

Virgil Extracts 1



Lines 202 -221. Here is the very first passage of your set text extract set out for you to write your translation above and below the words. Don't worry, you are not expected to be able to do it on your own! As we go along I will give you words you have not already met and point out any, that although they might be new, are on the syllabus list.

servatum ex undis Strophadum me litora primum

excipiunt. Strophades Graio stant nomine dictae 210

insulae Ionio in magno, quas dira Celaeno

Harpyiaequae colunt aliae, Phineia postquam

clausa domus mensasque metu liquere priores.

tristius haud illis monstrum, nec saevior ulla

pestis et ira deum Stygiis sese extulit undis. 215

virginei volucrum vultus, foedissima ventris

proluvies uncaeque manus et pallida semper ora fame.

huc ubi delati portus intravimus, ecce

laeta boum passim campis armenta videmus 220

caprigenumque pecus nullo custode per herbas.

Now we will translate this bit by bit. Aeneas and his friends have been driven off course by a storm.

servatum ex undis Strophadum me litora primum excipiunt.

Write the meaning of each word above it as we work through the sentence.

If you don't know where to start with a Latin sentence, go to the end. There is a good chance you will find the verb there. It will tell you what is happening and who is doing the action. So look at *excipiunt*. Yes! This is part of the verb *excipere* “to welcome” or “to rescue”. *Excipiunt* is in the present tense. Aeneas is telling this as though it is happening **now** to make it more vivid. This is called the historic present tense. The *nt* ending tells you the subject is “they” so look for a plural noun in the nominative. The only possibility is *litora* plural of *litus* meaning shore.¹ So the subject of the sentence is “shores”. What shores? *Strophadum* “of the Strophades”. Whom do they welcome? *me*. (Remember the narrator of book 3 of the *Aenid* is Aeneas himself.) When do they welcome him? *Primum*². *Servatum*³ *ex undis* describes Aeneas and you should be able to “guesslate” this if I tell you that *unda* is pictured below (think of “undulate”).



Now have a shot at writing your translation below the words. THEN look at my effort on the next page.

¹ *Litus* is on the syllabus vocabulary list.

² *Primum* is on the syllabus vocabulary list.

³ Part of *servo* on the syllabus list.

“The shores of the Strophades welcome me, saved from the waves, at first.”

Better word order:

“Saved from the waves, the shores of the Strophades welcome me at first,”

Well done if you go something like this as your answer! Don't worry if you don't. Remember this is not you unseen translation exercise. You will not be given anything as hard as this to translate that you have not prepared before. This is why we are doing all this **now**! All you have to do is remember it.

The next sentence is longer and tells us about the Strophades where Aeneas and his friends find themselves. We can break it down:

Strophades Graio stant nomine dictae insulae Ionio in magno,

Unfortunately we can't just go to the end for the **main verb** this time. *Strophades* is the subject. The verb that goes with *Strophades* is *stant*. This is part of the verb *stare* “to stand” which is on the syllabus list. Where do the Strophades islands stand? *In Ionio* [the Ionian sea] *magno*. This leaves us with *Graio nomine dictae* “called by the/a Greek name.”

Try this and THEN look at my attempt on the next page.

“Where the islands called by a Greek name, Strophedes, stand in the great Ionian Sea,”

The Strophades were called the “floating” or “turning” islands (see below for the reasons) and by using *stant* Virgil is explaining that by Aeneas's time the islands were fixed in place in the Ionian Sea. You might translate it “are now fixed”.

quas dira Celaeno Harpyiaequae colunt aliae,

*Aliae*⁴ goes with *Harpyiae*. The main verb is *colunt*; this is part of *colere* “to inhabit, to live”. *Quas* is “where” (remember that *qu* in Latin often gives you an English word beginning “wh”) and *dira* is part of *dirus* which is on the Syllabus vocabulary list. It qualifies *Celaeno*. *Celaeno* is a nominative singular proper noun and *Harpyiae* (Harpies) is nominative plural. These two words are the subject of *colunt*. *Celaeno* is chief of the Harpies. These were horrible creatures, half bird and half maiden whose job was to carry evil doers off to the furies. The illustration on the right shows what they looked like according to a medieval illustrator although he has given them a masculine face!



Try this and THEN look at my attempt on the next page.

4 Part of *Alius* which is on the syllabus vocabulary list.

“Where dreadful Celaeno and the other Harpies live.”

Did you get it? It is not looking good for Aeneas and his crew, is it?!

Phineia postquam clausa domus mensasque metu liquere priores.



