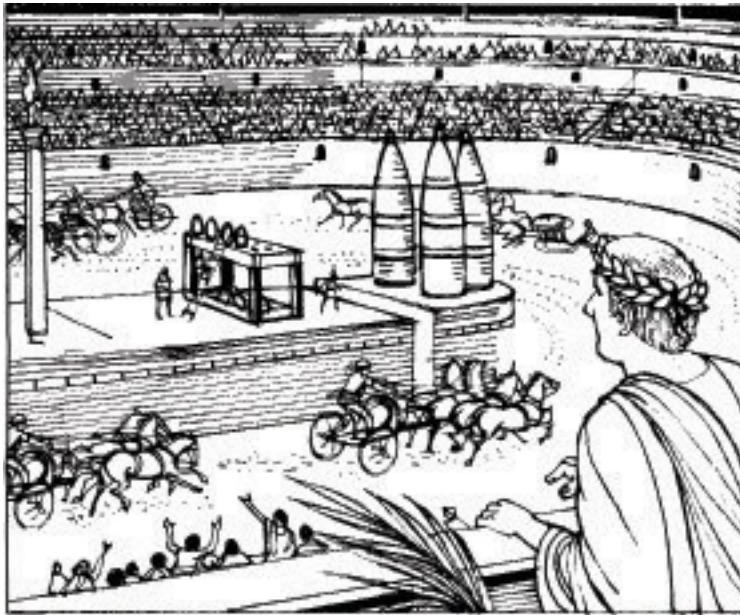


EDUQAS

Latin GCSE

Component 2:  
Themed Literature



Theme A:  
A day at the Races

Teacher's Notes

## A Day at the Races: Teacher's Notes

### Introduction

The prose and verse passages in this selection give an impression of a day spent at the races and show the place of chariot-racing in Roman life. As usual with Latin literature, the voices we hear are those of men of the upper and middle classes. The ordinary people of Rome and women also attended the Circus, but their experience comes down to us only filtered through the lens of élite men.

Passage	Type	Writer and Context	Subject and Themes
Ovid <i>Amores</i> 3.2 lines 1-14, 65-82	poetry excerpt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writer of love poetry</li> <li>• speaker is a young man (the poet himself or a fictional persona)</li> <li>• speaking to a young woman</li> <li>• setting is the Circus in Rome</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Circus as a good place to find a girlfriend</li> <li>• the excitement of watching the races</li> <li>• composition and behaviour of the crowd</li> <li>• what happened at the races, e.g. the starting gate, negotiating the <b>mētae</b>, restarting the race</li> </ul>
Martial <i>Epigrams</i> 10.50	poetry whole work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writer of short poems (epigrams) on various subjects</li> <li>• the poet addresses Scopus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lament for the dead charioteer, Scopus</li> <li>• status of charioteers in Roman society</li> </ul>
Pliny <i>Letters</i> 9.6	letter whole work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lawyer, politician and writer</li> <li>• letter to a friend</li> <li>• writing about chariot races in Rome</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pliny explains why he isn't going to the Circus</li> <li>• attitudes to chariot-racing</li> <li>• the passions raised by chariot-racing</li> <li>• information about how the games were organised</li> </ul>
Juvenal <i>Satire</i> 11 lines 197-204	poetry excerpt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writer of satire</li> <li>• writing about the Circus Maximus in Rome</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the poet describes the crowd in the Circus and explains why he prefers not to attend himself</li> <li>• the passionate partisanship aroused by chariot-racing</li> <li>• evidence for the activities that could be enjoyed at the Circus</li> </ul>

Suetonius <i>Caligula</i> 55	prose excerpt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writer of biographies of the emperors</li> <li>• writing about the recent past</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emperor Caligula's treatment of his favourite horse</li> <li>• passions aroused by chariot-racing</li> <li>• status of charioteers</li> </ul>
Suetonius <i>Nero</i> 22	prose excerpt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writer of biographies of the emperors</li> <li>• writing about the recent past</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emperor Nero's passion for chariot-racing</li> <li>• popularity of chariot-racing at all levels of society</li> <li>• attitudes to chariot-racing and its fans</li> </ul>
Virgil, <i>Aeneid</i> 5 lines 139-159	poetry excerpt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writer of epic poetry</li> <li>• boat race is part of fictional funeral games</li> <li>• setting is legendary past</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a boat race</li> <li>• compared to chariot race</li> <li>• excitement of crowd</li> <li>• tactics</li> </ul>

### The Passages

The passages were all written in the period between c. 27 BC and c. AD 130, i.e. the first one hundred and sixty years of the Empire, by writers living in Rome. They are presented in (roughly) chronological order, with the exception of the Virgil; although the earliest chronologically, the passage from the *Aeneid* is placed last because it differs from the others in several ways: it is not a chariot race; it is fictional; it is set in the distant past in Sicily rather than in contemporary or recent Rome. There is, of course, no need to study the passages in this order. They could be explored according to subject matter and themes, or they could be studied according to the difficulty of the text.

### About the Teacher's Notes

The notes on each passage begin with a brief introduction, including some information about each author and his works. The notes cover language, content, style and literary effects. Some common rhetorical devices are pointed out. However, it should be made clear to students that in the examination it will not be enough to identify a figure of speech; what is important is the ability to explain the effect of stylistic devices such as repetition of sounds (alliteration) - using the technical term is just a useful shorthand. The notes on the verse passages identify the metre and pay some attention to metrical effects, but there is no attempt to explain how metre works in Latin poetry. Each set of notes is designed to be used independently, so that the passages may be read in any order. As a result, some material is repeated. The notes include discussion and questions.

Teachers should not feel that they need to pass on all the information from the Teacher's Notes to their students; they should choose whatever they think is appropriate. The examination presupposes no knowledge by candidates except what is contained in the passages themselves or is essential for understanding the text.

### Exploration of the theme

Students will bring their own experiences and knowledge to this topic. They should be encouraged to explore contemporary attitudes towards leisure and entertainment

and compare them with those in Roman times. Students might begin to engage with the theme by thinking about their own experience of attending a sporting or cultural event such as a football match or a pop concert or festival.

One way of starting the exploration is to show the chariot race from the film *Ben Hur*. Alternatively, introduce the theme by talking about some of the pictures included in the prescribed material; Picture 2, the model of the Circus Maximus, would be a good starting point. This is an opportunity to introduce some of the specialist vocabulary students will meet in their reading.

