

# Virgil Extracts 11

Achaemenides concludes his warning speech and lo and behold...

*'vos animam hanc potius quocumque absumite leto.'*

*Vix ea fatus erat summo cum monte videmus  
ipsum inter pecudes vasta se mole moventem  
pastorem Polyphemum et litora nota petentem,  
monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen  
ademptum.*

*trunca manum pinus regit et vestigia firmat;  
lanigerae comitantur oves; ea sola voluptas  
solamenque mali.*

*postquam altos tetigit fluctus et ad aequora venit,  
luminis effossi fluidum lavit inde cruorem  
dentibus infrendens gemitu, graditurque per aequor  
iam medium, necdum fluctus latera ardua tinxit.  
nos procul inde fugam trepidi celerare recepto  
supplice sic merito tacitique incidere funem,  
vertimus et proni certantibus aequora remis.*



'vos **animam hanc** potius quocumque **absumite** leto.'

*potius* "rather" i.e. "it is better that" *absumere* "to kill", "to annihilate" *quocumque* "any... whatsoever" *Letum* "violent death" "killing" *leto* is the ablative.

Translate and compare in the usual way. You will notice from the ...*ite* ending that the verb is imperative (See Year 2 Term 2 Week 6 Day 3). *Vos* is just there for emphasis. By *potius* Achaemenides is indicating that he would rather fall into human hands than those of a Cyclops.

It is better that you kill my soul by any violent death whatsoever.

***Vix ea fatus erat***

*ea fatus erat* is an idiom meaning “was this said”

***summo cum monte videmus***

The object of *videmus* is *ipsum pastorem Polyphemum*. *summo cum monte* tells where.

***ipsum inter pecudes vasta se mole moventem***

*inter pecudes* also says where. *Mole* is “mass” or “bulk”.

***Vasta se mole moventem et litora nota petentem*** tells what two things the object of the main verb is doing.

***pastorem Polyphemum et litora nota petentem,***

*nota* “familiar”

***monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum.***

This line is a description of Polyphemus. *Informe* “deformed” “ugly” *Cui* “who” *ademptum* “cut off”.

Translate and compare in the usual way.

Scarcely had he said this than we saw the shepherd Polyphemus himself on the top of the mountain among the flocks, moving his vast bulk and seeking the familiar shore, a horrible monster, deformed, huge cut off from the light.

(“Cut off from the light” is a reference to his having been blinded.)

*trunca manu[m] pinus regit et vestigia firmat;*

*Trunca pinus* “a lopped-off pine tree.” There is some debate as to whether it should be *manu* “in his hand” which makes more sense than the accusative which would make “hand” the object of the verb *regit*. *Firmare* “to support” *vestigium* “footstep”.

*lanigerae comitantur oves;*

*Lanigerae* “woolly” *comitantur* “attended by” “escorted by” “accompanied by”.

*ea sola voluptas solamenque mali.*

The rest of the line and the incomplete half line that follows it tell what the sheep mean to Polyphemus now in his blindness. They are his *sola voluptas* and *solamen mali*. *Voluptas* “pleasure” “delight” *solamen* “solace” *mali* freely “for his evil (i.e. suffering)”.

Translate and compare.

In his hand a lopped-off pine tree rules (i.e. guides) and supports his footsteps.

Attended by his woolly sheep his only delight and solace for his suffering.

OR if you go for *manum*:

A lopped off pine tree rules/guides his hand and supports his footsteps.

Attended by his woolly sheep his only delight and solace for his suffering.

*Solamenque mali* is an incomplete line. There is a tradition that the Aeneid was left incomplete and unedited at the poet's death. In his will he asked that it be destroyed for that reason. It was preserved and published through the direct intervention of the Emperor Augustus, who instructed the contemporary poet Varius Rufus to revise and edit the whole work; even after this, there remain obvious gaps, of which this is presumably one. There is also the possibility, of course, that Virgil intended this line to be incomplete.

Looking at the it endings of all the verbs in these next three lines you can tell they are all about what Polyphemus did.

***postquam altos tetigit fluctus et ad aequora venit,***

*postquam* "as soon as" *altos* is "deep" here and goes with *aequora*.

***luminis effossi fluidum lavit inde cruorem***

*lavare* "to wash" "to bathe" *effossi* "gouged out" *inde*, "with the sea water"; literally "from that place" referring to *fluctus* and *aequora*. (goes with *luminis*). *Fluidum* "oozing" goes with *cruorem*.

***dentibus infrendens gemitu,***

This tells about two things he was doing at the same time. *Infridens* "gnashing" *gemitu* "groaning".

***graditurque per aequor iam medium,***

*gradi* "to step or walk" (deponent). *Medium* "middle of" goes with *aequor*. Start with *iam*.

***necdum fluctus latera ardua tinxit.***

The subject of the verb changes now, it is *fluctus*. *Tinguere* "to touch". *Necdum* literally "not yet" i.e. "did not even". *Ardua* "towering" "lofty".

Translate and compare.

As soon as he touched the waves and came to the deep water he bathed with seawater [his] blood oozing gouged-out eye, gnashing his teeth and groaning, now he stepped into the middle of the water and the waves did not even touch his huge sides.

(This is not looking good for Aeneas and the Trojans! So...)

***nos procul inde fugam trepidi celerare***

*Celerare* “to hurry” here is what is known as a historical infinitive. This is simply where an infinitive verb is used in place of the imperfect in narration. The subject is in the nominative in the usual way *nos celerare* “we hurried” the object is *fugam* “[our] escape”.

***recepto supplice sic merito***

*recepto* “taking with us” *supplex* “suppliant” *merito* “deserving”

***taciturne incidere funem,***

*tacitus* “silently” *incidere* “cutting”

***vertimus et prona certantibus aequora remis.***

*Prona remis* “leaning forward on our oars” *vertimus* “we turn up” *certare* is “to vie”

I think the last line is hard! My attempt is over the page. What can you come up with?

Taking with us the thus deserving suppliant and silently cutting the ropes, leaning forward on our oars, vying, we turn up the waters.

One translation I've look at gives the last line as: "then leaning into our oars, we vied in sweeping the sea." they use "sweeping" because one version of the poem has *verrimus* "we sweep" rather than *vertimus* "we turn".

My old commentary notes re *supplice sic merito* that "His information now proved correct: he was discovered not to be ... an impostor."

I have given you the whole of the old picture at the top of this week's lesson. You can see Polyphemus and his sheep and Achaemenides pointing him out to the Trojans. Anchises looks dignified and kind in the picture but I think Aeneas looks very silly!

Go through the lines and look for Latin words that relate to English words for yourself this week.

Don't forget your flashcards.

<https://quizlet.com/gb/617807965/aeneid-cambridge-international-igcse-2023-25-flash-cards/>