



CSCP Support Materials
for
Eduqas GCSE Latin
Component 2



Latin Literature and Sources (Themes)
Superstition and Magic

For examination in 2021-2023

Introduction

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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 I, Stage 7** and **Book III, Stages 22-23**.

Theme B: Superstition and Magic

Candidates are expected to be familiar with the following aspects of the theme:

- the work of an augur,
- the work of a hauspex;
- defixiones (curse-tablets).

Candidates should study the pictures in the [Eduqas Prescribed Material Booklet](#), one or more of which will be used as a basis for questions in each question paper. Candidates will also answer questions on the texts in the [Eduqas Prescribed Material Booklet](#).

Introduction

The Roman world was filled with gods and their landscape was filled with ritual. A pool might be the home of a nymph, a tree the home of a dryad; the threshold of every building held significance and every crossroad might be a meeting place of spirits. There was a world in which you interacted with the divine and the supernatural on a regular basis.

State religious practices and worship of the main gods was organised by prescribed ritual and conducted by colleges of priests. These religious practices were often held in public, but for the most part the people played a fairly passive role, unable to enter most temples or to take a direct part in the ceremonies. There were also regular festivals and rituals throughout the year, observed by the population as a whole and which marked out the Roman calendar.

In addition to public and collective interactions with the divine, an individual might choose to be initiated into a cult such as those of Isis or Mithras, often undergoing training or a series of tests before reaching the status of initiate. These cults enabled worshippers to establish a more personal connection with a specific power and perhaps to hope for a reward in return for their devotion. These cults were tolerated in Roman society provided that they did not interfere with an individual's participation in the rites of the established Roman religion.

Any individual might experience direct contact with the divine or supernatural in other ways. Dreams were held in great esteem as tools of divination, whether you believed they were messages and instructions direct from the gods or symbols to enable you to make sense of your life. Dream manuals survive from the Roman world which show us that people regularly consulted on the meanings of their dreams. In fact the Romans made use of a wide range of divination techniques. For Platonists and Stoics, everything in the world was imbued with the cosmic soul and therefore could be used to tell the future. Acts of divination were as varied as casting sand into the wind and observing the patterns it made as it fell, or observing the patterns of flames in a fire.

This selection of sources looks at some of the different ways in which the Romans experienced contact with the world of superstition and magic: through forms of divination; through their perceptions of supernatural creatures; and through their attempts to control this world with spells and curses.

Exploration of the theme

In this theme, the following topics will be covered:

- communication with the world of the divine
 - sacrifices
 - appeasing the dead
- divination
 - the work of an *augur*
 - the work of a *haruspex*
 - dreams
 - omens
- curses
 - *defixiones*
 - spells
- warding off evil
 - sacrifices
- the supernatural
 - depiction of witches and witchcraft
 - werewolves
 - spirits
 - some magical places and artefacts

Students will undoubtedly have their own knowledge which they can bring to this topic. Explorations which compare ancient and modern attitudes towards magic and superstition are to be encouraged.

Ways to start might include establishing what superstitions they know from their own experience, e.g. black cats crossing your path, saying 'bless you' after sneezes, avoiding walking under ladders, breaking a mirror etc. They may also know ways of 'telling the future' (tarot, for example).

Modern depictions of werewolves are very similar to ancient ones, and so students may well have a clear idea of how they look and act. Comparisons of ancient depictions of witches with later European witch trials is illuminating in terms of similar prejudices against women.

It may be useful to tackle the source material thematically. The texts are presented in the booklet in alphabetical order according to author in order that the teacher is free to use their professional judgement in presenting the material to their students in whatever order seems best.

Sources

Source	Type	Writer and Context	Subject and Themes
Images			
Picture 1: Road surrounded by tombs	Via dei Sepolcri, Pompeii		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> appeasing the spirits of the dead magical artefacts and locations
Picture 2: A <i>defixio</i> (curse tablet)	lead tablet		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicating with the divine magical artefacts
Picture 3: Preparations for a sacrifice	altar		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the role of a priest how a sacrifice is carried out
Picture 4: Bronze model of a liver	bronze model		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the role of the <i>haruspex</i> divination through haruspicy
Picture 5: Romulus and Remus' augury	print		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> divination through augury
Picture 6: Augustus (centre) as an <i>augur</i>	altar		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> divination through augury the objects and dress of an augur
Text			
Horace <i>Odes</i> 3.27.1-16	poetry excerpt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> writer of poetry in a variety of styles the poet wishes good omens upon a friend departing the city on a long voyage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the poet gives a list of bad omens
Martial <i>Epigrams</i> 7.54	poetry whole work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> writer of short poems (epigrams) on various subjects the poet addresses Nasidienus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the poet takes bad dreams very seriously evidence for how to ward off bad omens

