two would grow in its place. Hercules, in his second Labour, killed it with fire. **turba capitum:** 'with its multitude of heads' (instrumental ablative). Notice how once again the key words *Lernaeus anguis* enclose the rest of the line.

22 **vera proles:** no son of a mortal father could have been so successful. **addite:** vocative singular of the perfect passive participle, agreeing with *tu*, supplied as the subject. **decus:** in apposition to the understood *tu*: 'as a glory'. **divis:** dative after *addite*: 'added as a glory to the gods,' and so 'a glorious addition to the gods'.

23 The order for translation is *adi et nos et tua sacra dexter secundo pede*. **adi:** imperative: 'approach', followed by two direct objects linked by *et ... et*. **dexter:** best translated as an adverb, as so often in Latin poetry: 'favourably'. **pede secundo:** 'with favourable foot', repeating the idea of *dexter*: the song of praise ends with a prayer pleading with Hercules to attend the celebration, but only if he comes with favourable intent. It was a standard belief, or at least a hope, that gods attended rites dedicated to them.

24-5 **talia:** such exploits', i.e. 'such were the exploits'. **super omnia:** 'on top of all these exploits'. **Caci speluncam:** '(the tale of) Cacus' cave'. **spirantemque ignibus ipsum:** 'and (the tale of) the man himself, breathing fire'; *ignibus* is instrumental ablative, but best translated as the object. Note the triple alliteration in these lines.

26 **strepitu:** the noise of the singing and celebration.

Questions

1. How many of Hercules' Twelve Labours are mentioned here?

2. Which of the exploits of Hercules mentioned here were not part of his Labours?

3. What do most of Hercules' exploits have in common?

4. What impression of Hercules do you get from the hymn of the Salii?

Passage I

‘Returned to the city’: the celebrations had been taking place in a wooded area outside the city, close to the river.

‘Aeneas was amazed ... taking in the places’: as they made their way into the city and to the palace, Evander pointed out places of interest. To Aeneas, these places were merely of general interest; to the reader of the Aeneid, however, each place described was full of historical significance. In this way Virgil is trying to persuade his contemporaries that the grand buildings and other landmarks of Rome could have their origins traced back to the days of Aeneas and the Golden Age of the heroes; Rome was therefore a city with a glorious past and so a present worth fighting to preserve. A further motive of Virgil in describing these landmarks is to fire Aeneas with a renewed enthusiasm for his destined task of founding a new city for his people.

‘The citadel of Rome’: i.e. Pallanteum, built on the Palatine Hill, preceding the Capitoline Hill as the citadel of Rome.

‘Fauns and nymphs’: these were male and female demigods of Greek mythology, inhabiting and identifying with natural features such as woods, mountains and streams.

‘Men born from the hard wood of oak trees’: Evander is talking of the age of primitive humans, living before the civilising influence of the gods. He imagines these primitive people as tough as oak wood.

‘Fruit trees and ... the hunt’: they lived as did the hunter-gatherers of the Stone Age.

Saturn: The Romans identified this god with the Greek Cronos, who reigned on Olympus until his son Zeus (Jupiter) dethroned him. The Roman tradition has him fleeing to Latium (the region of Italy including Rome), where he was welcomed and introduced the local peoples to agriculture, initiating a Golden Age. (His name was thought to be derived from *sero*, ’I sow’.)

‘Because he had lain hidden’: Virgil attempts, probably wrongly, to derive the name Latium from *lateo*, ‘I lie hidden’.

‘Basely coloured age’: this was called the Silver Age, where people no longer live in harmony with nature or with each other.

‘Bands of Ausonians’: these were, according to tradition, the aboriginal inhabitants of the southern half of Italy.

‘Sicanian tribes’: aboriginal inhabitants of Sicily. The origins of all the tribes of Central and Southern Italy in what we call the Bronze and Iron Ages are subjects of speculation; evidence from burial customs suggests that most came from the North, but it is possible that there were earlier migrations of people from the South.

‘The land of Saturn changed its name many times’: although the ‘land of Saturn’ was generally thought to comprise just Latium, here Virgil is thinking more broadly: other names for Southern Italy were Oenotria, Ausonia, Hesperia and Italia.

‘There were kings’: the seven kings of Rome, starting with Romulus and ending with Tarquin the Proud.

‘We Italians’: Clearly Evander now identifies himself as a native.

‘Thybris’: an alternative form of Tiber.

‘Albula’: an old name for the Tiber.

‘Fearsome warnings’: the reason for Evander’s enforced departure from his homeland in Greece is unknown (a crime and famine have been suggested). The warning of Evander’s mother parallel that of Aeneas’ mother, Venus; both men were driven to seek a new home.

‘The nymph, Carmentis’: like most of the heroic figures in ancient epic, Evander had a demigod for a parent.

‘The authority of the god, Apollo’: as the god of prophecy, Apollo would have been consulted and his approval sought before the undertaking of any important or perilous journey.

Questions

1. Why would a contemporary reader have found Evander’s words here interesting and reassuring?

2. How much of what Evander says do you think could be factual?

Statue of Hercules and Cacus By Baccio Bandinelli in the Piazza della Signoria, Florence.

Rome, showing the Aventine Hill and Forum Boarium.