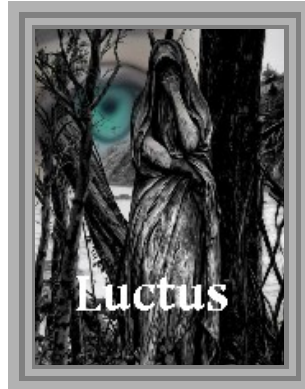


Virgil Extracts 3



vestibulum ante ipsum primisque in faucibus Orci

Luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae,

pallentesque habitant Morbi tristisque Senectus, 275

et Metus et malesuada Fames ac turpis Egestas,

terribiles visu formae, Letumque Labosque;

tum consanguineus Leti Sopor et mala mentis

Gaudia, mortiferumque adverso in limine Bellum,

ferreique Eumenidum thalami et Discordia demens 280

vipereum crinem vittis innexa cruentis.

Aeneas and his guide are now at the very gate of the underworld. This sentence tells us what they find just outside the entrance.

ante (“before” in the sense of “in front of” like an ante-room. Add to your vocabulary notebook)

vestibulum (related to “vestibule”)

ipsum (“itself” This is an adjective or three terminations. Add it to your notebook)

que in (“and at”)

primis (another adjective or three terminations for your notebook. “[the]first”)

faucibus (“jaws” i.e. an opening or mouth)

Orci (Orcus was a god of the underworld who punished oath-breakers. Here his name stands for the underworld itself.)

Translate this now and then compare your answer with mine on the next page.

Before the entrance itself and at the first mouth of the underworld...

Next comes a long list of the people who *habitant* there. Linked together with *que, ac* and *tum* they form a list of personifications of evils or miseries. Some have a few words of description attached to them:

Luctus – Grief
Curae – Cares (or Remorse) described as *ultrices* “avenging” may be translated “Guilty Conscience”.

These first two have *posuere cubilia* “have put (or made) their beds” in this place.

Morbi – Diseases [related to “morbid”] described as *pallentes*, “pale” or “pallid”
Senectus – Old Age [related to “senior”] described as *tristis*, “sad”
Metus – Fear
Fames – Hunger [related to “famine”] described as *malesuada* “tempter to sin”
Egestas – Poverty described as *turpis* “loathsome”

This group is described as *terribiles visu formae* “forms terrible to be seen.”

Letum – Death
Labos – Toil [related to “labour”]
Sopor – Sleep described as *consanguineus Leti*, “Death's brother”
Gaudia – Pleasures – but they are *mala mentis*, “evil” or “guilty” Pleasures “of the mind/soul”
Bellum – You know who this is! - described as *mortiferum*, “death-bearing”

This group is positioned *adverso in limine* “on the opposite threshold.”

Eumenidum – This is the genitive form of *Eumenides*, the Furies, goddesses of vengeance. The genitive is used because it is not the Furies themselves who are here but *ferrei thalami Eumenidum* “the iron beds [literally bedrooms so “cells” might be a good translation or “chambers”¹] **of the furies**”

Discordia – Last on the list is Strife [related to “discord”] who is *demens*, “mad.” Her appearance is described too: *vipereum*, “[her] snaky” *crinem* “locks”² *innexa* “bound” *cruentis* “with bloodstained” *vittis* “ribbons/bands of wool”.³
(Delightful!!)

All this should enable you to make a translation. When you have had a go you can look at my attempt on the next page.

1 The word can mean a bridal chamber or a young girl's bedroom.

2 Other horrible creatures of mythology – Medusa and the furies had snakes for hair.

3 These woollen strands are symbolic. Sacrificial victims, priestesses and alters were all decorated with these. Is Strife some sort of horrible priestess?

Before the entrance itself and at the first mouth of the underworld Grief and the avenging Cares have made their beds, and pale Diseases and sad Old Age live, and Fear and Hunger, the tempter to sin, and loathsome poverty – forms terrible to be seen – and Death and Toil and Sleep, Death's brother and the sinful Pleasures of the mind and, on the opposite threshold, death-bearing War and the iron chambers of the Furies and mad Strife her snaky locks bound with blood-stained ribbons.

Remember your translation does not have to be word for word the same as mine but it does have to be accurate. You can contact me if you are in doubt. When you are satisfied with your translation make yourself a flash card with the Latin on one side and the translation on the other in the same way as before.

This grisly collection of human woes Virgil places at the entrance to the Underworld. They give us an interesting picture of how the pagan Roman mind viewed death and their idea of what constituted the worst suffering. Sleep is perhaps the odd one out. Why do you think Virgil includes him? It will be interesting to notice as we go on how different Virgil's realm of the dead is to the ideas found in the Bible. Here at the outset in Virgil's scheme are all these terrible evil Deities with no one to combat “the last enemy” (1 Cor.15:26) and no victor over death.

It is going to be quite a task remembering all these woes together with the monsters we will meet in the next lesson. In order to make it easier for you I suggest you make a huge picture which you can put up on the wall. It does not have to be a brilliant work of art so don't worry if drawing is not your strong point! Draw some kind of cave like entrance, draw Aeneas and the Sybil approaching and then draw all the people in this lesson. They should be placed well back from the cave entrance so that there is plenty of space for the creatures you will meet in the next lesson. If you are good at that sort of thing you can do cartoons but don't worry if you are not – anything will do! The important part is to label each person with the Latin name from the text *and* the English translation together with any descriptive words Virgil has added (in both languages). No matter how bad your pictures are, if the labels are clear and easy to read you have done a good job. Obviously if it is colourful and even funny it will help you remember better.

Don't forget to keep your vocabulary notebook up to date.