



# CSCP Support Materials for Eduqas GCSE Latin

## Component 2: Latin Literature and Sources (Themes) Love and Marriage

### *Epitaph to Claudia*

For examination in 2024-2026

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 follow:

- 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.

## ANON: epitaph to Claudia

### An inscription extolling the virtues of Claudia

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This funerary inscription (CIL 1.2.1211) was found in Rome and dates from c.150 BC. It would originally have been part of a tomb set up alongside a public road. It belongs to a class of epitaph set up by husbands in praise of the virtues of their late wives. The virtues listed are often similar and represent the Roman ideal: this was how **matronae** were supposed to be, particularly in the higher social classes. There is no evidence to indicate whether the inscription gives a true or idealised account of the dead woman, though the informal, conversational tone gives it an air of authenticity lacking in other, more formal eulogies.

The Latin has been lightly adapted to remove archaic and phonetic spellings.

*Content note: this text refers to the burial of a child.*

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#### Text

hospes, quod dico paulum est; asta ac perlege.

hic est sepulcrum haud pulchrum pulchrae feminae:

nomen parentes nominarunt Claudiam.

suum maritum corde dilexit suo.

natos duos creavit: horum alterum 5

in terra linquit, alium sub terra locat.

sermone lepido, tum autem incessu commodo,

domum servavit, lanam fecit. dixi. abi.

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#### Notes

- hospes:** the tomb itself addresses anyone passing by, creating a conversational tone.  
**paulum:** the passer-by is persuaded to stop, as it will not take long to read this.  
**asta ac pellege:** the prefixes change the tone of the verbs, and when taken with the imperative form make the appeal to the reader stronger: 'stand *still* and read it *through*'.
- sepulcrum ... pulchrum ... pulchrae feminae:** this line is arranged noun-adjective-adjective noun (*chiasmus*) to draw attention to the play on words which

contrasts the beauty of Claudia with the lack of beauty in the tomb. This contrast is emphasised further by placing **haud pulchrum** next to **pulchrae** (*juxtaposition*).

- 3 **nomen ... nominarunt: nomen** is unnecessary but focuses the reader's attention on the first important fact about the dead woman: her name. Probably her name is given first because this was assigned to her at birth, and the inscription catalogues in sequence the main stages of her life: birth, marriage, childbirth and maintenance of the home.

**Claudia** was a family name: this woman would have shared it with all the women in her family. Rather than giving her a personal identity, the focus on her name therefore tells us which family is being commemorated here. Notice how **nomen** and **Claudiam** begin and end the clause, giving maximum emphasis to her name.

**nominarunt** for **nominaverunt**

- 4 **suum ... suo:** notice again the same framing technique as in line 3; she 'possesses' the other words by enclosing them.

**corde dilexit suo:** the word order suggests that her heart was full of love. Marriages were usually arranged by parents and the ideal was that a couple would grow close over time rather than fall in love first.

- 5 **natos:** the provision of sons was the primary purpose of marriage. Claudia has therefore fulfilled her most important role

- 6 **in terra linquit:** she leaves one son 'on' the earth, as opposed to the other one under it – i.e. one is alive, and the other has died. It is probable that this was a death in infancy: it is estimated that between 20-35% of children died before they reached 5 years old.

- 7 **sermone lepido ... incessu commodo:** these attributes stress how 'appropriate' Claudia's behaviour was. Although she demonstrated 'charming conversation', this would have been in private or in a narrow range of circumstances: a 'good wife' was expected to be silent when politics or business was discussed, or when away from the home. Her way of walking was also appropriately ladylike.

- 8 **domum servavit:** maintenance of the household was the second most important responsibility of the **matrona** after childbirth. These two simple words confer high praise on Claudia.

**lanam fecit:** this too was one of the traditional domestic responsibilities of the virtuous **matrona**. Students may well be unfamiliar with what this phrase means: there are some links below to provide some assistance. The students may know some myths which revolve around the skills of weaving and textile production (Penelope in the *Odyssey*, the tale of Arachne).

**dixi. abi:** the final short words mirror the short imperatives in line 1 and send the reader back on their journey.

## Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each sentence, clause, or phrase, 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.

### **hospes...asta ac perlege (line 1):**

- Who does the epitaph address? What does it say about its own message?
- What two things does it tell us to do?

### **hic...pulchrae feminae (line 2):**

- What is here? How is it described?
- Whose is it? How is she described?

### **nomen...Claudiam (line 3):**

- What was her name? Who gave her this name?

### **suum...suo (line 4):**

- Who did Claudia love? What did she love him with?

### **natos...terra locat (lines 5-6):**

- Who did she bear?
- Where does she leave one of them? Where is the other one?
- What does this mean has happened to each of the two children?

### **sermone... fecit (lines 7-8):**

- How is her conversation described? How is her way of walking described?
- What two things did she spend her time doing?

### **dixi. abi (line 8):**

- What does the tomb say it has done?
- What does it now tell the reader to do?

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## Questions on Content and Style

1. (lines 1-2) How does the epitaph encourage the passer-by to read it?
2. (lines 3-6) What do we learn about Claudia's family here?
3. (lines 7-8) What do we learn about Claudia here?
4. (line 8) How does the text make it clear that we have reached the end?
5. (whole text) How does the author, through the style of his writing, draw our attention to what he considers important about Claudia?

## Discussion

**Themes:** marriage, expectations of women, children

The informal introduction and ending frame a serious message: the deceased woman fulfilled all the expectations imposed by a conservative society on the *materfamilias*. Students should discuss what these expectations appear to be, based on this text, and how this compares to what they observe in their other sources.

Students may notice the number of lines devoted to discussion of the family rather than Claudia. This public declaration of Claudia's qualities would have reflected well upon the husband, who would have been considered an effective *paterfamilias*, and the wider family who had instilled these values and attributes in Claudia.

Students could extend their discussion by considering the extent to which they see gendered representations of 'good' partners in the media today, and whether they perceive there to still be expectations around motherhood and 'appropriate' behaviour. This is a sensitive topic and will need to be handled with care.

The informal language of the epitaph might also suggest that there is genuine affection here. To what extent do the students agree with this conclusion?

### Questions on the whole passage

1. Why do you think that a family would set up an epitaph like this one?
2. What can we learn from this text about the expectations for Roman wives?

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### Further Information and Reading

The Cambridge Latin Course Book V Stage 38 focuses on Roman marriage and contains a detailed discussion in English. A digital version of this section can be found [here](#).

A small selection of other epitaphs for women, including translations and notes, can be found [here](#). Some further examples, with translations but no notes, can be found [here](#). These epitaphs show a range of styles and other information which was included on tombs, and provide a contrast with Claudia's relatively personal and elegant epitaph. They also reflect many of the same themes, in particular the focus on the family.

For more on women and weaving, [this site](#) offers a range of discussion and primary material relating to the Greek world which heavily influenced Roman depictions of the 'good wife' in the household. [This article](#) discusses Roman women and textiles, although it focuses more on trade.