



CSCP Support Materials: Translation

Eduqas GCSE Latin
Component 3A

Latin Literature (Verse)
The Adventures of Perseus

For examination in 2024 - 2025

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Cover image: Andromeda mosaic from 'House of Poseidon' in Zeugma, 2nd-3rd century AD, Zeugma Mosaic Museum, Gaziantep, Turkey

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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). The purpose of 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.

The Adventures of Perseus

Ovid, Metamorphoses 4.615 – 758, 765 - 803

In his Metamorphoses, Ovid fitted together into a continuous poem of around 12,000 lines an enormous range of myths and folk-tales beginning with the creation of the world and ending in Ovid's own day. Almost all the stories it contains (including this one) involve a change of shape (in Greek, a 'metamorphosis') of one sort of another – humans, for example, being transformed into animals, trees, and even mountains!

The story begins when Perseus was returning home with Medusa's head. He was the son of Jupiter and the mortal woman, Danae, whose father, Acrisius, had imprisoned her in a tower because of a prophecy which foretold that any child of hers would bring him death. Jupiter visited Danae in a shower of gold, and she conceived a son. Many years later, Perseus was sent on a mission by king Polydectes to bring back the head of the Gorgon, Medusa. The king hoped that Perseus would be killed and therefore he would be able to marry Danae, a marriage to which Perseus was opposed.

Latin		English Meaning	Literal Translation
<p style="text-align: center;">[Perseus]</p> <p>viperei referens spoliū memorabile monstri aera carpebat tenerum stridentibus alis. cumque super Libycas victor penderet harenas, Gorgonei capitis guttae cecidere cruentae, quas humus exceptas varios animavit in angues; unde frequens illa est infestaque terra colubris. inde per immensum ventis discordibus actus nunc huc, nunc illuc <u>exemplo nubis aquosae</u> fertur et ex alto seductas aethere longe despectat terras totumque supervolat orbem. ter gelidas Arctos, ter Cancri bracchia vidit, saepe sub occasus, saepe est ablatu in ortu. iamque cadente die, veritus se credere nocti, constitit Hesperio, regnis Atlantis, in orbe, exiguamque petit requiem, dum Lucifer ignes evocet Aurorae, currus Aurora diurnos.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">A (lines 4.615 – 630)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[Perseus]</p> <p><i>as he brought back the famous plunder of the snake-haired monster was passing through the delicate air on whirring wings. While the victor over the monster was hanging above the Libyan sands, bloody drops from the Gorgon's head fell to earth 5 which the soil caught and brought alive as different kinds of snakes, and so from this, that country is dangerous and full of snakes. From there he was driven across the vast sky, by opposing winds, and he was carried now here, now there, <u>like a raincloud</u>; and from high in the air far away, 10 he looked down on remote lands, and flew above the whole world. Three times he saw the frozen Arctic, three times he saw the claws of the Crab: often he was carried away below the setting sun and often towards the east. Now it was sunset, he was afraid to entrust himself to the night, and he stopped in the western part of the world, in the kingdom of Atlas, 15 and sought a little rest until the Morning Star called forth Dawn's stars and Dawn [called forth] her daytime chariot.</i></p>	<p><u>an example of a rain cloud</u></p>	

B (lines 4.631 – 645)

Atlas was the son of Iapetus and was far bigger and stronger than any mortal man. He ruled the furthest part of the world and the sea which divides its waters for the panting horses of the Sun and receives the weary wheels of his chariot. A thousand flocks of sheep and as many herds of cattle wandered through Atlas' remote fields. He also had a tree, the leaves of which were glistening with shimmering gold, and these leaves covered the branches and the apples on the tree with gold. 'Friend,' said Perseus to Atlas, 'if the glory of a noble family impresses you, my father is Jupiter; or if you are an admirer of glorious deeds, you will admire mine. I ask you for hospitality and somewhere to rest.' Atlas, however, recalled an ancient prophecy which Themis had once spoken on Mt Parnassus: 'Atlas, the time will come when your tree will be stripped of its gold, and a son of Jupiter will have the glory for this plunder.'

