



Classics Transition Work: *salvete omnes!*

Welcome to Classics and welcome to St. Dominic's Sixth Form College. For many of you, this will be the first time you have formally studied the subject. Therefore, this work booklet is designed to help you to adjust to life as an A-level student, studying the ancient world. Please do not be daunted; **curiosity and enthusiasm are all that are required at this time. Classics is a complex subject**, but it is also a lot of fun; our classroom discussions are never boring and I hope to give you some indication of that while completing the tasks below.

In one of our two first year modules (**Imperial Image**) we will study a myriad of historical sources relating to the *reign* of the first Emperor Augustus. These sources offer a fascinating insight into this tumultuous and transformative period of Roman History and range from: **numismatics** (posh word for coins); buildings i.e., temples; ancient poetry; statues & ancient biography i.e., Augustus' very own the *Res Gestae*.¹

For the following tasks, you are going to examine **three prescribed sources**, commencing with a coin (*denarius* = silver coin). **For all of the sources your approach should be analytical in nature and consider the following questions:**

- **Source provenance** – who was the author, when was it made, within what **historical context**?
- What does the source depict/show/discuss?
- How does the source present **Augustus**; is it largely positive or negative?
- Do you consider the source to be reliable?
- What do you think its target audience might have been; what is its purpose and what ideas does it convey?
- Should we consider it **propaganda**; if so how and why?

In order to conduct research on these sources, feel free to use the internet – Wikipedia is a great starting point and far better than AI, which should be avoided at all times, if you want to actually be able to think independently/intelligently. On the reverse of this resource is more information on the sources selected. **However, aim to conduct your own research first, before using these.**

¹ While it is important to learn some Latin/Greek terms for the course, our study will be in translation and our focus historical/cultural rather than linguistic.

Source 1: *Denarius*, obv. Bare head of Octavian (former name of Augustus), rev. Pax (goddess) standing left holding olive branch and cornucopia.

Inscription: CAESAR DIVI F – Caesar, son of a god.



Write down your thoughts here, with reference to the study questions/aims on the previous page:

Source 2: [Augustus of Prima Porta](#) – statue of Augustus as *Imperator*. The image on the right is a close-up of the breastplate Augustus wears on the statue.



Write down your thoughts here:

Source 3: [Suetonius, *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars: Augustus*](#)

68 Accusations of Homosexuality and Effeminacy:

As a youth he was reproached with various sexual improprieties. Sextus Pompey taunted him with the charge of effeminacy, while Mark Antony accused him of unnatural relations with Julius Caesar as the price of his adoption; and Lucius Antonius claimed that not only was that accusation true, but also that he had submitted to Aulus Hirtius in Spain, for three thousand gold pieces, and that he used to soften the hairs on his legs by singing them with red-hot walnut shells.

Furthermore, on one occasion in the theatre, the following line, said of a eunuch priest of Cybele striking a tambourine, was loudly applauded, as referring insultingly to Augustus:

‘See, how this sodomite’s finger rules the orb!’

69 His Adulteries:

Not even his friends denied he was given to adulterous behaviour, though they justified it as a matter of policy not passion, claiming he discovered his enemy’s intentions through their wives and daughters. Mark Antony accused him not only of marrying Livia with indecent haste (in 38 BC), but of manoeuvring an ex-consul’s wife from the dining room to the bedroom before the man’s eyes, and returning her blushing and with her hair in disorder. He also claimed Augustus divorced Scribonia (in 39 BC) because she showed resentment of a rival’s influence over him too openly; and that friends of his pandered to him, stripping wives and young women of their clothes, in the manner of Toranius, the slave-dealer, and inspecting them as though they were up for sale.

Mark Antony also wrote familiarly to Augustus, before his quarrels with him: ‘Why the change in you? Because I’m rutting with Cleopatra? She’s my ‘wife’. After nine years is it news? Do you rut only with Livia? Be hanged if, by the time you read this, you’ve not had Tertulla or Terentilla, or Rufilla, or Salvia Titisenia, or the whole lot of them together! What matter where or whom you pleasure?’

