



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

GCSE (9–1) Latin
J282/06 Literature and Culture
Prescribed Sources Booklet

‘The History Exam’

It is expected that learners will be familiar with the sources in this booklet and will have studied sources from elsewhere relevant to the topic studied.

Section C: **Myths and Beliefs**

1. Roman Gods

Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Venus, Neptune, Minerva, Apollo, Diana, Vulcan, Vesta, Pluto, Mercury and their roles

2. State religion

Temple of Jupiter in Pompeii, sacrifices

3. Beliefs in the after-life

Tombs in Pompeii, beliefs about life after death

4. Aeneas, Romulus and Remus

The exile from Troy, visit to the underworld, Romulus and Remus found Rome

C. Myths and Beliefs

1. Roman Gods

- (i) Six couches were put out in public; one for Jupiter and Juno, another for Neptune and Minerva, a third for Mars and Venus, a fourth for Apollo and Diana, a fifth for Vulcan and Vesta, and the sixth for Mercury and Ceres.

Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 22.10.9

- (ii) *Jupiter and Mercury visit an old couple, Baucis and Philemon.*

Jupiter once came here, disguised as a mortal, and with him
His son, the messenger Mercury, wand and wings set aside,
Looking for shelter and rest, they called at a thousand homesteads
A thousand doors were bolted against them. One house, however
Did make them welcome, a humble abode with a roof of straw
And marsh reed, one that knew its duty to gods and men.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 8.626–631

- (iii) *Gilt bronze head of Minerva*



2. State Religion

(i) *The Lupercalia festival*

They (the Luperci) cut the hides of goats into strips and run through the city, naked except for a loin covering, lashing anyone in their way with the strips of the goat hide. However, women of child-bearing age do not avoid the lashings, since they think that they aid in fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth.

Plutarch, *Romulus*, 21.3-5

(ii) *Temple of Jupiter, Pompeii*



(iii) *Temple of Vesta, Rome*



(iv) *Christianity in Rome*

First, Nero had the self-admitted Christians arrested. Then, on their information, large numbers of others were condemned – not so much for starting fires as because of their hatred for the human race. Their deaths were made amusing. Dressed in wild animals' skins, they were torn to pieces by dogs, or crucified, or made into torches to be set on fire after dark as illumination.... Despite their guilt as Christians, and the ruthless punishment it deserved, the victims were pitied. For it was felt that they were being sacrificed to one man's brutality rather than to the national interest."

Tacitus, *Annals*, 15.47

[After the Great Fire] punishments were also inflicted on the Christians, a sect professing a new and mischievous religious belief.

Suetonius, *Life of the Emperor Nero*, 16

(v) *The Emperor Marcus Aurelius makes a sacrifice*



(vi) *A Roman family sacrificing food and drink*



(vii) *Caesar is marching towards Rome with his army. The seer Arruns seeks a sign from the gods on what is to come.*

[Arruns] sanctified the place, and brought a sacrificial bull to a holy altar, a bull chosen for its size, but when he began to pour the wine, and sprinkle the grain from his slanting knife, the victim struggled violently against the unwelcome sacrifice; yet when the noble attendants dragged on its horns it sank to earth, helplessly offering its unprotected neck to the blow. The liquid that flowed from the gaping wound was not red blood but a strange and terrible slime. Appalled by the dark outcome, Arruns grew pale, and snatched up the entrails to read the cause of divine anger. Their very colour alarmed him, the organs, black with congealed gore, were marked with signs of malignant sickness, covered everywhere with dull patches, and spots of blood. The liver, he saw, was flabby and rotten, with ominous streaks on its exposed part. The branches of the panting lungs were indistinct, with only a thin membrane separating the vital organs. The heart was flattened, the flesh exuded corrupted blood through gaping cracks, and the bowels betrayed their hiding place. Behold, he saw a horror never once witnessed in a victim's entrails without disaster following; a vast second lobe grew on the lobe of the liver, so that one part hung flabby with sickness, while the other quivered and its veins trembled to an a-rhythmic beat. Perceiving the prediction of profound disaster, he cried aloud: 'I scarcely dare to reveal to man the evil the gods prepare. My sacrifice finds favour, not with mighty Jove but with the infernal gods who enter the body of this dead bull. We feared the worst, but what follows will be worse than our fears.'