### **Cultural context**

Teachers will decide how much information about the Circus Maximus and chariot-racing their students will need before reading the texts. Much can be derived from the texts themselves, while some material can be provided as explanation in the course of reading. It is advisable not to overload students with information before they start reading. However, teachers may appreciate a brief overview; more detail is given in the notes on individual texts.

Chariot-racing was the most popular form of public entertainment in Rome. Charioteers were popular heroes who could earn large sums in prize money and gifts from wealthy supporters. The most important venue was the Circus Maximus. A circus was an oval-shaped open-air track with two long sides and seats for spectators down both sides. The starting gates (**carcerēs**) led on to one end of the track, and there was a turning post (**mēta**) at each end. Chariot races were originally part of a religious festival, and there was a general association of the whole event and place with religion. The god Consus had an underground altar in the Circus, and there were temples near the **carcerēs** and statues of gods on the **spīna** (the central spine of the track). Four teams competed, each consisting of one, two or three chariots. A race (**cūrsus**) was seven laps of the track. The charioteer had to race at full speed down the length of the track, then slow down to negotiate the turning post (**mēta**) to avoid losing ground.

### **Understanding the text**

This is likely to be the first experience most students have of reading real Latin and some of the features, particularly word order, will be unfamiliar. Sentence length may cause difficulty. Teachers can help in three ways:

- read the Latin text aloud, to emphasise phrasing and stress wordgroups;
- break up complex sentences into constituent parts for comprehension;
- ask leading questions.

### **Comprehension and translation**

Students should be made aware of the types of question which will be set in the examination. They need to know that translation is not the main method of assessment and that it is not enough to be able to translate the Latin; they have to understand the Latin text well enough to choose and quote individual words and phrases to support their answers.

## Aims and methods

Activities for students	Aims
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding what the Latin means</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop reading competence</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring the themes arising in each passage and in the selection as a whole</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflect on themselves and their own society and culture in the light of their consideration of other people, societies and cultures separated in space and time</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engaging with the Latin text/examining language use</li> <li>• interpreting the text</li> <li>• analysis and evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop a critical insight into the way language is used to develop trains of thought, to express feeling or to influence people</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• showing knowledge and understanding by answering questions</li> <li>• expressing opinions and feelings</li> <li>• creative translation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appreciate critically and make an informed and personal response to the language, literary forms, techniques and qualities of the texts</li> </ul>

### Further reading

*Cambridge Latin Course* Book IV, Stage 33, pages 89-90

Jerome Carcopino, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome: The People and the City at the Height of the Empire* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1941; repr. 1991)

## Notes on the Passages

### Ovid, *Amores* 3.2 (lines 1-14, 65-82): *A good day at the Circus*

#### Introduction - Ovid

Publius Ovidius Naso (43 BC - AD 17) was born in Sulmo, about ninety miles east of Rome, to a wealthy equestrian family. He was educated in Rome and lived there most of his life, until AD 8, when the Emperor Augustus exiled him to Tomis on the Black Sea (in modern Romania). The reasons for his banishment are not known exactly. He himself says that it was because of **carmen et error** (a poem and a mistake). The poem was the *Ars Amatoria* (*The Art of Love*); the mistake may have been a scandal, possibly involving Augustus' family. Ovid was a prolific and versatile poet. As well as the love poems *Amores* and *Ars Amatoria*, his works include *Metamorphoses* (a collection of myths bound together by the theme of transformation) and *Tristia* (*Sad Poems*), which he wrote while in exile.

#### Summary

The poem gives a vivid and exciting account of a visit to the races. It takes the form of a dramatic monologue by a young man speaking to the woman sitting next to him. However, the narrator hasn't come to the Circus because he is interested in chariot-racing. The attraction of the races for him is that it is a good place to pick up a girl, and his commentary on the day's events is an elaborate chat-up line. The extract falls into three parts. In the first part (lines 1-8) the poet chats up the girl; in the second (lines 9-14) he imagines he is the charioteer; the third part (lines 15-32) describes the race.

#### Text and adaptation

This is an extract from a much longer poem. The language of the original has not been changed, but the text has been abridged: a passage of 50 lines has been omitted between lines 14 and 15, and the last two lines have been cut.

#### Suggestions for reading and teaching

This is one of the more difficult pieces in the selection, so you might want to leave it until nearer the end. The setting at the races will need some preparation. Some of the visual material could be studied in advance, perhaps enlivened by watching the chariot race from the film *Ben Hur*. This is an opportunity to introduce some of the specialist vocabulary students will meet: **cursus** (race, track), **faveō** (support), **agitātor** (driver), **carcer** (starting-gate), **lōra dare** (relax the reins), **verber** (whip), **mēta** (turning post), **rota** (wheel), **quadriugī equī** (chariots drawn by a team of four horses), **axis** (chariot), **palma** (palm of victory).

The poem starts abruptly and students will need to be guided carefully to pick up the clues about the situation in the first few lines. The speaker is not named and there is no reason to identify him with Ovid; the 'I' of the poem is a poetic persona adopted by the author. In the notes below he is referred to as the speaker, the narrator, the poet, or sometimes, for convenience, rather inexactly as Ovid. For convenience some teachers might prefer to use 'Ovid' throughout.

#### Language and Style

Some of the language is conversational and quite straightforward; some, however, is highly wrought and artificial. Students will need a lot of help in places, especially with unfamiliar forms and constructions, and with word order. Split phrases, in which an adjective or participle is separated from the noun it qualifies, will cause some difficulty. In dealing with these the class will be helped by careful phrasing when the teacher reads the passage aloud, and by periodic reminders that each phrase or sentence must be read through to the end. Ovid's practice of putting the subordinate clause before the main

clause of the sentence may cause particular difficulty.

### Further reading

#### Translations

Guy Lee, *Ovid's Amores* (London: John Murray, 1968)

A.D. Melville, *Ovid: the Love Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)

#### Commentaries

Jennifer Ingleheart and Katharine Radice, *Ovid: Amores III A Selection: 2,4,5,14* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press 2011; repr. London: Bloomsbury 2013)

### Metre

Elegiac couplets

### Notes

**Lines 1-4** (*Amores* 3.2 lines 1-4)

*The speaker of the poem plunges into conversation with his neighbour as they watch the preparations for the chariot races in the Circus. He declares quite openly that he is more interested in her than in the races.*

**1 nōn ... equōrum:** it isn't clear at first whether **nōn** qualifies **sedeō**, **studiōsus**, or even **nōbīlium**. Some teachers might prefer to help their students with this from the start, or use leading questions. However, many students would enjoy the challenge of unravelling the meaning for themselves. Perhaps start by translating the line phrase by phrase, but postpone putting it together until line 3 has been understood. The translated phrases could be put on the board and referred to later:

not I am sitting a fan (masculine; refers to I) of well-bred horses

**1-2 studiōsus, ipsa:** it is important that students take notice of the endings of these words, as they give clues about the gender of the speaker and the person being spoken to. **studiōsus** describes **ego** and has a masculine ending (-us); **ipsa** has a feminine ending (-a), and is the subject of **favēs** ('you support'). Ovid thus makes it clear that a man is speaking to a woman.