The final part of the sentence tells you why and when (*postquam*) the Harpies came to the Strophades. Phineus was a seer who was punished for revealing the future to human beings. His punishment was blindness and also to be tormented by the harpies who stole or defiled his food. To earn his freedom from this punishment Phineus set sail with the Argonauts and with the help of the Boreads, the “wind brothers” the Harpies were chased away to the floating islands. The picture shows the Boreads coming to help Phineus (he is groping blindly in the picture and tapping his way with a stick). It is the pursuit of the Boreads (they are soldiers with wings in the picture) that caused the Harpies to be *metu*.⁵ So now *Phineia domus clausa* to the Harpies. *Que mensas priores* literally, I think, “and the previous tables” i.e. the tables where they used to feed. *Liquere* is “to flee or leave.” This is quite difficult so don't worry if you can't piece it all together. I made it:

When (or perhaps “since”) in fear they left Phineus's closed home and the tables where they used to feed.

The next sentence is shorter:

tristius haud illis monstrum,

nec saevior ullam pestis

et ira deum

Stygiis sese extulit undis.

Go for the end first: *sese extulit undis Stygiis*. *Tulit* is part of *ferre* (see the vocabulary list in the syllabus) and *extulit* means “rose up”. *Sese* makes it reflexive so raised **itself** up. Where from? *undis Stygiis* (“Styx”). The first two lines above say that “no sadder.... than.... nor.... ” rose up...” etc. *Illis* “than they”. *Pestis* is “plague”. Translate *et* “at” in the third line above.

Have a go and THEN look at my attempt on the next page.

⁵ *Metus* is in the syllabus vocabulary list.

“No sadder monster than these nor more savage plague ever raised itself from the waves of the Styx at a god's anger.”

Virgil is picturing an angry deity calling up plagues and horrors from the river Styx in Hades to punish some mortal. The Harpies were the worst! Next a few details of their charming appearance and habits!

virginei volucrum vultus,

foedissima ventris proluviae

uncaequae manus

et pallida semper ora fame.

Volucris is an unusual third declension noun meaning a bird or other flying creature. The other two words are in the syllabus vocabulary list. What **literary device** does Virgil use in this group of words?⁶

You will spot from the *-issima* ending that the next word is a superlative. *Foedis* is “filthy”. It goes with *proluviae* which means “an overflow”. Where does this come from? *Ventris* means “stomach” or “body”.

Then comes something about their hands. *Uncaequae* means “hooked” or “barbed”. So claws or talons?

Lastly their *ora* is *pallida* with *fame* – which is the ablative singular of *fames* “hunger” (related to famine and famish).

Have a shot at this and THEN look at my attempt on the next page. It is not a pretty picture!

⁶ Alliteration. Literary devices are important to notice as you will probably be asked about them. Here is emphasises the horrible description.

“Birds with maiden faces, foulest overflow comes from their stomach and their hands are clawed and their faces always pale with hunger.” Yuk!

However, when Aeneas and his crew first arrive at the Strophades it is not the Harpies that they first encounter but something much more tempting to hungry mariners.



huc ubi delati portus intravimus,

Delati “having been brought/carried”

ecce laeta boum passim campis armenta videmus

boum genitive plural of *bos* “cattle”, *passim* “everywhere” *armenta* “herds”

caprigenumque pecus nullo custode per herbas.

Caprigenum (genitive plural “goats”) *que pecus* (“flock”) *nullo custode per herbas* (accusative plural “grass”).

All the other words are on the vocabulary list in the syllabus so have a shot at this And then look at my attempt over the page.

“When having been carried here we entered the port, behold, we see happy herds of cattle everywhere and flocks of goats unguarded throughout the grasses.”

(These flocks and herds need no guardians any more than flock and herds of the gods would – they belong to the Harpies! Trouble is brewing for Aeneas and his friends.)

You must **learn** the translation of your set passages. By this I do not mean just commit it all to memory. You must be able to remember the translation **when you see the Latin**. The translations that I give are very literal so that you can see how that they are arrived at from the Latin. This means they are not very polished as English.

To help you memorise the translation I recommend you make yourself a set of flashcards. Make one card for each sentence. On one side put the Latin text. On the other put your finished translation. It does not have to be identical to mine but it must be correct! If you are in any doubt you can contact me and ask. Number the cards and put the line number(s) from the poem on the cards too. This will help you keep the cards in order. You can use these cards to test yourself especially if you are working alongside someone else so that you can test each other. If not, it will just have to be your mum! Your helper should hold up the card so that you can see the Latin and they can see the English. You should say the translation and they can check what you say against the back of the card. Later on as you get good at this you may want to shuffle the cards up to test yourself. The numbers will help you get the cards back into order again. There are now on-line flashcards on Quizlet: <https://quizlet.com/gb/617807965/igcse-aeneid-2023-lines-flash-cards/?new> which you can use either directly or printed out.

As you go along doing the Virgil exercises I have noted words that are on the syllabus vocabulary list. Add the words to your vocabulary notebook as necessary.