Lucan, *Pharsalia*, 1.606-637

3. Beliefs in the afterlife

(i) Tombs, Pompeii



(ii) *Respecting the dead*

Honour is given to tombs as well. Placate the souls of your fathers and bring small gifts to the pyres after they have died down. The dead want only small gifts, piety pleases them more than a rich gift: the gods in the depths of the Styx are not greedy. A tile wreathed in garlands you offer is enough, along with sprinkled corn and a few grains of salt, and bread softened in wine and loose violets. Put these in the jar left in the middle of the road. I do not forbid larger gifts, but a ghost can be placated even by these. Add prayers and appropriate words at the hearths you have set up. This was the custom which Aeneas, fit source of piety, brought to your lands, righteous Latinus. He used to bring solemn gifts to the spirit of his father; from this the peoples learned the pious rites. But once upon time, while they waged long wars with fighting weapons, they abandoned the Parental Days. This did not go unpunished; for it is said that it was from that omen that Rome grew hot with the pyres of the dead outside the city. In fact I scarcely believe this: they say that our ancestors came out of their graves and uttered groans during the silent night, and they say that through the city streets and the wide fields howled ugly spirits, a ghostly crowd. After that, the honours they had neglected were given to the tombs, and the prodigies and funerals came to an end.

Ovid, *Fasti*, 2.533-570

(iii) *Other beliefs on the afterlife*

All men, after their last day, return to what they were before the first; and after death there is no more sensation left in the body or in the soul than there was before birth... For what is the actual substance of the soul, when taken by itself? Of what material does it consist? Where is the seat of its thoughts? How is it to see, or hear, or how to touch? And then, of what use is it, or what can it avail, if it has not these faculties? Where, too, is its residence, and what vast multitudes of these souls and spirits must there be after the lapse of so many ages? But all these are the mere figments of childish ravings, and of that mortality which is so anxious never to cease to exist. It is a similar piece of vanity, too, to preserve the dead bodies of men; just like the promise that he shall come to life again... What downright madness is it to suppose that life is to recommence after death! Or indeed, what repose are we ever to enjoy when we have been once born, if the soul is to retain its consciousness in heaven, and the shades of the dead in the infernal regions? This pleasing delusion, and this credulity, quite cancel that chief good of human nature, death, and, as it were, double the misery of him who is about to die, by anxiety as to what is to happen to him after it. And, indeed, if life really is a good, to whom can it be so to have once lived? How much more easy, then, and how much more devoid of all doubts, is it for each of us to put his trust in himself, and guided by our knowledge of what our state has been before birth, to assume that that after death will be the same.

Pliny, *Natural History*, 7.55

(iv)

CARA MEIS VIXI VIRGO VITAM REDDIDI
MORTVA HIC SVM CINIS IS CINIS TERRA [E]ST
SIN EST TERRA DEA EGO SVM DEA MORTVA NON SVM
ROGO TE HOSPES NOLI OSSA MEA VIOLARE
MVS VIXIT ANNOS XIII

I lived, dear to my parents. As a young girl I gave up my life. Here I am, dead. I am ash. The ash is earth. But if earth is a goddess, I am a goddess. I am not dead. I ask you, stranger, do not disturb my bones. Mus (= Mouse) lived 13 years.

CIL 6. 35887, Rome

(v)



ALEXANDER BUBULARIUS DE MACELLO
QUI VIXIT ANNIS XXX
ANIMA BONA OMNIORUM AMICUS
DORMITIO TUA INTER DICAIS

Alexander, beef-seller from the market, who lived thirty years, good soul, friend of all, may your sleep be amongst the just.

