

Final Project: Analysis and Artistic Translation
LATIN 226: Roman Lyric
Spring 2003 • Wheaton College



Assignment: Produce an artistic translation and literary commentary for at least one poem by Catullus or Horace.

Process:

- 1) **Select a poem** that you find both personally and/or intellectually compelling and that you deem worthy of presentation to an English-speaking audience. Make certain that you thoroughly understand the Latin text of the poem.
- 2) **Inform me** of your selection via email before **9am, Thursday, May 1st**.
- 3) **Perform a formal analysis** of the poem according to the principles in “Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About a Poem...” You need not write up your findings, but they will influence how you translate and comment on your poem.
- 4) **Investigate other translations** of your poem. Make photocopies of all the translations you consulted. These will be turned in with your translation.
- 5) **Determine your personal philosophy of translating.** The process of translating is not simply one of rendering words from one language into another with the assistance of a dictionary. Once you have a thorough understanding of the poem, determine what aspects of the poem are most important for you to convey to your audience. Will you focus on conveying the original’s sound effects, word play, alliteration, and similar poetic devices into English... or is the poem’s theme or style more important? Do you want to use a poetic meter or no meter at all? Will your translation rhyme even if the original does not? Will you chose archaic diction to suggest the antiquity of the source? Or employ colloquialisms to convey the immediacy of the original? In thinking through your philosophy, you may want to consider “A meditation on translating Horace” by William Peterfield Trent [<http://www.bartleby.com/109/32.html>].
- 6) **Write a ~1 page introduction** that explains why you selected the poem and outlines your general philosophy for the translation. You will want to revise your introduction after you complete your commentary.
- 7) **Translate your poem** according to your personal philosophy of translating. You are aiming not to produce a literal translation of the kind that would aid someone in translating the original but an artistic and expressive translation of the work that captures some of the artistry and poetic effect of the original that you identified in your formal analysis.
- 8) **Write a 3-6-page commentary** on your translation in which you explicate the poetic devices, structure, narrative devices, etc. of the poem and explain how you conveyed these in your translation or justify why your translation does not reflect these aspects of the original. This should reflect in detail your personal philosophy of translating.

Due Date: Before 3pm, Wednesday, May 7th @ Knapton 119 (My Office)

Formalities: 5-8 pages: ~1 page introduction; translation; 3-6 page commentary; bibliography and appendix (including copies of all translations that you consulted); Times 12 pt.; top and bottom margins: 1”; side margins: 1.25” (“MS Word default”); footnotes (not endnotes); attach a completed Checklist for Papers; **Follow the style guidelines (for quotations, citations, footnotes, etc.) in *The Chicago Manual of Style*.** Note – an *x* page paper must include *x* pages of your writing; citation footnotes, images, title page, and bibliography do not count towards this figure. Conversely, do not pile information that is critical to your argument into footnotes in an attempt to squeeze your paper down below the page limit.

Remember that you are striving to produce a *ktēma eis aei* (“a possession for the ages”) that will be submitted to the magazine “Circumference: Poetry in Translation” and will be “webified” and reside on my webpage. You may also wish to submit your translation to “Rushlight.” As always, don’t hesitate to contact me with questions.