Write down your thoughts here:

Reflections: write in the box below and attempt to work analytically, with specific reference to the sources you have studied.

1. Having considered the sources above, what impression to you have of the Emperor Augustus & his legacy?

[illegible]



Homer's *Iliad* & The World of the Hero

Our second first year module is Homer's *Iliad*. This Epic poem is considered a cornerstone of western civilisation and culture. *The Iliad* offers a gripping exploration of heroism, honour, and human vulnerability set against the backdrop of the Trojan War. Its powerful themes—fury, fate, glory, and grief—still resonate today, while its vivid storytelling and unforgettable characters have shaped literature for centuries. Reading *The Iliad* is not just an encounter with the ancient world, but with the timeless truths of human nature.

Our study of *The Iliad* will take a contextual approach, situating the poem within the cultural, historical, and literary world of the Bronze Age. Together, we'll develop the skills needed to become expert readers of this foundational text and the complex society it portrays. As preparation, we'll begin by exploring the distinctive—and often alien—code of heroism that governs the actions of its characters. Their ideals of honour, glory, and vengeance differ sharply from our own, but understanding them is key to unlocking the poem's enduring power.

Task 1: Research and define the following bronze-age values.

- *Kleos:*
- *Kalos Thanatos:*
- *Menis:*
- *Geras:*
- *Aristeia:*

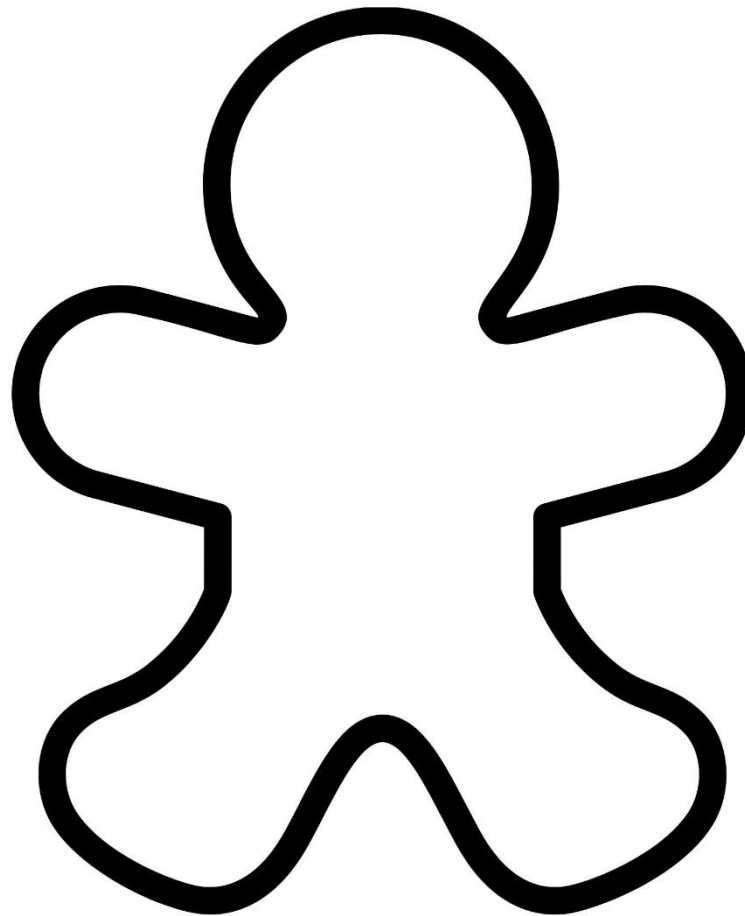
Achilles is brutal, vain, pitiless - and a true hero

Homer's idolised demigod in the *Iliad* has plenty of loathsome aspects - but remains a magnetic figure it's hard not to admire



Task 2: Using your knowledge of the values that underpinned bronze-age heroism and society, consider what you believe to be both similar and different to our modern perspective of heroism, making notes around the gingerbread outline below. **If you like, you might want to pick a specific hero to frame this around i.e., Achilles or Hector.**

Similar.



Different.



@BEACONPROJECT40