AN2007.51, Rome

4. Aeneas, Romulus and Remus

- (i) Yet destiny wouldn't allow Troy's hopes to be overturned
Along with her walls. Aeneas, the hero whose mother was Venus,
Rescued his household gods and through the flames on his shoulders
He carried a burden as sacred, his venerable father Anchises.
These with his own dear son Ascanius formed the spoil
Which Aeneas the dutiful chose to salvage from all his possessions
Fleeing across the sea with his people in ships...

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 13 623–628

- (ii) *Aeneas escapes from Troy (as depicted by Bernini, the early 1600s AD)*



(iii) *A she-wolf looks after Romulus and Remus*



- (iv) They walked in the darkness of that lonely night with shadows all about them, through the empty halls of Dis and his desolate kingdom, as men walk in a wood by the sinister light of a fitful moon when Jupiter has buried the sky in shade and black night has robbed all things of their colour. Before the entrance hall of Orcus, in the very throat of hell, Grief and Revenge have made their beds and Old Age lives there in despair, with white faced Diseases and Fear and Hunger, corrupter of men, and squalid Poverty, things dreadful to look upon, and Death and Drudgery besides.

...

Here too are all manner of monstrous beasts, Centaurs stabling inside the gate, Scyllas- half dogs, half women - Briareus with his hundred heads, the Hydra of Lerna hissing fiercely, the Chimaera armed in fire, Gorgons and Harpies and the triple phantom of Geryon. Now Aeneas drew his sword in sudden alarm to meet them with naked steel as they came at him, and if his wise companion had not warned him that this was the fluttering of disembodied spirits, a mere semblance of living substance, he would have rushed upon them and parted empty shadows with steel.

Here begins the road that leads to the rolling waters of Acheron, the river of Tartarus. Here is a vast quagmire of boiling whirlpools which belches sand and slime into Cocytus, and these are the rivers and waters guarded by the terrible Charon in his filthy rags. On his chin there grows a thick grey beard, never trimmed. His glaring

eyes are lit with fire and a foul cloak hangs from a knot at his shoulder. With his own hands he plies the pole and sees to the sails as he ferries the dead in a boat the colour of burnt iron. He is no longer young but, being a god, enjoys rude strength and a green old age. The whole throng of the dead was rushing to this part of the bank, mothers, men, great-hearted heroes whose lives were ended, boys, unmarried girls and young men laid on the pyre before the faces of their parents, as many as are the leaves that fall in the forest at the first chill of autumn, as many as the birds that flock to land from deep ocean when the cold season of the year drives them over the sea to lands bathed in sun. There they stood begging to be allowed to be the first to cross and stretching out their arms in longing for the further shore. But the grim boatman takes some here and some there, and others he pushes away far back from the sandy shore.

...

'The throng you see on this side are the helpless souls of the unburied. The ferryman there is Charon. Those sailing the waters of the Styx have all been buried. No man may be ferried from fearful bank to fearful bank of this roaring current until his bones are laid to rest. Instead they wander for a hundred years, fluttering round these shores until they are at last allowed to return to the pools they have so longed for.'

Aeneas and the Sibyl sail across the river Styx to the bank opposite

The kingdom on this side resounded with barking from the three throats of the huge monster Cerberus lying in a cave in front of them. When the priestess was close enough to see the snakes writhing on his neck, she threw him a honey cake steeped in soporific drugs. He opened his three jaws, each of them rabid with hunger, and snapped it up where it fell. The massive back relaxed and he sprawled full length on the ground, filling his cave. The sentry now sunk in sleep, Aeneas leapt to take command of the entrance and was soon free of the bank of that river which no man may recross...

