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*Fellow & Director of Studies in Classics*

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Congratulations on your confirmed offer to read Classics at Emmanuel! As your Director of Studies, I will be your first point of contact for academic matters, as well as one of your teachers. At this point I'm writing with some information that will be helpful for the coming weeks, before you arrive in Cambridge.

Most importantly, I want to emphasize the importance of preparing yourself by working through your set texts for Michaelmas Term in the original. Like most things at Cambridge, this is not obligatory in any formal sense; but the short terms here are extremely intensive, leaving little if any time for the slow reading of texts that is an essential first stage to studying them. This is no small task, and you may not have time to complete it. But every hour you put in before the start of term will pay off, and I sincerely hope that you will have read all the Michaelmas texts before we meet, and **at the very least** the first one in each language (Homer *Iliad* 1 and Virgil *Aeneid* 8). These expectations are a little different for Intensive Greek students, who will work through their Greek texts in Faculty reading classes during term; in that case, please aim to have read **all three Latin texts** for Michaelmas (the Virgil, plus Sallust *Bellum Catilinae* and Augustus *Res Gestae*) in advance: that will give you more space to concentrate on the Greek work when you arrive.

*How* you read the texts is up to you. The ideal is to work through the original (without a translation), using a commentary and dictionary and compiling a vocabulary list as you go. Do this for each text, and you will be well set up for the year's study, as well as learning a lot about languages, culture and more. Next best is to read the text with a dictionary, referring to a translation occasionally when you get stuck. I don't recommend writing out your own translation: a major goal for the next two years is to break free of A-level style memorizing of set texts and to get you reading more fluently and independently.

You'll already have received (or will soon) a letter from Dr Launaro, the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Faculty of Classics, giving full details of your set texts and the recommended edition (generally an untranslated text with commentary) for each. Many people like to buy these either for convenience or to be able to mark them up, though there is no requirement to do so, and there are copies in the Faculty and College libraries, and often online. Loeb editions, with parallel English, are useful for browsing unfamiliar authors (and you'll have free online access to all of them once you're here), but it is not good practice to use these for texts you are studying: far better to get used to having just the Greek or Latin in front of you, referring occasionally to a separate translation (e.g. Penguin or Oxford World's Classics).

You can often find cheaper copies of books on amazon or abebooks.co.uk, and, once you have a Cambridge ID card, you will be able to buy books published by Cambridge University Press at 20% discount in their shop on Trinity Street. Our local branch of the Blackwell chain, called Heffers, should have all the recommended editions, and sometimes has some cheaper second-hand copies in stock. You can freely download most Latin texts from thelatinlibrary.com but it's not advisable, because there are frequent misprints.

There are other important ways to prepare yourself – revising Greek and Latin grammar and syntax with the help of the ‘language pack’ that you have received from the Faculty, reading other literature in translation (starting with the *Iliad*, *Odyssey* and *Aeneid* if you haven’t read them yet), and reading anything about the ancient world that interests you – but let me underline again how valuable it will be to read **as much as possible** of your set texts in the original language.

### Reference books

For your language work it is well worth investing in Greek and Latin grammars, and I recommend one of the following for each language:

H. W. Smyth, *Greek grammar* (Cambridge Mass. 1956 etc.) [advanced: may seem a little daunting at this stage, but it will be suitable throughout the course]

JACT, *Reading Greek: vol. 2, grammar and exercises* (2nd ed., Cambridge 2007) [intermediate]

J. Morwood, *Oxford grammar of classical Greek* (Oxford 2001) [basic: suitable for first year only]

B. L. Gildersleeve and G. Lodge, *Gildersleeve’s Latin grammar* (London 1903 etc.) [advanced but much more accessible than Smyth, so you should find it fine from the start]

B. H. Kennedy, *Kennedy’s revised Latin primer* (London 1962) [intermediate]

J. Morwood, *A Latin grammar* (Oxford 1999) [basic]

The standard full-size dictionaries, ‘Liddell and Scott’ and the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, are expensive, and copies are available for reference in the College and Faculty libraries. In any case, the full ‘Liddell and Scott’ is cheaply available as an app (as is the older, and inferior, full-size Latin dictionary, ‘Lewis and Short’). However, you will probably want to own a mid-size dictionary yourself, ideally:

‘middle Liddell’ = the ‘intermediate’ Liddell and Scott (Oxford)

D. P. Simpson, *Cassell’s standard Latin dictionary* (London 1977)

I wouldn’t buy smaller ‘pocket’ dictionaries; these are not adequate even for your first year.

Lots of information about Tripos (the degree course) is on the Faculty website; the part of the course you will follow in your first year is called Part IA. In the meantime feel free to email me (clw36@cam.ac.uk) with any questions.

I’ll be on sabbatical leave next term, and my colleague Dr Nigel Spivey (njs11@cam.ac.uk) will be Acting Director of Studies. I’ll look forward to bumping into you, though, and to resuming as Director of Studies in January.

With best wishes

Chris Whitton