

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



MARTIAL
A slow journey

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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This document refers to the official examination images and texts for the Eduqas Latin GCSE (2021 - 2023). It should be used in conjunction with the information, images and texts provided by Eduqas on their website:

[Eduqas Latin GCSE \(2021-2023\)](#)

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.**

MARTIAL, *A slow journey* (*Epigrams XI.79*)

Martial is late for a dinner-party – for which he blames the mules sent by his host.

Marcus Valerius Martialis (c.AD 40 – c.AD 103) was born in Spain and moved to Rome in his mid-twenties. He produced twelve books of epigrams (short poems) on a variety of themes, often writing with biting humour and critical observations.

In this short poem, Martial has been invited to dinner by his friend Paetus. His host has also sent mules to convey the poet to his villa, which appears to be outside the city. Martial, however, is running very late.

This text is unadapted.

Notes

metre: elegiac couplet

- 1 **ad primum...lapidem:** the main roads leading from the city of Rome were marked with milestones every Roman mile. For more information on milestones and roads, see the introduction to the Teachers' Notes and the notes on picture 1

decima...hora: around 4pm and the normal time when a Roman dinner party would begin. For more information on how the Romans measured time see the *Further Information and Reading*.

The *juxtaposition* (placing next to) of **primum** and **decima** emphasises the ridiculous slowness of this journey. He should be much further along the road.

venimus: Martial is probably using the poetic plural 'we'.

- 2 Martial's host is presumably annoyed by his late arrival. The exaggerated gravity of the legal language **arguimur...crimine** ('we are accused of the crime') makes his annoyance appear absurd.

lentae...pigritiae: the unnecessary adjective 'slow' emphasises just how slowly Martial has been progressing.

- 3 Martial does not dispute the slowness, just the cause! He uses the repetitive (*anaphora*: repeating the same words at the same point in a phrase) three-part list **non est...non est...est** to build up to his accusation that it is in fact Paetus who is to blame for Martial's lateness. The rhyming juxtaposition of **mea sed tua** also helps to draw attention to this.

- 4 The alliteration draws attention to what Martial believes is the real problem: **misisti mulas...mihi**. The *hyperbaton* (separation) of **mulas...tuas** delays the punch line: the host himself is responsible for Martial's lateness by sending such slow mules for him! In typical Martial style, he names the addressee: **Paete** ('Paetus'). This name features often as a friend in Martial's poems and scholars think that he may be a literary invention.
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Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each line, 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.

lines 1-2:

- Where has Martial arrived? When has he arrived there?
- What is he accused of?

lines 3-4:

- What is it not the fault of? Whose fault is it not? Whose fault is it?
- What is his friend's name? What has he sent to Martial?

Questions on Content and Style

1. Who is Martial addressing? Why is he addressing him?
 2. (lines 1-2) How does Martial emphasise how slowly this journey is going?
 3. (lines 3-4) How effective is Martial in using his style of writing to put the blame on Paetus?
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Discussion

Themes: roads, milestones, carriages and carts, delays

There is plenty of scope here for looking at excuses for lateness – there are no doubt lots of examples which teachers and students can think of, in particular linked to travel!

Students could also use this text to start thinking about the speed of travel in the ancient world and how long it took to make journeys by various modes of transport. The Stanford University ORBIS project is an excellent resource for this: students can input start and end locations and mode of transport, the site mapping the route for them and calculating travel time in the ancient world. It will also calculate a vast range of other data, including cost.

<http://orbis.stanford.edu/>

General questions on the passage and theme

1. Do you feel sympathy for Martial after reading this poem? Explain your answer.
 2. Considering what you know about travel in the Roman world, do you think that Martial's argument is plausible?
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Further Information and Reading

Martial mentions that it is the 10th hour in this poem. The Romans measured the period of daylight as 12 'hours', and night time as 12 'hours'. This meant that as the seasons changed and the amount of darkness each day changed, the length of an 'hour' also changed. More information can be found here:

http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/secondary/SMIGRA*/Hora.html

Nigel M. Kay, *Martial Book XI: a commentary* (OUP 1985)