Aeneas has met his companion Deiphobus in the underworld

The Sibyl gave her warning in few words: 'Night is running quickly by, Aeneas, and we waste the hours in weeping. This is where the way divides. On the right it leads up to the walls of great Dis. This is the road we take for Elysium. On the left is the road of punishment for evil-doers, leading to Tartarus, the place of the damned.'

'There is no need for anger, great priestess,' replied Deiphobus. 'I shall go to take my place among the dead and return to darkness. Go, Aeneas, go, great glory of our Troy, and enjoy a better fate than mine.' These were his only words, and as he spoke he turned on his heel and strode away.

Aeneas looked back suddenly and saw under a cliff on his left a broad city encircled by a triple wall and washed all round by Phlegethon, one of the rivers of Tartarus, a

torrent of fire and flame, rolling and grinding great boulders in its current. There before him stood a huge gate with columns of solid adamant so strong that neither the violence of men nor of the heavenly gods themselves could ever uproot them in war, and an iron tower rose into the air where Tisiphone sat with her blood-soaked dress girt up, guarding the entrance and never sleeping, night or day. They could hear the groans from the city, the cruel crack of the lash, the dragging and clanking of iron chains.

...

They entered the land of joy, the lovely glades of the fortunate woods and the home of the blest. Here a broader sky clothes the plains in glowing light, and the spirits have their own sun and their own stars. Some take exercise on grassy wrestling-grounds and hold athletic contests and wrestling bouts on the golden sand. Others pound the earth with dancing feet and sing their songs while Orpheus, the priest of Thrace, accompanies their measures on his seven-stringed lyre, plucking the notes sometimes with his fingers, sometimes with his ivory plectrum.

...

Father Anchises was deep in a green valley, walking among the souls who were enclosed there and eagerly surveying them as they waited to rise into the upper light. It so happened that at that moment he was counting the number of his people, reviewing his dear descendants, their fates and their fortunes, their characters and their courage in war. When he saw Aeneas coming towards him over the grass, he stretched out both hands in eager welcome, with the tears streaming down his cheeks, and these were the words that broke from his mouth: 'You have come at last,' he cried. 'I knew your devotion would prevail over all the rigour of the journey and bring you to your father.'

...

And now Aeneas saw in a side valley a secluded grove with copses of rustling trees where the river Lethe glided along past peaceful dwelling houses. Around it fluttered numberless races and tribes of men, like bees in a meadow on a clear summer day, settling on all the many-coloured flowers and crowding round the gleaming white lilies while the whole plain is loud with their buzzing. Not understanding what he saw, Aeneas shuddered at the sudden sight of them and asked why this was, what was that river in the distance and who were all those companies of men crowding its banks.

'These are the souls to whom Fate owes a second body,' replied Anchises. 'They come to the waves of the river Lethe and drink the waters of serenity and draughts of long oblivion. I have long been eager to tell you who they are, to show them to you face to face and count the generations of my people to you so that you could rejoice the more with me ...'

Extracts from Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6.268f

(vi) *Ovid tells a condensed version of the founding of Rome.*

Proca was followed as king by Amulius. He had unjustly seized the Ausonian state by force of arms from his brother. Numitor later recovered the throne with the aid of his grandson, Romulus. So, on the feast of Pales, the god of the shepherds, the walls of the city of Rome were founded. A war was then started by Tatius the Sabine, leading the fathers of women abducted by Romulus' men...

... But peace was eventually made. They decided not to continue the fight to the end, and the royal power was divided with Tatius.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 14.771-804

(vii) They began to build a settlement, which Aeneas named Lavinium after his wife Lavinia. A child was soon born of the marriage: a boy, who was given the name Ascanius.