**1 ego nōbīlium ... studiōsus equōrum:** the interlacing of nouns (or pronouns) and adjectives is a common feature of Latin poetry. Teachers may want to draw students' attention to this arrangement of words. If this is their first experience of reading Latin poetry the unfamiliar word order will be a difficulty for students. It may be best to use comprehension questions, such as:

- Pick out the two adjectives in line 1.
- Which adjective describes **ego**?
- Which adjective describes the horses? What does it mean?

**2 cuī tamen ipsa favēs, vincat ut ille, precor:** tricky word order and students will need a lot of help. The antecedent of **cui** is **ille**. **vincat ut ille** depends on **precor**. Ovid often puts a subordinate clause before the clause it depends on. It is also common in poetry to postpone a conjunction (**ut**), which would normally be the first word in its clause. **ille** refers to the charioteer. One approach is to help students by rearranging the words:

*precor tamen ut ille, cui ipsa favēs, vincat*

Alternatively break the sentence down into phrases and ask questions:

**precor:** what is the speaker (I) doing?

**ut ille vincat:** what is he praying for? Who do you think **ille** refers to?

**[ille] cui favēs:** which charioteer does he want to win?

**ipsa:** what does this word tell us about the person he is speaking to?

**1-2 nōn ego nōbīlium sedeō studiōsus equōrum; cuī tamen ipsa favēs, vincat ut ille,**

**precor:** the first two lines of the poem have the maximum number of dactyls. This gives a sense of speed. The young man sounds as if he is plunging breathlessly into conversation with the girl.

**3 ut loquerer tēcum vēnī:** ensure students don't confuse **vēnī** (1st person singular perfect tense) with **venī** (imperative). Again, the subordinate clause precedes the verb it depends on: *vēnī ut loquerer tēcum*. Ask students: Why has he come to the Circus?

**loquerer tēcum... tēcum sedērem:** notice the word order (ABBA); an example of chiasmus. The effect is to focus all the speaker's attention on the person he is speaking to.

**4 3-4 tēcum ... tēcumque ... tibi ...:** notice how Ovid repeats the personal pronoun in various forms. The effect continues in line 5 with **tū ... tē**.

**5 nē tibi nōn nōtus, quem facis, esset amor:** 'so that you are in no doubt of the love which you cause'. Literally, 'so that the love, which you make, should not be unknown to you'. The antecedent of **quem** is **amor**. The double negatives cancel each other out, as in English; the effect is emphatic.

### Discussion

The poem begins by jumping straight into the man's conversation with the girl and the reader has to work out what is happening as the situation develops, without any scene-setting. Encourage students to pick up the clues in the first three lines for themselves, and try not to give too much away. Line 1 can be translated in several ways and it isn't until line 3 that the correct solution becomes apparent. It is important therefore to read and explore lines 1-3 as a unit before attempting a translation. As there is no sentence break at the end of line 3, it might be preferable to postpone an attempt at translation until the first four lines have been explored. Pause at this point to recapitulate lines 1-4. Perhaps begin by checking students' understanding by means of questions 1-5 below (they could do these individually in writing). Now go back to line 1, and ask for a translation. Students should now realise that what the poet is saying is that he hasn't come to the Circus to watch the races.

If students lack confidence in translating, a useful exercise might be to put a literal translation on the board:

I do not sit a fan of thoroughbred horses

Now, ask them which English words they need to add so this makes sense. They may need some prompting to come up with:

I do not sit *here as/because I am* a fan of well-bred horses

Asking for more alternatives might produce something like:

I am not sitting here because I am a fan of thoroughbred horses

### Questions

1. Where is the speaker?
2. Who is he sitting next to?
3. What is his attitude to chariot-racing?
4. Why has he come to the Circus?
5. What age do you think the speaker and the person he is addressing might be?
6. Which words emphasise that the speaker is focusing all his attention on the woman he is speaking to?



**Lines 5-8** (*Amores* 3.2 lines 5-8)

The speaker suggests to his neighbour that while she watches the races he should look at her. He then expresses envy for the charioteer she supports.

**6 tū ... ego:** the personal pronouns at the beginning of each clause emphasise the contrast between 'I' and 'you'. The contrast can be expressed in translation by adding 'while': 'You ..., while I ...'.

**ego tē:** add **spectō**. The verb **spectō** has to be understood from the next clause. Roman writers often leave out a word when it can be supplied from the context by the reader.

**3-5 tēcum ... tēcumque ... tibi ... tū ... tē:** notice how Ovid repeats the personal pronoun in various forms in these lines: **tēcum ... tēcum ... tibi ... tū ... tē**.

**5-6 spectēmus uterque ... pāscat uterque:** 'let us each look at ... let each feast'. The present subjunctive form of the verb expresses an encouragement or a command (jussive subjunctive). See *Cambridge Latin Grammar* page 48, Section 12.3 and 4.

**7 quod iuvat:** 'what pleases (us)', i.e. 'what we (each) like'

**oculōs ... suōs:** split noun + adjective phrase. This is a common arrangement of words in poetry and students will gradually become familiar with it. At first, however, they will probably need help and teachers may want to draw attention to it. **suōs** here = 'his' or 'her'. It can be translated as 'our'.

**8 cuiūcumque:** dative singular of **quīcumque**. **faveō** is used with a dative noun or pronoun. **cuiūcumque** ('whichever one') refers to the charioteer, **agitātor equōrum**.

**9 ergō illī cūrae contigit esse tuae:** 'Is that the reason that you care for him?', 'Is that why he has had the good luck to make you care for him?'. Students will need a lot of help construing this difficult sentence.

**illī ... contigit?:** 'has he had the good luck?'. Literally 'has it happened to him?'. **contigit** is an impersonal verb.

**cūrae esse tuae:** 'to be of concern to you', 'to be cared for by you', 'to be the centre of your attention'. The dative (with **esse**) is predicative. See *Cambridge Latin Grammar* pages 51-2, Section 5c. **cūrae ... tuae** is a split noun + adjective phrase. **tuae** is a variation of the more usual **tibi** with the predicative dative: **cūrae esse tibi**.