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Latin		English Meaning	Literal Translation
<p>id metuens solidis pomaria clauserat Atlas moenibus et vasto dederat servanda draconi arcebatque suis externos finibus omnes.</p> <p><u>huic</u> quoque 'vade procul, ne longe gloria rerum, quam mentiris' ait, 'longe tibi Iuppiter absit! vimque minis addit manibusque expellere temptat cunctantem et placidis miscentem fortia dictis.</p> <p>viribus inferior (quis enim par esset Atlantis viribus?) 'at quoniam parvi tibi gratia nostra est, accipe munus!' ait, laevaue a parte Medusae ipse retro versus squalentia protulit ora.</p> <p><u>quantus erat</u>, mons factus Atlas; nam barba comaeque in silvas abeunt, iuga <u>sunt</u> umerique manusque, quod caput ante fuit, summo est in monte cacumen, ossa lapis fiunt. tum partes auctus in omnes crevit in immensum (sic, di, statuistis) et omne cum tot sideribus caelum requieuit in illo.</p>	<p></p> <p>5</p> <p>10</p> <p>15</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">C (lines 4.646 – 662)</p> <p><i>Atlas fearing this, had shut off his orchards with solid ramparts and given to a huge serpent the job of protecting them, and he prevented all strangers [from entering] his lands.</i></p> <p><i>So, <u>to Perseus</u> too, he said, ' Get far away from here, in case the glory of your deeds done faraway which you are lying about, [may fail you] and Jupiter may be far from you.'</i></p> <p><i>He added violence to threats and while [Perseus] hesitated, he tried to throw him out with his own hands, [all the while Perseus was] mixing brave actions with soothing words.</i></p> <p><i>Being the lesser in strength (for who is equal in strength to Atlas?)</i></p> <p><i>he said, 'Since my gratitude is of little interest to you, receive this gift,' and he, turning away, brought forth</i></p> <p><i>with his left hand, the filthy face of Medusa.</i></p> <p><i><u>How great</u> a mountain Atlas became! His beard and hair</i></p> <p><i>were changed into forests, his shoulders and hands <u>became</u> ridges, and what was previously his head, was now a peak on the very top of the mountain,</i></p> <p><i>his bones became rock. Then having increased in all directions,</i></p> <p><i>he grew to a tremendous size (thus, gods, you decreed it) and the whole sky with [its] many stars rested on him.</i></p>	<p><i><u>to him</u></i></p> <p><i><u>Atlas became a mountain as great as he [once] was. are</u></i></p>

D (lines 4.663 – 671)

Aeolus had now shut the winds in their everlasting prison, and Lucifer, the daystar, warning men to be up and about their work, had risen very brightly high in the sky. Perseus took up his wings again and strapped them to either foot; he fastened on his curved sword and cut a path through the liquid air with a flick of his winged sandals. After leaving innumerable tribes below and around him, he caught sight of the Ethiopian peoples and the lands of Cepheus. There Jupiter Ammon had unjustly ordered that the innocent Andromeda should pay the penalty for her mother's foolish claims about her own beauty.

