AP Latin Summer 2012 Assignment

* Read *Vergil’s Aeneid: Hero, War, Humanity*. Translated by G.B. Cobbold
* Choose 5 of the following questions and compose an essay for each. In each of your responses, cite at least three references from the *Aeneid,* using MLA format. You may need to do further research on the *Aeneid*, Vergil and the Augustan Age.
* Each essay question will be worth 20 points. Be sure to give enough information in your answer to warrant 20 points. I will also be looking for analysis in your answers, not merely comprehension.

1. What is an epic poem? In what ways does the *Aeneid* adhere to and depart from the traditional definition?

2. In the original Latin, Aeneas is routinely described as *pius* (lit. pious). Is Aeneas’ piety an attractive characteristic, or does he come off as a bit of a prig? Do his actions at the very end of the story seem consistent with everything else that he does?

3. Is it fair to suggest that Turnus is more fully depicted and more interesting than Aeneas? In what ways might Turnus be considered a more sympathetic character?

4. What does Vergil mean when he says at the beginning of Book 7 that he plans to introduce “a more serious tone” and “a more universal theme”? What are the differences in tone and theme between the two halves of the *Aeneid?*

5. What is the function of the gods and other supernatural beings, who are very active throughout?

6. Does the persistent presence of gods and supernatural beings make the story more or less satisfactory?

7. What was the role of women in the Roman society of Vergil’s time? How does Vergil treat women (e.g. Helen, Hecuba, Creusa, Andormache, Dido, Amata, Camilla) in the *Aeneid*? Is it true, as one critic has suggested, that the *Aeneid* celebrates “macho” behavior as no other work of literature?

8. Much is made in the *Aeneid* of father-son relationships. How much do the relationships that Vergil describes have in common with contemporary father-son relationships? Do Vergil’s fathers and sons set a good example?

9. The *Aeneid* is full of similes. What do the similes have in common? Do they have any other function beyond the simple comparison of one action/person to another?

10. Is the *Aeneid* a work of propaganda? If it is, does this get in the way of our appreciation of the narrative?

11. How are patriotic themes dealt with? Does Vergil’s patriotism differ in any way from contemporary definitions?

12. There is a tradition that when Vergil died, he requested (unsuccessfully) that the manuscript of the Aeneid should be destroyed because it needed so much revision and polishing. What changes do you think he might have made himself? What changes would you have suggested to him?