*Discussion*

Line 5 begins by stressing the difference between Ovid and his neighbour: she is watching the races, while he is watching her. However, the rest of the couplet focuses on the similarity between them: both should look at what gives them pleasure. **oculōs pāscat uterque suōs** repeats in metaphorical terms **spectēmus uterque quod iuvat**. The repetition and metaphor emphasise the idea of pleasure. Ovid then suddenly turns his attention from his neighbour to one of the charioteers, expressing his envy of the charioteer whom she supports.

*Questions*

1. In lines 5-6 what suggestion does Ovid make?
2. Study lines 5-6. In what way are Ovid and the girl different? In what way are they similar? Show how Ovid, by his use of language, highlights the similarity and the difference.
3. In lines 5-6 how does Ovid emphasise the enjoyment which both he and his neighbour feel?
4. Look at lines 7-8. Ovid describes a charioteer as **fēlix**. Which charioteer is this and why does Ovid think he is **fēlix**?

**Lines 9-14** (*Amores* 3.2 lines 9-14)

Now Ovid starts to imagine himself as a charioteer in a race. Note that he has switched from describing what is actually happening to fantasy.

**10 hoc mihi contingat:** 'if I should get a chance like this'. Literally, 'should this happen to me'. The present subjunctive could also be interpreted as a wish: 'May this happen to me.' **sacrō dē carcere:** the preposition is placed between adjective and noun, a common arrangement of words in poetry. Teachers may wish to draw attention to it if it is new to students. The horses were released from the starting gate (**carcer**) at the beginning of the race. There are several possible explanations for the description of the starting gate as 'sacred'. Chariot races were originally part of a religious festival and there was a general association of the whole event and place with religion. There may be a more specific reference, perhaps to the god Consus who had an underground altar in the Circus uncovered only on his festival days, or to the statues of gods which may have been on top of the **carcerēs**. For more information on the starting gates see the note below on line 16, **aequō carcere**.

**9-10: missis ... equis:** split participle + noun phrase

**11 insistam:** there are two possible interpretations:

- (i) present subjunctive (I would urge on);
- (ii) future indicative (I shall urge on).

The *Eduqas Resources* (Explorer and interlinear translation) opt for (i). However, a very good case can be made for (ii); in particular, **dabō** and **notābō** in line 11 are future indicative. The indicative makes Ovid's fantasy more real and vivid. Allow either translation.

**forti mente:** 'with strong mind'. Ask students to suggest a more natural English word or phrase, e.g. 'boldly' or 'with determination'.

**vehendus:** 'being carried along', i.e. 'driving'. The gerundive here has the sense of a passive present participle (which does not exist in Latin).

**12 modo ... modo:** 'now ... now', 'one moment ... the next'

**lōra dabō ... verbere terga notābō:** the charioteer would slacken the reins (**lōra dare**) to let the horses go faster and lash them with his whip to urge them on.

**et modo lōra dabō, modo verbere terga notābō:** this line has the maximum number of dactyls, which gives a sense of speed. The repetition of sounds adds to the swift, repetitive movement: **modo ... modo, dabō ... notābō, verbere terga**.

**13 nunc ... rotā:** after this line has been translated, ask students:

- At this point would the charioteer be increasing or decreasing his speed?
- Why would he want his wheel to scrape the turning post?
- What risk was he running in doing this?

See the *Discussion* below for visual material which could be used here.

**14 sī mihi currentī fueris cōspecta, morābor:** a difficult line. Perhaps start with comprehension questions, such as:

- Which word refers to Ovid? What is he doing? Is he literally running?
- What does **morābor** mean? What would cause Ovid to slow down?

**sī mihi currentī fueris cōspecta:** 'if while I'm racing I spot you'. Literally, 'if you will have been spotted by me running'.

**mihi:** = **ā mē**. The dative case is sometimes used for the agent with perfect passive verbs.

**currentī:** present participle, dative case, agreeing with **mihi**.

**fueris cōspecta:** instead of the future perfect tense **cōspecta eris**. The being seen happens in the future, but before the slowing down. To indicate this difference in time, Latin uses the future perfect tense. Translate with a present tense.

### Discussion

It is crucial that students realise the significance of **hoc mihi contingat**. With these words Ovid puts himself into the position of his neighbour's favourite charioteer and imagines himself participating in the race. Lines 9-14 are a flight of fantasy, made more realistic by the use of the future indicative rather than the subjunctive (**dabō, notābō, stringam** and possibly **Insistam**). A sense of speed and quickly changing action is built up in lines 11-13 before the sight of the girl takes the charioteer's/Ovid's mind off the race and all thought of winning leaves him as the reins fall from his hands.

Students will need some knowledge of chariot-racing to follow what is happening here, especially in line 12. Some preparation will probably have been done in advance, but teachers may want to pause at this point to look at some visual material. Picture 2, the model of the Circus Maximus, shows the **spīna** and the **carcerēs**. Picture 3 is a more detailed view of the **spīna**. Picture 4 is a funerary sculpture showing a charioteer preparing to turn at the **mēta**, and Picture 5 shows a crash at the **mēta**. The cover of the *Word order and interlinear translation* booklet has a line drawing which shows the **mētae** very clearly. The oval-shaped track had two long sides and a central barrier (**spīna**). At each end of the **spīna** there was a turning post (**mēta**). These **mētae** were three tall conical pillars (they can be seen clearly in Picture 5). The charioteer had to race at full speed down the length of the track, then slow down to negotiate the bend, keeping as close as possible to the turning post (**mēta**) to avoid losing ground.

### Questions

1. Here Ovid is imagining what he would do if he should have the charioteer's good luck. What does he imagine happening?
2. Look at lines 9-13. Pick out two details which make the description of the race vivid and exciting. Quote the Latin words and translate them.

### Lines 15-18 (*Amores* 3.2 lines 65-8)

*Ovid leaves his fantasy and returns to what is really happening in the Circus - the race now begins. Ovid predicts that the girl's favourite will win.*

**15 iam**: this word marks the change in focus from Ovid's fantasy to the reality of what is happening in the Circus.

**15-16 maxima iam vacuō praetor spectācula Circō quadriugōs aequō carcere mīsit equōs**: the interlaced order of nouns and adjectives is complicated. Perhaps start with comprehension questions to focus on the skeleton of the sentence and build up a picture of what is happening. For example:

- Who was the praetor? (Or, explain if the students do not already know this.)
- What did he do?
- Where had the horses been before the praetor sent them out to the track?
- Pick out the two-word phrase which describes the track before the horses appeared. Translate it.
- What did the spectators think about what they were seeing? (Hint: a two-word phrase tells you this.)
- Which word describes the horses? So, what does **quadriugōs equōs** mean?
- Which word describes the starting gate?