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Latin		English Meaning	Literal Translation
<p>quam simul ad duras religatam bracchia cautes vidit Abantiades (nisi quod levis aura capillos moverat et tepido manabant lumina fletu, marmoreum ratus esset opus), trahit inscius ignes et stupet et visae correptus imagine formae paene suas quaterne est oblitus in aere pennas. ut stetit, 'o' dixit 'non istis digna catenis, sed quibus inter se cupidi iunguntur amantes, <u>pande requirenti nomen terraeque tuumque,</u> et cur vincla geras.' primo silet illa, nec audet appellare virum virgo, manibusque modestos celasset vultus, si non religata fuisset; lumina, quod potuit, <u>lacrimis implevit obortis.</u> <u>saepius instanti, sua ne delicta fateri</u> <u>nolle videretur,</u> nomen terraeque suumque, quantaque maternae fuerit fiducia formae indicat; et nondum memoratis omnibus unda insonuit, veniensque immenso belua ponto imminet et latum sub pectore possidet aequor.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">E (lines 4.672 – 690)</p> <p>As soon as he saw her tied by her arms to the cruel rock, the descendant of Abas (except that a gentle breeze had moved her hair and her eyes were streaming with warm tears, he would have supposed her to be a work of marble), unknowingly he fell in love, 5 he was both amazed and taken by the image of such beauty he almost forgot to keep his wings moving in the air. As he stood there, he said, 'O, you are not deserving of those chains, but those by which passionate lovers are joined to each other. 10 <u>Reveal your name, I beg you, and [the name] of your country</u> and why you are wearing chains.' At first, she was silent for [being] a maiden she did not dare to address a man, she would have hidden her face modestly with her hands, if she had not been tied; (she did) what she could do, <u>tears welled up and filled her eyes.</u> 15 <u>Since he was more insistent, she did not</u> <u>want to seem to be confessing a crime,</u> she told him her name and that of her country and how much confidence her mother had in [her own] beauty; and when she had not yet finished recounting everything the sea roared, and coming from the vast ocean, a sea-monster <u>threatened</u> and occupied the broad sea beneath its breast.</p>	<p><u>Reveal to [the person]</u> <u>begging</u> <u>she filled her eyes with</u> <u>welling tears</u> <u>she seemed not to want</u> <u>to confess her crimes to</u> <u>[him as he was] very</u> <u>frequently pressing for</u> <u>an answer</u></p>	

F (lines 4.691 – 713)

The girl cried out; her sorrowful father and her mother were both close by, both wretched, though her mother had more cause to be so. They could bring no help to her except to weep and wail, as you might expect, and they clung to her chained body. Then the stranger spoke thus: 'There will be plenty of time left for weeping but the time for bringing help is short. If I, Perseus, were to ask for this girl's hand in marriage – I, Perseus, son of Jupiter and the woman who, though shut away in a tower, was made pregnant by Jupiter's fertile gold: I, who overcame the snake-haired Gorgon, and dared to move through the airy breezes on beating wings – I would certainly make the best son-in-law you could possibly have. Besides such benefits as these, I hope to perform a valuable service (may the gods favour me): if she is saved by my bravery, I propose she may be mine.' Her parents accepted the offer (who would have hesitated?), and begged him for help, promising in addition their kingdom as a wedding gift. 5 10

And look, just as a swift ship with a sharp prow cuts the waters driven by the sweating muscles of the crew, so the beast cut through the waters with the force of its breast. It was as far from the rocks as a Balearic sling is able to send a lead shot twisting through the air, when suddenly Perseus launched himself from the earth with a leap. He flew up high into the clouds. When the man's shadow appeared on the surface of the sea, the monster saw the shadow and furiously attacked it. 15 20