The Trojans and the Latins were soon jointly involved in war. Turnus, prince of the Rutuli, to whom Latinus's daughter Lavinia had been pledged before Aeneas's arrival, angered by the insult of having to step down in favour of a stranger, attacked the combined forces of Aeneas and Latinus. Both sides suffered in the subsequent struggle: the Rutuli were defeated, but the victors lost their leader Latinus. Turnus and his people, in their anxiety for the future, then looked for help to Mezentius, king of the rich and powerful Etruscans, whose seat of government was at Caere, at that time a wealthy town. Mezentius needed little persuasion to join the Rutuli, as from the outset he had been far from pleased by the rise of the new settlement, and now felt that the Trojan power was growing much more rapidly than was safe for its neighbours.

In this dangerous situation Aeneas conferred the native name of Latins upon his own people; the sharing of a common name as well as a common polity would, he felt, strengthen the bond between the two peoples. As a result of this step the original settlers were no less loyal to their king Aeneas than were the Trojans themselves. Trojans and Latins were rapidly becoming one people, and this gave Aeneas confidence to make an active move against the Etruscans, in spite of their great strength. Etruria, indeed, had at this time both by sea and land filled the whole length of Italy from the Alps to the Sicilian strait with the noise of her name; none the less Aeneas refused to act on the defensive and marched out to meet the enemy. The Latins were victorious, and for Aeneas the battle was the last of his labours in this world. He lies buried on the river Numicus. Was he man or god? However it be, men call him Jupiter Indiges - the local Jove.

Aeneas's son Ascanius was still too young for a position of authority; Lavinia, however, was a woman of great character, and acted as regent until Ascanius came of age and was able to assume power as the successor of his father and grandfather. There is some doubt - and no one can pretend to certainty on something so deeply buried in the mists of time - about who precisely this Ascanius was. Was it the one I have been discussing, or was it an elder brother, the son of Creusa, who was born before the sack of Troy and was with Aeneas in his escape from the burning city - the Iulus, in fact, whom the Julian family claim as their eponym? It is at any rate certain that Aeneas was his father, and whatever the answer to the other question may be - it can be taken as a fact that he left Lavinium to found a new settlement. Lavinium was by then a populous and, for those days, a rich and flourishing town, and Ascanius left it in charge of his mother (or stepmother, if you will) and went off to found his new settlement on the Alban hills.

This town, strung out as it was along a ridge, was named Alba Longa. Its foundation took place about thirty years after that of Lavinium but the Latins had already grown so strong, especially since the defeat of the Etruscans, that neither Mezentius, the Etruscan king, nor any other neighbouring people dared to attack them, even when Aeneas died and the control of things passed temporarily into the hands of a woman, and Ascanius was still a child learning the elements of kingship. By the terms of the treaty between the Latins and Etruscans the river Albula (now the Tiber) became the boundary between the two territories.

Livy lists Ascanius' descendants until he reaches Proca.

Proca, the next king, had two sons, Numitor and Amulius, to the elder of whom, Numitor, he left the hereditary realm of the Silvan family; that, at least, was his intention, but respect for seniority was flouted, the father's will ignored and Amulius drove out his brother and seized the throne. One act of violence led to another; he proceeded to murder his brother's male children, and made his niece, Rhea Silvia, a Vestal, ostensibly to do her honour, but actually by condemning her to perpetual virginity to exclude the possibility of issue. But (I must believe) it was already written in the book of fate that this great city of ours should arise, and the first steps be taken to the founding of the mightiest empire the world has known - next to God's. The Vestal Virgin ... gave birth to twin boys. Mars, she declared, was their father - perhaps she believed it, perhaps she was merely hoping by the pretence to alleviate her guilt. Whatever the truth of the matter, neither gods nor men could save her or her babes from the savage hands of the king.