**15 vacuō ... Circō**: ablative absolute. Literally, 'with the track [being] empty', i.e. 'while the track is empty'. The track is clear for the first race of the day.

**maxima ... spectācula**: 'the greatest show'. **spectācula** is plural, but translate it as singular. Roman poets often use plural nouns instead of singular (poetic plural) and *vice versa*. It is a way of fitting the words into the metre. **maxima ... spectācula** is in apposition to **quadriugōs ... equōs**.

**praetor**: the praetor was the senior magistrate responsible for organising the

public games, including chariot-racing. The patron of the games, often the emperor or a magistrate, would drop a white cloth to signal the start of each race.

**16 quadriugōs ... equōs:** chariots drawn by four horses

**aequō carcere:** at one end of the Circus were twelve stalls, one for each of the chariots in the race. The chariots lined up in these stalls waiting for the race to start. At the front of each stall, facing the track, was a wooden gate. The gates were spring-loaded and would spring open simultaneously when the presiding magistrate dropped the white cloth to signal the start of the race. The starting gates were staggered, so that the distance from the start to the turning point was the same for each chariot, as in some races on a modern running track. Ovid describes the starting gate as 'fair' because it was designed to give each chariot an equal start.

**17 cuī studeās, videō:** another example of the subordinate clause preceding the main clause. **cuī** refers to one of the charioteers. **studeās** is subjunctive because **cuī studeās** is an indirect question. Ovid is now speaking to the girl sitting next to him.

**18 quid cupiās, ipsī scīre videntur equī:** again, the subordinate clause precedes the main clause. Students should be getting used to this by now. Perhaps use a question before translating:

- How do the horses react to the girl's presence?

### Discussion

Exploration of lines 15-16 will centre on the details of what happened at the start of the race in the Circus. Students will need to be given extra information in order to understand Ovid's description (see the notes above). Once the race is underway, Ovid fixes attention on the girl's favourite charioteer, who at first takes the lead. Ovid's excitement is conveyed by the jerky rhythm of the short clauses and the accumulation of verbs in line 17 (**studeās, videō; vincet**). He is so carried away that he makes the exaggerated claim that even the horses sense what the girl wants.

### Questions

1. Look at lines 15-16. Write down three facts about chariot-racing which are mentioned in these lines.
2. Look at lines 17-18. Which charioteer is Ovid looking at? How are Ovid's words designed to flatter the girl he is talking to?
3. How does Ovid's style of writing convey his excitement in lines 17-18?

### Lines 19-22 (*Amores* 3.2 lines 69-72)

*The charioteer the girl supports takes the turn too wide and is in danger of losing his lead.*

**19 mē miserum:** 'wretched me'. The accusative case is used for an exclamation.

The phrase is an expression of self pity. It could be translated here as 'Oh no!'

**spatiōsō ... orbe:** split adjective + noun phrase

**circuit:** the subject (he) is now the charioteer.

**mētā ... orbe:** the charioteer should try to go round the bend keeping as close as possible to the turning-posts. If he took the bend wide, he could give his opponent an advantage. On the other hand, keeping too close to the **mētā** ran the risk of crashing. Picture 5 shows a crash at the **mētā**; the three conical columns which marked the **mētā** are clearly visible.

**20 quid facis?:** Ovid now speaks directly to the charioteer. This will become clear to students from the rest of the couplet.

**admōtō ... axe:** split participle + noun phrase. There are two interpretations:

(i) 'with his chariot moved near', i.e. having caught up. **axis** means 'wheel', but can be used to refer to the 'chariot': an example of synecdoche, using the part of something to refer to the whole (cf. 'my wheels' for 'my car' in English). The charioteer in second

place has moved his chariot up close and is catching up with the leader.

(ii) 'with his wheel moved near [to the turning post]'. The charioteer in second place has turned tightly at the turning post and is therefore catching up. On this interpretation, **admōtō ... axe** is to be taken closely in contrast to **spatiōsō ... orbe** in the previous line. The *Eduqas Resources* (Explorer and interlinear translation) have (i).

**proxumus**: = **proximus**. The next [charioteer].

**21 bona vōta**: 'best hopes'. Literally, 'good prayers'.

**22 validā lōra sinistra manū**: the arrangement of words here is one which is common in poetry. One noun and adjective pair (**lōra sinistra**) is placed inside another (**validā ... manū**). The metre shows that **validā** is feminine ablative singular, agreeing with **manū**, and **sinistra** is neuter accusative plural, agreeing with **lōra**.

**tende ... lōra sinistra**: the chariots raced round the track in an anticlockwise direction, so pulling the left reins would have the effect of turning the chariot to the left, and therefore closer to the turning post.

**validā ... manū**: literally, 'with a strong hand'. This could be translated as '[pull] hard with your hand'.

### Discussion

Ovid's excitement quickly turns to disappointment as the favoured charioteer takes the turning post too wide and is almost overtaken. He now changes addressee, from the girl to the charioteer and his attitude alters from admiration and confidence to criticism. The repeated question (**quid facis?**) expresses his incredulity and his language is contemptuous - he calls the charioteer a fool, **infēlix** (and cf. line 23 **ignāvō**, 'a slowcoach'). Ovid, who says that he has no interest in chariot-racing, has now become an expert and a partisan. But his enthusiasm is just for the sake of impressing the girl. He wants the charioteer to win because he doesn't want the girl to be disappointed.

### Lines 23-32 (*Amores* 3.2 lines 73-82)

*The crowd wave their togas to demand that the race be run again. The race is restarted and the girl's favourite wins.*

**23 ignāvō**: 'a slow [charioteer]', i.e. 'a slowcoach'

**sed enim**: literally, 'but indeed'. Translate as 'anyway' or 'but really'.

**Quirītēs**: the citizens of Rome. Ovid is now speaking to the spectators.

**24 iactātīs ... togīs**: split participle + noun phrase. By waving their togas the spectators gave a sign that they wanted the race to be stopped and restarted. **signa**: poetic plural. Translate as singular.

**25-6 nē ... sinūs**: use comprehension questions to guide students here:

- How might the waving of togas annoy the girl?
- What suggestion does Ovid have to prevent this happening?

