

Eduqas GCSE Latin
Component 2: Latin Literature and Sources
(Themes)
Travel by Land and Sea



HORACE
A journey by canal

Teachers should not feel that they need to pass on to their students all the information from these notes; they should choose whatever they think is appropriate.

The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.

The Teacher's Notes contain the following:

- An **Introduction** to the author and the text, although students will only be asked questions on the content of the source itself.
- **Notes** on the text to assist the teacher.
- **Suggested Questions for Comprehension, Content and Style** to be used with students.
- **Discussion** suggestions and questions for students, and overarching **Themes** which appear across more than one source.
- **Further Information and Reading** for teachers who wish to explore the topic and texts further.

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Information about several of the pictures in this booklet, together with useful additional material for the Theme, may be found in the support available online for **Cambridge Latin Course, Book III, Stage 24, pages 66-69.**

HORACE, *A journey by canal* (Satires 1.5 1-26)

A night-time journey is less than relaxing

Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65 BC – 8 BC) was a lyric poet writing in the time of the emperor Augustus. Horace was born in southern Italy, at that time an area still closely associated with the Greek world, and he grew up steeped in Hellenistic culture. Although as a young man he lived in Rome, he soon moved to Athens where he continued his education. The turbulence of the era affected him greatly: following the assassination of Julius Caesar he was recruited by Brutus to fight against Antony and Octavian (the later Augustus). Horace later accepted a pardon from Octavian and returned to Italy, but his family estates had been confiscated. He was able to turn his hand to writing and real success followed when he received the patronage of Maecenas, one of Augustus' closest advisers.

In the spring of 37BC, Horace made a 340 mile journey from Rome to Brundisium, in the very southeast of Italy. It took around 15 days, and, although Horace does not mention exactly how he is travelling for most of the poem, it is likely that he was making his way partly by litter, partly on horseback, partly by carriage. A bodyguard would also have escorted him: the Italian countryside in the early 30s BC was a dangerous place for travellers and robbery was frequent. *En route*, he encountered politicians and other famous poets of the age, including some envoys heading to meet with Mark Antony, the great patron of the arts Maecenas, and the epic poet Virgil. The poet recalls the journey satirically, sometimes in the style of an epic, sometimes in the style of pastoral elegy, but all the time poetic ideals are shattered by ignominious reality: an upset stomach, raucous banter, and persistent bugs.

The text is unadapted.

Notes

metre: dactylic hexametres

- egressum:** Horace and his friend are at the very start of the long journey mentioned in the introduction. They have made it as far as **Aricia**, 16 miles south of Rome along the Appian Way (the *Via Appia* was the main road heading south). Already, the journey is not going well. The separation (*hyperbaton*) of **magna...Roma**, and the **m alliteration** of **magna me**, emphasises the greatness of the city he has left behind, the *juxtaposition* ('placed next to') of **Roma** and **Aricia** stressing the contrast with the place he find himself in now. He also sets the tone of the poem, using *personification* when describing how 'Aricia welcomed me' (**me accepit Aricia**): this poem will use the literary techniques of grand poetry to describe everyday events.
- The contrast continues with the *enjambé* ('placed on the next line') phrase **hospitio modico** ('with simple accommodation'). The **modico** is starkly different to the **magna** in line 1: already the journey has become disappointing.

rhator comes Heliodorus: Horace is not alone. The companion mentioned was probably the tutor of Octavian when he was a boy. Octavian would later assume the name Augustus and become the first Roman emperor. He was a keen patron of poets such as Horace. Heliodorus is a welcome companion on a long journey as he would provide interesting conversation: he is described as **doctissimus** ('most learned') in the next line.

3 They journey on swiftly to **Forum Appi**, 27 miles further down the Appian Way. It was at the north end of a 16 mile canal running through the Pomptine Marshes: travellers would try to board the barge at night to sleep on the journey, waking at the other end of the canal to continue on the next stretch at daybreak.

4 **differtum nautis cauponibus atque malignis:** the sailors are there to run the boat service: more on this later. Innkeepers in Roman literature are often portrayed as unscrupulous and morally dubious, their inns filled with prostitutes and criminals. Horace even emphasises the word **malignis** by placing it at the end of the line. In fact there were different types of lodging available along routes like the *Via Appia*, some of which had excellent reputations. Wealthy Romans like Horace preferred to lodge with friends and acquaintances rather than stay in these places.

5-6 **altius ac nos praecinctis:** this is a reference to fit pedestrian travellers who would hike up their tunics so that they could walk faster. Of course, Horace and Heliodorus are probably not actually walking, they are too high-status to do that.

7-8 Horace has a problem common enough for travellers: the food and water is not agreeing with his stomach. When he says he 'declares war on his stomach' (**ventri indico bellum**) he means that he has decided to lay off eating, at least for a while. The metaphorical language he is using reminds us that this is a satire: he is casting himself in the role of an epic hero undertaking a journey filled with monsters and battles, except his will be an upset stomach, grudging innkeepers and, as we shall see, mosquitoes.