Latin		English Meaning	Literal Translation
<p>utque Iovis praepes, vacuo cum vidit in arvo praebentem Phoebos liventia terga draconem, occupat aversum, neu saeva retorqueat ora, squamigeris avidos figit cervicibus ungues, sic celeri missus praecipuus per inane volatu terga ferae pressit dextroque frementis in armo Inachides ferrum curvo tenus abdidit hamo. vulnere laesa gravi modo se sublimis in auras attollit, modo subdit aquis, modo more ferocis versat apri, quem turba canum circumsona terret; ille avidos morsus velocibus effugit alis, quaque patet, nunc terga cavis super obsita conchis, nunc laterum costas, nunc qua tenuissima cauda desinit in piscem, falcato vulnerat ense.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">G (lines 4.714 – 4.738)</p> <p><i>Just as Jupiter's eagle, when it has seen, in some deserted field, a basking snake exposing its lead-coloured back to Phoebus, [the sun god,] seizes it and in case [the snake] twists back its cruel mouth, fixes its greedy talons in the scaly neck, so he [Perseus] swooped in swift flight, headlong through the empty [sky] and bore down on the back of the creature.</i></p> <p><i>The descendant of Inachus hid his sword in right up to its curved hilt in the right shoulder of the bellowing beast.</i></p> <p><i>The beast was in pain from the deep wound and now raised itself up high into the air, now dived deep in the waters, now it twisted [in circles] like a fierce boar which a baying pack of dogs terrifies.</i></p> <p><i>Perseus fled on his swift wings [from] the greedy jaws, and wherever there was an opportunity, with his curved sword he wounded [the beast] now [on] his back studded with hollow shells, now [in] the ribs on his flanks, now where his tail was thinnest and tapered like a fish.</i></p>	<p><i>sent headlong</i></p> <p><i>[i.e. Perseus]</i></p> <p><i>wounded with a serious wound, high up, it raised....</i></p> <p><i>That [man]</i></p> <p><i>his very thin tail tapered into [the shape of] a fish</i></p>

Latin		English Meaning	Literal Translation
<p>belua puniceo mixtos cum sanguine fluctus ore vomit; <u>maduere graves aspergine pennae.</u> nec bibulis ultra Perseus talaribus ausus credere conspexit scopulum, qui vertice summo <u>stantibus exstat aquis, operitur ab aequore moto;</u> nixus eo rupisque tenens iuga prima sinistra ter quater exegit <u>repetita per ilia</u> ferrum. litora cum plausu clamor superasque deorum implevere domos; gaudent generumque salutant auxiliumque domus servatoremque fatentur Cassiope Cepheusque pater.</p>	<p>15</p> <p>20</p> <p>25</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">G (lines 4.714 – 4.738) continued</p> <p><i>The monster spewed out water mixed with red blood; and[the hero's] wings were wet and heavy with spray.</i></p> <p><i>Perseus did not dare to trust his soaking winged sandals anymore, he caught sight of a cliff whose highest peak stood out from the waters when they were calm but was covered when the sea was rough.</i></p> <p><i>He leaned on this and grasping the topmost ridge of the rock with his left hand, he drove his sword three times, four times, over and again into [the monster's] belly.</i></p> <p><i>A shout filled with applause the shores and the lofty houses of the gods; Cassiope and Cepheus, [the girl's] father, rejoiced and greeted their son-in-law, and acknowledged him as the help and saviour of their house.</i></p>	<p><i>[his] heavy wings were wet with spray</i></p> <p><i>when the waters were calm</i></p> <p><i>through the repeatedly attacked belly</i></p>