The mother was bound and flung into prison; the boys, by the king's order, were condemned to be drowned in the river. Destiny, however, intervened; the Tiber had overflowed its banks; because of the flooded ground it was impossible to get to the actual river, and the men entrusted to do the deed thought that the flood-water, sluggish though it was, would serve their purpose. Accordingly they made shift to carry out the king's orders by leaving the infants on the edge of the first flood-water they came to, at the spot where now stands the Ruminal fig-tree - said to have once been known as the fig-tree of Romulus. In those days the country thereabouts was all wild and uncultivated, and the story goes that when the basket in which the infants

had been exposed was left high and dry by the receding water, a she-wolf, coming down from the neighbouring hills to quench her thirst, heard the children crying and made her way to where they were. She offered them her teats to suck and treated them with such gentleness that Faustulus, the king's herdsman, found her licking them with her tongue. Faustulus took them to his hut and gave them to his wife Larentia to nurse. ...

By the time they were grown boys, they employed themselves actively on the farm and with the flocks and began to go hunting in the woods; their strength grew with their resolution, until not content only with the chase they took to attacking robbers and sharing their stolen goods with their friends the shepherds. ... Brigands, incensed at the loss of their ill-gotten gains, laid a trap for Romulus and Remus. Romulus successfully defended himself, but Remus was caught and handed over to Amulius. The brigands laid a complaint against their prisoner, the main charge being that he and his brother were in the habit of raiding Numitor's land with an organized gang of ruffians and stealing the cattle. Thereupon Remus was handed over for punishment to Numitor. Now Faustulus had suspected all along that the boys he was bringing up were of royal blood. He knew that two infants had been exposed by the king's orders, and the rescue of his own two fitted perfectly in point of time. Hitherto, however, he had been unwilling to declare what he knew, until either a suitable opportunity occurred or circumstances compelled him. Now the truth could no longer be concealed, so in his alarm he told Romulus the whole story; Numitor, too, when he had Remus in custody and was told that the brothers were twins, was set thinking about his grandsons; the young men's age and character, so different from the lowly born, confirmed his suspicions; and further inquiries led him to the same conclusion, until he was on the point of acknowledging Remus. The net was closing in, and Romulus acted. He was not strong enough for open hostilities, so he instructed a number of the herdsmen to meet at the king's house by different routes at a preordained time; this was done, and with the help of Remus, at the head of another body of men, the king was surprised and killed.

Before the first blows were struck, Numitor gave it out that an enemy had broken into the town and attacked the palace; he then drew off all the men of military age to garrison the inner fortress, and, as soon as he saw Romulus and Remus, their purpose accomplished, coming to congratulate him, he summoned a meeting of the people and laid the facts before it: Amulius' crime against himself, the birth of his grandsons, and the circumstances attending it, how they were brought up and ultimately recognized, and, finally, the murder of the king for which he himself assumed responsibility. The two brothers marched through the crowd at the head of their men and saluted their grandfather asking, and by a shout of unanimous consent his royal title was confirmed. Romulus and Remus, after the control of Alba had passed to Numitor in the way I have described, were suddenly seized by an urge to found a new settlement on the spot where they had been left to drown as infants and had been subsequently brought up.

There was, in point of fact, already an excess of population at Alba, what with the Albans themselves, the Latins, and the addition of the herdsmen: enough, indeed, to

justify the hope that Alba and Lavinium would one day be small places compared with the proposed new settlement. Unhappily the brothers' plans for the future were marred by the same source which had divided their grandfather and Amulius - jealousy and ambition. A disgraceful quarrel arose from a matter in itself trivial. As the brothers were twins and all question of seniority was thereby precluded, they determined to ask the tutelary gods of the countryside to declare by augury which of them should govern the new town once it was founded, and give his name to it. For Palatine hill and Remus the Aventine as their respective stations from which to observe the auspices. Remus, the story goes, was the first to receive a sign - six vultures; and no sooner was this made known to the people than double the number of birds appeared to Romulus. The followers of each promptly saluted their master as king, one side basing its claim upon priority, the other upon number. Angry words ensued, followed all too soon by blows, and in the course of the affray Remus was killed. ...

This, then, was how Romulus obtained the sole power. The newly built city was called by its founder's name.

Extracts from Livy, *History of Rome*, 1.4–6