9-10 **iam nox...signa parabat:** these lines are another excellent example of Horace using typical epic style, *personifying* the night and creating a dramatic tableau in the sky.

It becomes clear now that although they stopped for dinner, the friends will continue their voyage through the night using the barge service which ran alongside the *Via Appia* through the Pomptine Marshes. This 'sleeper' service enabled travellers to wake refreshed on the other side to continue their journey.

11 **tum pueri nautis pueris convicia nautae:** the *polyptoton* (repetition of a word but with a different ending) and *chiastic* arrangement (explained below) create another highly-wrought line.

Chiasmus is the arrangement of phrases so that the second one is in reverse order compared with the first (**pueri nautis pueris... nautae**).

- 12-13** The shouts of the slave-boys and boatmen are in direct speech, and in the order they are shouted, which enlivens. They are shouting instructions '**huc adpelle**', exaggerating the number of people being taken on board '**trecentos inseris**' and using appropriately colloquial Latin '**ohe iam satis est**' to say enough passengers have crowded on board.
- 13** **dum mula ligatur**: the barges were pulled along the canal by mules who walked along the towpath (see *picture 4* for a barge being towed by men in a similar manner).
- 14** the mosquitos (**culices**) and in particular the malaria they spread were a real threat to travellers. The drainage of the Pomptine Marshes was attempted frequently throughout history in order to improve Roman health, but it was not achieved until the mid 20th century. Horace has the additional problem that **ranae palustres** ('marsh frogs') are particularly loud in spring.
- 15-17** the translation is **ut** (while) **nauta** (a boatman), **prolutus** (soaked in) **multa** (too much) **vappa** (bad wine), **atque viator** (and a passenger) **cantat** (sing) **certatim** (in competition) **absentem amicam** (about an absent girlfriend).
- 15** **cantat** is a frequentative verb – they *keep on* singing! The lack of *end-stopped lines* (the end of a sentence occurring at the end of a poetic line) here also give the sense of the disruptions dragging on for a long time without a break.
- 18** **missae pastum retinacula mulae**: rather than walking the mule along the bank throughout the night as he was supposed to do, the boatman has instead decided to take advantage of the fact that all his passengers are asleep and let the mule have a break, so that he can have a nap as well!
- 19** The *sibilance* (repetition of 's' sounds) in **stertit supinus** mimic the soft snores of the boatman.
- 20** **nil**: by pushing 'not at all' to the front of this clause Horace emphasises the lack of movement.
- 21-23** another 'epic' battle scene! **cerebrosus** ('hot-brained') is not a common word in Latin, especially in poetry, but very evocative. The use of a club (**fuste**) in conjunction with this adjective creates a satirical image of a cut-rate Hercules.
- 22** **mulae nautaeque caput lumbosque**: the parallel phrases here create a nice balance to the line.
- 23** **quarta...hora**: this would be around 10 am, and a lot later than they would have hoped to finish their trip through the Marshes. For more information on Roman calculation of time see the notes on the *Martial* text.
- 24** **Feronia** was an old Italian goddess of fertility and wilderness. Her sacred spring was near to Anxur.
- 25** **milia tria**: for information on Roman miles, see the note on *picture 1*.

- 26 Anxur** was an old name for Terracina, a coastal town about 56 km south of Rome along the *Via Appia*. One of the distinctive features were the **saxis...candentibus** ('gleaming white rocks'), the limestone cliffs on the way to the town. This is another example of epic description in this text.
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Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each line or sentence, asking leading questions so that the class comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

egressum...modico (lines 1-2):

- Where has he left? How is it described?
- Which place has welcomed him?
- What has it welcomed him with?

rhedor...doctissimus (lines 2-3)

- What is his companion's job? What is his companion's name?
- How is he described?

inde...malignis (lines 3-4)

- Where did they go from there?
- What kinds of people is this place filled with?

hoc iter...tardis (lines 5-6)

- How are Horace and Heliodorus feeling? What did it cause them to do with this journey?
- How long do other people take to complete this journey? How are these other people dressed? What does this mean? Why would it make them quicker than Horace and Heliodorus?
- What road are they following? What kind of people find it less arduous?

hic ego...comites (lines 7-9)

- Horace is having some trouble: on account of what? What was the water like? What has he declared war on? What do you think that this means?
- What are his companions doing? What is Horace doing? How does Horace feel while he waits?

iam nox...parabat (lines 9-10)

- What was night preparing to draw over the earth? What else was night preparing to do?

tum pueri...satis est (lines 11-13)

- What are the boys starting to throw? Who at? What are the boatmen doing in return?
- What do the boys shout to get the boatmen to bring the boat in? What do they shout when it's getting crowded? What do they shout to signal the barge is full?