Latin		English Meaning	Literal Translation
<p style="text-align: center;">resoluta catenis</p> <p>incedit virgo, pretiumque et causa laboris.</p> <p>ipse manus <u>hausta</u> <u>victrices</u> <u>abluit</u> <u>unda</u>,</p> <p>anguiferumque caput dura ne laedat harena,</p> <p>mollit humum foliis natasque sub aequore virgas</p> <p>sternit et imponit Phorcynidos ora Medusae.</p> <p>virga recens <u>bibulaque</u> <u>etiamnum</u> <u>viva</u> <u>medulla</u></p> <p><u>vim</u> <u>rapuit</u> <u>monstri</u> <u>tactuque</u> <u>induruit</u> <u>huius</u></p> <p>percepitque novum ramis et fronde rigorem.</p> <p>at pelagi nymphae factum mirabile temptant</p> <p>pluribus in virgis et idem contingere gaudent</p> <p><u>seminaque</u> <u>ex illis</u> <u>iterant</u> <u>iactata</u> <u>per undas</u>.</p> <p>nunc quoque coraliis eadem natura remansit,</p> <p>duritiam tacto capiant ut ab aere, quodque</p> <p>vimen in aequore erat fiat super aequora saxum.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">H (lines 4.738 – 752)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Released from her chains,</i></p> <p><i>the maiden, the prize and reason for his task, stepped forward.</i></p> <p><i>[The hero] himself washed his victorious hands with <u>water drawn from the sea</u>,</i></p> <p><i>and so that the snake-bearing head might not suffer an injury from the hard sand,</i></p> <p>5 <i>he made the ground soft with leaves, and he spread out seaweed that grew beneath the surface,</i></p> <p><i>then he placed on that the head of Medusa, daughter of Phorcys.</i></p> <p><i>The fresh seaweed, <u>even now absorbent and living</u>,</i></p> <p><i><u>drew in the strength to its core and became hard at the touch of this monster</u></i></p> <p><i>and felt a new rigidity in its branches and foliage;</i></p> <p>10 <i>but the sea-nymphs tested this amazing thing</i></p> <p><i>and were thrilled that the same thing happened with more seaweed,</i></p> <p><i>and when the seeds from those plants were scattered across the waves, they repeated the action.</i></p> <p><i>Now red coral [reefs] also retain the same nature;</i></p> <p><i>they become hard at the touch of air, and</i></p> <p>15 <i>that which was [pliant] seaweed in the water, becomes a rock above it.</i></p>	<p><i><u>with gathered up sea water</u></i></p> <p><i><u>alive even now and with an absorbent core</u></i></p> <p><i><u>drew in the strength of the monster and became hard at its touch</u></i></p> <p><i><u>and the seeds from them, scattered across the waves, repeated [the action]</u></i></p> <p><i><u>Now the same nature remains for the red coral</u></i></p>	

I (lines 4.753 – 786)

To celebrate his victory, Perseus set up altars to Mercury, Minerva and Jupiter, and sacrificed to them. Perseus and Andromeda were married and there was much rejoicing at the wedding feast. When the feast was over and they had all had plenty of wine, which is the generous gift of Bacchus, Perseus asked about the country and the people who lived there, and their customs and character. 5
The king, Cepheus, explained to him and then said, 'Now, my very brave fellow, tell us, I beg you, with what bravery and skill you stole away that head which was covered with snakes rather than hair. 'Perseus, the descendant of Agenor, told them about a place lying beneath the cold slopes of Mount Atlas, protected by a mass of solid stone; in the entrance of which lived twin sisters, daughters 10
of Phorcys, who shared the use of a single eye. This, by cunning and skill, he managed to get hold of as it was being passed from one to the other; and then through hidden and trackless pathways, rocky country bristling with overgrown woods, he reached the home of the Gorgons. Everywhere, through all the fields and roads he saw statues of men and wild beasts who, having seen Medusa, 15
were turned into stone; he himself however looked at Medusa reflected in the bronze of his polished shield which he carried in his left hand. While deep sleep held the snakes and Medusa herself, he snatched away her head from her neck. Pegasus, swift on his wings, and his brother, Chrysaor, were born from their mother's blood. 20

J (lines 4.787 – 803)

Perseus also told them about the unbelievable perils he had encountered on his journeys, which seas and which lands he had seen from high in the sky and which stars he had touched on his beating wings. He had finished, but they wanted more; one of the princes there asked him to explain why one alone of the Gorgon sisters had snakes intertwined in her hair. Perseus replied, 'You are asking to hear a story that is well worth telling. Now listen to the explanation. That woman once was very beautiful and aroused jealous hope in many prospective suitors, and there was no part of her more remarkable than her hair. I once met someone who said he had seen her. It is said that the ruler of the sea, Neptune, assaulted this girl in the temple of Minerva; the daughter of Jupiter looked away and covered her virtuous face with her aegis. So that this deed might not go unpunished, the goddess changed the Gorgon's hair into foul snakes. Now too, so that she might terrify her enemies and stun them with fear, she carries the snakes, which she created, on her breastplate.

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