**25 nē turbet toga mōta capillōs**: again the subordinate clause precedes the main clause. **nē** introduces a negative purpose clause, 'so that ... not'. The main clause, which follows in the next line, makes clear that Ovid is now speaking to the girl: he uses the second person singular form of the verb.

**26 in nostrōs ... usque sinūs**: 'close in my arms'

**abdās tē licet**: 'you can hide yourself'. **licet ut** + present subjunctive means 'it is allowed that ...' or 'it is possible that ...'. **ut** can be omitted. **licet** is an impersonal verb. **tē** is the object of **abdās**. See *Cambridge Latin Grammar* page 60, Section 1d.

**27 iamque patent iterum reserātō carcere postēs**: here **carcer** means the starting stall and the **postēs** are the gates at the front of each stall. See the note on line 16.

Although **carcere** is singular, Ovid is referring to all of the stalls, so it is best to use the plural in English. Students will probably begin by translating the ablative absolute literally as 'with the starting stalls [having been] unlocked'. They could be encouraged to rephrase

this as a subordinate clause ('and now, when the stalls have been unlocked ...') or a separate main clause ('and now the starting stalls have been unlocked and ...').

**28 admissis ... equis:** ablative absolute. Literally, 'with the horses having been released'. Encourage a more natural English translation, such as 'once the horses have been released'.

**discolor:** the charioteers wore coloured tunics to show the team they represented, just like a modern football strip or jockey's shirt. Four teams of chariot-racers competed regularly with each other: green, blue, red and white. Show students Picture 1: the wall painting depicts four charioteers, each wearing his team's colours, including helmets.

**agmen:** a word with military associations. It usually refers to a column of soldiers marching into battle.

**29 superā ... insurge:** Ovid is now speaking to the charioteer whom his girl supports. Students will probably translate **superā** as 'Win!'. Ask for more natural alternatives e.g. 'Be the winner!' or 'Be victorious!'.

**spatiō ... patentī:** split noun + adjective phrase

**30 sint mea, sint dominae fac rata vōta meae:** the word order and the compressed expression are difficult. Moreover students may not have come across this use of **fac**. One approach is to rearrange the words and supply those which have to be understood: *fac [ut] vōta mea [et vōta] dominae meae rata sint*. The phrase **fac ut** + present subjunctive means 'make it happen that', 'see to it that'.

**30,31 dominae:** Roman poets often call the woman they love **domina**.

**30-31 sint ... sint ... sunt:** the verb is repeated, first in the subjunctive mood and then in the indicative, underlining the change from hope to reality.

**31 sunt dominae rata vōta meae:** ask students:

- Are the girl's wishes granted?
- Are Ovid's wishes granted?

**sunt dominae rata vōta meae, mea vōta supersunt:** an artfully crafted line. The line is framed by the verb **sunt**, the indicative mood contrasting with the repeated subjunctive in the previous line. The chiasmic arrangement of **vōta meae, mea vōta** (ABBA) highlights the contrast between Ovid's wishes and those of the girl; although he calls her **dominae meae**, she is not yet his girlfriend.

**32 ille:** the charioteer

**palmam:** the winning charioteer received a palm branch and a wreath as a sign of victory. There was also a monetary prize for the driver and the team, which was given later. The mosaic in Picture 6 shows the victorious charioteer driving his chariot towards the magistrate who will present him with the palm branch and wreath. Next to the magistrate is a trumpet player who announces the victory.

**palmam, palma:** the juxtaposition puts emphasis on the two different meanings of **palma**, victory in the race for the charioteer and success in love for Ovid.

**palma petenda mea est:** 'my victory palm is [yet] to be won'

### Discussion

Again, reality seems to merge into fantasy as Ovid calls on the spectators to wave their togas to demand that the race be rerun. Presumably this usually happened when there had been a foul. Here, however, Ovid wants the race to be stopped just because his girl's favourite is losing. And there is an additional advantage for Ovid. He suggests the girl can shelter in his arms so that her hair won't be disturbed by a flapping toga. Quite unrealistically, the race is indeed restarted and this time the girl's favoured charioteer is the winner. Lines 30-31 play on the different wishes of Ovid the lover and the girl he is trying to seduce: she wants her favourite charioteer to win, he wants to win her over; her wish has come true, as yet his is still unsatisfied. The final line contrasts Ovid the lover with the charioteer. The charioteer has his palm of victory, while Ovid the lover has yet to win his. At the end we are reminded of Ovid's earlier fantasy of being a successful

charioteer. That was just a dream. Could success as a lover be a reality?

Lines 26 and 27 provide a good opportunity for exploring how sound can enhance meaning. In line 26 (**in nostrōs abdās tē licet usque sinūs**) **tē** is enclosed in **nostrōs ... sinūs**, just as the girl is enclosed in her suitor's arms. This effect is possible because of the flexibility of word order in a Latin sentence. In line 27 the sound pattern works to help the listener decode the words: words which need to be taken as a group share similar sounds. The main verb **patent** and the subject **postēs** are linked by the alliteration of *p*, even though they are separated in the line. The three-word phrase in the middle of the line is tied together by assonance; each word contains the sound *er*: **iterum reserātō carcere**.

The notes on lines 30-31 contain some detailed analysis of the effects of word order and word form. Teachers may want to explore this with the class as part of a second, more detailed, reading of the text. Instead of requiring students to pick out particular examples of striking word order, ask questions such as those below.

#### *Questions*

1. Study lines 30-31. How does Ovid bring out the contrast between himself and the girl he is trying to seduce?
2. Explain the difference between **sint rata vōta** (line 30) and **sunt rata vōta** (line 31). (You can do this by translation.) How does the style of writing emphasise the difference?

#### *General questions and activities*

1. Show how Ovid blends reality and fantasy in this poem.
2. What evidence for chariot-racing is contained in this poem?
3. How does the style of writing convey a sense of the excitement felt by the crowd watching the chariot race?
4. Compose your own monologue chatting up a girl (or boy), transposing Ovid's pick-up lines to a more modern situation e.g. a football match or a rock concert. Try to match Ovid's ingenuity.
5. Imagine you are the girl. Write an account of her response - it could be in the form of a conversation with a friend, a diary entry, or a speech in reply to the young man.

## Martial *Epigrams* 10.50: *Lament for a dead charioteer*

### Introduction

Marcus Valerius Martialis (c. AD 40 - c. AD 103) was born in Bilbilis in Spain and came to Rome in about AD 64. He wrote twelve books of *Epigrams*, short poems in a variety of styles and on a variety of subjects. This poem is a lament for the death of the charioteer Flavius Scorus. The poet appeals to the goddesses Victory and Glory and to personifications of Popularity and Honour to join in the mourning, and then speaks directly to the dead charioteer. The text is unadapted.