Ovid <i>Amores</i> 1.8.1-18	poetry excerpt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writer of love poetry • the poet is writing as though he is hiding on the threshold of his girlfriend's home • describing the old woman he sees talking to his girlfriend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the poet describes a Roman witch and what powers she was supposed to have had
Petronius <i>Satyricon</i> 61-62	prose excerpt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writer and member of the imperial court • an excerpt from a novel • a first person account told at a dinner party 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the author describes an encounter with a werewolf
Pliny <i>Letters</i> 5.5	letter excerpt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lawyer, politician and writer • letter to his friend • writing about the death of the writer Gaius Fannius 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a dream is described and interpreted
Suetonius <i>Divus Iulius</i> 81	prose excerpt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writer of biography • writing about the death of Julius Caesar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a haruspex warns Caesar of his impending assassination • an unfavourable sacrifice is performed • there are further bad omens
Virgil <i>Aeneid</i> 4.504-521	poetry excerpt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writer of epic poetry • the queen of Carthage prepares a curse for Aeneas • the setting is the legendary past 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a description of the ritual surrounding a curse • magical artefacts are described • the appearance of a practitioner of magic

As is usual with Latin literature, we should bear in mind that the authors we are hearing from are male and upper-class.

Suggestions for reading and teaching

Key aims are:

- Understanding the meaning of the Latin
- Literary appreciation
- Developing an understanding of the topic

It is often useful to adopt the following approach when introducing students to original literature:

- Read the Latin aloud to emphasise phrasing and stress word groups
- Break up more complex sentences into constituent parts for comprehension
- Focus on comprehension of the text and understanding the content through questioning and using the vocabulary
- Look closely at how the Latin is expressed and the ways in which the literary devices enhance the meaning.
- Although a sample translation is provided in the course resources, teachers might want to encourage their students to make their own version after various options have been discussed and evaluated. The first step is a literal translation, then something more polished in natural English that is as close to the structure and vocabulary of the original Latin as possible. Students will soon see that a degree of paraphrasing may be required when the Latin does not readily translate into correct and idiomatic English.

About the Teacher's Notes

The following *Notes* focus on language, content, style and literary effect. The *Discussion* and *Questions* focus mostly on literary appreciation and interpretation. Rhetorical and technical terms are used throughout the notes. Some of these may be unfamiliar to teachers new to teaching Latin literature; a definition will be supplied. As the teacher is free to teach these sources in any order they wish, there will be duplication within the notes from time to time.

The notes are designed to provide for the needs of a wide spectrum of teachers, from those with limited knowledge of Latin and who are perhaps entirely new to reading Latin literature, to teachers experienced in both language and literature. It is hoped that all will find something of use and interest. **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.**

Some of the information contained in the notes is for general interest and to satisfy the curiosity of students and teachers. **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.
 - **Discussion** suggestions for students and overarching **Themes** which appear across more than one source.
 - **Suggested Questions for Comprehension, Content, Style and Culture** to be used with students.
 - **Further Information and Reading** for teachers who wish to explore the topic and texts further. None of this is intended for examination.
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Further reading on Magic and Superstition

Cambridge Latin Course Book 1, Stage 7, pages 93-95 (Roman beliefs about life after death)

Cambridge Latin Course Book 3, Stage 22, pages 34-35 (Magic and curses)

Cambridge Latin Course Book 3, Stage 23, pages 48-53 (Roman religion, including divination)

B. Ankarloo and S Clark, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe, Vol. 2: Ancient Greece and Rome* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999)

Mary Beard, John North and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome Vol. 1: A History* (Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Mary Beard, John North and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome Vol. 2: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge University Press, 1998)

G. Luck, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (John Hopkins University Press, 2006)

D. Ogden, *Night's Black Agents: Witches, Wizards and the Dead in the Ancient World* (Bloomsbury, 2008)