dum aes...hora (line 13-14)

- What is being collected? What is being harnessed? What goes by as this is happening?

mali...certatim (lines 14-17)

- What two types of animals are preventing sleep? How do you think they would have prevented Horace from sleeping?
- Who is absent? Which two people are singing about this? What might explain why the boatman is singing? How do we know they are singing loudly at each other?

tandem fessus...supinus (lines 17-19):

- What happens at last? Why?
- What has happened to the mule? What has the boatman done so that the mule does not wander off? How is the boatman feeling? What does he do?

iamque dies...dolat (lines 20-23)

- What time of day is it now? What do Horace and the other passengers realise?
- What type of person jumps up? Who does he hit? Which parts of them does he hit? What does he hit them with?

quarta...hora (line 23)

- At what time are they at last disembarked?

ora...lympha (line 14):

- What do Horace and his friend wash? Where? Who is Horace talking to in this line?

milia...Anxur (lines 25-26):

- How far do they travel next? What do they eat first? How do we know they were travelling slowly?
- What town do they come near to? What is this place built on? How are the rocks described?

Questions on Content and Style**1. (lines 1-6)**

- a) How does Horace make it clear from the start that he thinks this journey will be uncomfortable?
- b) Describe Horace's travelling companion. Do you think that he will be a good companion for Horace?
- c) What is Forum Appi like and why?
- d) Do you think that this is a leisurely journey? How can you tell from these lines?

2. (lines 7-9)

- a) What has happened to Horace and how is he dealing with this?

- b) Why is he impatient?
- 3. (lines 9-13)
 - a) How do Horace and Heliodorus continue their journey?
 - b) How does Horace use a variety of techniques to bring the description of this scene alive?
- 4. (lines 13-19)

Explain five ways in which this journey does not go well.
- 5. (lines 20-23)
 - a) Explain why one man is so angry.
 - b) What does he do because he is so angry?
 - c) Do they arrive late or early? How do you know?
- 6. (lines 24-26)
 - a) Who is Feronia?
 - b) What do Horace and Heliodorus do once they disembark? Why do you think that a Roman would do this?
 - c) What is distinctive about Anxur?
 - d) In these lines, how does Horace convey his frustration at the journey through his choice of vocabulary and style of writing?

Discussion

Themes: travel by barge, Roman roads, accommodation and food, delays

Given the detail we have here, students could easily produce a simple map of Horace's journey as a visual guide to the text, illustrating moments from the account and annotating with Latin words and phrases.

In this poem Horace is describing a long journey and the many trials and tribulations he, and Heliodorus, faced along the way. He does this, however, with a satirical epic tone. Students could find the mock epic references (heroic battles, gods, unusual locations, and challenges to be overcome) and could also consider the way in which Horace describes the ordinary in such a way to make it seem extraordinary by using a wide range of literary techniques. They could then write a mini mock-epic of their own about a journey they have taken, annotating to show where they have been inspired by Horace.

This text could also be usefully compared with Juvenal and Ovid, both of whom describe in detail the challenges of travel in the ancient world. Students could use these texts to produce a Travel Guide to the Ancient World using information from the authors.

General questions on the passage and theme

1. What problems does Horace describe?
 2. Travel from Rome was in many ways well-organised and modern. What evidence is there in this poem which could prove this?
 3. What evidence is there here to show that long-distance travel by land was fairly common in ancient Rome?
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Further Information and Reading

Horace and Heliodorus are following the famous Appian Way (for more information on the *Via Appia* see the information on *picture 1* and for more on roads in general see the *Introduction*). This road was called 'the queen of long roads' by the Romans. Horace meets his other travelling companions at Anxur: they will have come by sea from Ostia.

Horace is following a well-travelled route, and this poem gives us an insight into how long-distance travel overland worked. We can work out the average speed of travel from the information in lines 5-6. The distance from Aricia to Forum Appi is around 40km (25 miles). Horace tells us that determined travellers can make the journey in one day, but that he and Heliodorus lazily took two days. This gives an average speed of 20km (12.5 miles a day). It is unclear exactly how they are travelling (as pedestrians, riding, or by carriage or litter), but this is a comfortable walking speed. As Aricia (mentioned in line 1) is about 20km (12.5 miles) from Rome, this must mean that by the time they board the barge in line 9 they have been travelling for three days.

The barge was dragged along a canal at the side of the *Via Appia* as it ran through the Pomptine Marshes from Forum Appi to Lucus Feroniae. From the information in this poem, it



appears to be operating as a sleeper service, allowing travellers to continue their voyage overnight.

This service, and the number of inns mentioned by Horace, shows that the *Via Appia* must have been carrying enough travellers to support these facilities.

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E Gowers, *Horace: Satires Book I* (CUP 2012)

P. M. Brown *Horace Satires I* (Aris and Phillips 1993)