### Reading and teaching

The title gives an indication of what the poem is going to be about, and will help students with the description of Victory as 'sad' in line 1. The language and references of the first line are difficult and require some preparation. One way of approaching this poem is to start with the cultural context. If students have not yet learned about the Circus and the track, they could examine some images, which would lead to a discussion of tactics for turning at the **mēta**. The oval-shaped track had two long sides and a central barrier (**spīna**). At each end of the **spīna** there was a set of three turning posts (**mētae**). The turning post is described here as short because a skilful charioteer would reach it in as short a distance as possible by driving close to the inside of the track. The **mētae** were three tall conical pillars set on a high platform. The charioteer had to race at full speed down the length of the track, then slow down to negotiate the bend, keeping as close as possible to the turning post (**mēta**) to avoid losing ground. Picture 4 is a funerary sculpture showing a charioteer preparing to turn at the **mēta**. The crash at the **mēta** shown in Picture 5 is evidence of how dangerous chariot-racing could be. Picture 8 will help students with the references to palms in line 1. Understanding also requires some knowledge of Roman mourning rituals: wearing dark clothes, beating the breast, and throwing a lock of the mourner's hair on to the funeral pyre. Perhaps check how much students know and fill in any gaps in their knowledge before starting to read the poem

The use of proper names in the poem could be off-putting, especially the direct addresses to abstract qualities. Teachers could go through the proper names before reading the poem, perhaps putting them on the board.

<b>Flavius Scorus</b>	a famous charioteer
<b>Victōria</b>	Victory; worshipped as a goddess by the Romans
<b>Favor</b>	Popularity; personification of an abstract quality, not a goddess
<b>Honor</b>	Honour; worshipped as a goddess
<b>Glōria</b>	Glory; personification of an abstract quality

**Idūmaeus, a, um** Idumean, Judaeans (the Roman province of Judea was a source of palms)

### Further reading

*Commentaries*

Lindsay and Patricia Watson (eds.), *Martial: Select Epigrams* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

### Metre

Elegiac couplets



## Notes

**1 frangat Idūmaeās trīstis Victōria palmās:** the goddess Victory is being asked to break the palms which symbolised victory, as an expression of mourning.

**frangat ... Victōria:** 'let Victory break'. The present subjunctive form of the verb expresses a command (jussive subjunctive). See *Cambridge Latin Grammar* page 48, Section 12.3 and 4. The inversion of the usual order of subject and verb may add to the difficulty of the opening line for students. The flexibility of Latin word order compared to English gives scope for enhancing meaning by the arrangement of words in a sentence or in a line of poetry. First word in a line of poetry is an emphatic position. Placing a word first in a sentence, if it disrupts the natural word order, is also a way of emphasising that word. The effect of the word order here is to stress the verb **frangat**, placed prominently as the first word in the poem.

**Idūmaeās trīstis Victōria palmās:** the intricate arrangement of words is characteristic of poetry. One adjective + noun phrase (**trīstis Victōria**) is placed inside another (**Idūmaeās ... palmās**). Idumea (Judaea) was a Roman province in the eastern Mediterranean (modern Israel), famous for its fine palms. Palms were given to charioteers as signs of victory. Palm trees grew in southern Italy, so victory-palms could have been acquired from there, but the geographical epithet adds a touch of exoticism and grandeur. Picture 6 is a mosaic showing the victorious charioteer driving his chariot towards the magistrate who will present him with the palm branch and wreath. Next to the magistrate is a trumpet player who announces the victory. This line presents several difficulties: the unfamiliar proper names, the reference to victory palms, the intricate word order and the jussive subjunctive. Perhaps begin by explaining that Victory is a goddess and the palms are symbols of victory (perhaps looking first at Picture 6), then ask questions, such as:

- What is Victory being asked to do?
- Which word describes Victory? What does it mean?
- Why do you think Victory is being asked to break the palms?

**2 plange ... pectora nūda:** beating the breast, especially a bared breast, was a sign of mourning. The plural **pectora nūda** is used instead of the singular; the poetic plural is common in poetry.

**Favor:** unlike **Victōria**, **Favor** wasn't a goddess. Martial is personifying the abstract quality 'Popularity'. (This is shown by the capital letters used in the Latin text and in English.) **saevā pectora nūda manū:** one noun + adjective phrase (**pectora nūda** is enclosed in another (**saevā manū**). Cf. line 1. The endings of the adjectives do not show which of the nouns they describe. (Note that the macra have been added by modern editors; they are not present in the original Latin text and they are not shown in the text printed in the prescription and on the examination paper.) Both **saeva** and **nūda** could be either neuter accusative plural to go with **pectora** or feminine ablative singular to go with **manū**.

However, the metre shows that (i) **saevā** is feminine ablative singular and therefore goes with **manū**; and (ii) **nūda** is neuter accusative plural and therefore goes with **pectora**. **saevā:** this choice of adjective suggests violence, emphasising the extent of the grief.

**3 mūtet Honor:** 'let Honour change'. Another jussive subjunctive like **frangat** in line 1.

**Honor:** worshipped as a goddess, like **Victōria**

**mūtet ... cultūs:** dark clothes were worn as a sign of mourning.

**3-4 inīquīs mūnera flammīs mitte corōnātās, Glōria maesta, comās:** the word order is difficult. Comprehension questions could be used as a guide, for example:

- Who is the poet speaking to here?
- What does he tell her to do?
- Which word describes **Glōria**?
- Which word describes the hair?

- Why do you think he wants **Glōria** to throw the hair?
- Whose hair do you think it is?

**3 inīquīs ... flammīs:** the flames are those of the funeral pyre. Death is unfair in that some people die young while others live until old age.

**mūnera:** 'as a gift'. A poetic plural. **mūnera** is in apposition to **corōnātās ... comās**.

**4 mitte corōnātās ... comās:** this refers to the custom of offering a lock of hair to the dead. A crown of laurel leaves was a symbol of victory; the winning charioteers were given crowns. The interlinear translation in the *Eduqas Resources* has 'your crowned hair'. Another possibility is 'her crowned hair'. In the latter case, Glory would herself be wearing the crown which symbolised victory.

**Glōria:** a personification

**5 heu facinus:** 'What an outrage!' The accusative case is used for an exclamation. Cf. **mē miserum**.

**prīmā ... iuventā:** the adjective is separated from the noun it qualifies. Such split adjective + noun phrases are common in poetry.

**prīmā fraudātus ... iuventā:** 'cheated of your earliest youth'. **prīmā ... iuventā** goes with **fraudātus**, which takes the ablative case.

**Scorpe:** Flavius Scorpus was a famous charioteer.

**6 nigrōs ... equōs:** split adjective + noun phrase. Black was associated with death and the Underworld.

**nigrōs ... iungis equōs:** the idea here is that after death people continued the same kind of activities they had pursued when they were alive.

**7-8 curribus illa tuīs semper properāta brevisque cūr fuit et vītae tam prope mēta tuae?:** a very condensed sentence. It can be broken into two parts for translation, as if it were two separate sentences. One approach is to rearrange the word order, adding words which have to be supplied: *illa [mēta] curribus tuīs semper properāta brevisque [erat]. cūr et mēta vītae tuae tam prope fuit?*

**curribus ... tuīs:** poetic plural. The dative case expresses the agent with the perfect participle **properāta**.

**curribus illa tuīs semper properāta brevisque ... mēta:** 'That turning point was always short reached quickly by your chariot'. The turning-point can be described as short in the sense that the skilful charioteer would keep close to the inside of the track and therefore reach the turning post in the shortest distance possible.

**8 et:** here = 'also'

**vītae ... tuae:** split noun + adjective phrase

### Discussion

Just the fact that a well-known poet such as Martial should compose a poem to honour Scorpus' death is evidence of the fame and popularity achieved by some charioteers. They were popular idols, like footballers, pop singers or film stars today. Ovid's *A good day at the Circus* can be compared for the popularity of charioteers among young women.

Nowhere does the poem state that Scorpus died as the result of an accident during a race, but this is a possibility. The poem emphasises his youth (**inīquīs, prīmā fraudātus ... iuventā, tam cito**), and the whole of the last line **cūr ... tuae**) and chariot-racing was very dangerous; accidents, some of them fatal, must have been common. On the other hand, it could be argued that, if Scorpus had died in the Circus, Martial would probably have mentioned it in the poem.

The poem opens strikingly with the verb **frangat**, thus stressing from the start the violence of the mourning, an idea picked up in **saevā** in the next line. The first half of the poem has a sense of grandeur with its appeals to goddesses and personifications of abstract qualities to join in the mourning, intricate word order and the exotic decorative adjective

**Idūmaeās.** Each goddess/abstraction is differentiated and enlivened by visual details which are signs of mourning: breaking the palms of victory to show sadness, beating the breast, wearing mourning clothes and throwing locks of hair on to the funeral pyre. The mixture of jussive subjunctives and imperatives to phrase these appeals also injects some variety. The four goddesses and abstractions are testament to Scopus' success as a charioteer and the extent of the mourning for him. Although left unstated by the poem, we can assume that there was an outpouring of popular grief for Scopus too. The second half of the poem is addressed directly to the dead charioteer Scopus, focusing on his youth and his skill. Again there is vivid use of visual detail, the black horses of the underworld.

The poem ends with a clever play on two meanings of **mēta**, real and metaphorical, the turning post of the chariot race, which was the goal of the race down one side of the track, and the end of life. This short poem therefore has several themes: it serves as praise for the success and skill of Scopus; it is a cry of outrage at his early death; and it is an expression of mourning. Students could discuss whether the poem gives them the impression of genuine grief or whether they find it frigid and artificial? (See question 3.)

### *Questions*

1. Look at lines 1-4. What signs of mourning are mentioned?
2. Look at lines 1-4. How does Martial emphasise the extent of the grief for Scopus? You might consider the choice and position of words as well as what Martial is saying.
3. Which of the following words do you think is an appropriate description of this poem? Choose one and explain why you have chosen it.  
clever emotional                      artificial              sad                      sentimental              angry
4. From reading this poem what can we learn about the status of charioteers in Roman society?

## Pliny, *Letters* 9.6: *Not at the races*

### Introduction

Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus (c. AD 61 - c.112) had a successful career in Rome as a lawyer and politician, culminating in the governorship of the province of Bithynia. He is known as Pliny the Younger to distinguish him from his uncle, Pliny the Elder, who adopted him on his father's death. Pliny's letters, collected in ten books, give a valuable insight into the people and events of his times, and the life of a wealthy member of the Roman élite. Although most are personal letters to friends and family, Pliny wrote them self-consciously with publication in mind, and he published them himself at regular intervals. Some of the letters were rewritten and edited before publication. Unlike non-literary letters, nearly all of them are restricted to a single subject, so they resemble short essays.

### Summary

Pliny writes to his friend Calvisius Rufus to say that he has spent the last few days in his study, even though it is a holiday and races are on at the Circus. The bulk of the letter is occupied with a condemnation of the frivolity of chariot-racing and its fans.

### Text

This is the complete unadapted text.

### Suggestions for reading and teaching

Students will need to know something about chariot-racing and Pliny's social status. Teachers will decide how much information to provide in advance and how much should emerge from reading the letter. A lot depends on the individual students and their prior knowledge. However, it is important not to overload students with detail before reading; they will enjoy using the text as a source of information, and the teacher can supplement it on an *ad hoc* basis. Chariot races were held in a circus, which was an oval-shaped open-air track with seats for spectators down both sides. Picture 2 is a model of the Circus Maximus. See the introduction to this selection for information on the Circus Maximus and chariot-racing.

There is a lot of material here for discussing Pliny's style and how he uses it to enhance his meaning. On the first reading it is advisable to concentrate on understanding the basic gist of what Pliny is saying and making a close translation. Analysis of style, and perhaps a more polished translation is best deferred to a later exploration of the whole text.

### Language and Style

The style of the letters is elegant and polished, but Pliny does not use the elaborate sentence structure favoured by such authors as Cicero and Livy. Nevertheless, the words and clauses are still artfully arranged, and chiasmus is used frequently, contributing to the elegance of the style. Other rhetorical features are also prominent, such as asyndeton, tricolon, the historic present tense and some poetic vocabulary. Superlative adjectives and adverbs are used for emphasis. Often the effect of these techniques is to make the narrative more dramatic and vivid.

### Further reading

#### *Commentaries*

A.N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966)

A.N. Sherwin-White, *Fifty Letters of Pliny the Younger: selected and edited with introduction and notes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967; rev. 1969)

### Translations

Betty Radice, *The letters of Pliny the Younger* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963; 2nd edition 1969)

P.G. Walsh, *Pliny the Younger: Complete letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

### Notes

**1 inter pugillārēs et libellōs:** ‘among my writing tablets and books’. This could be translated as ‘with my writing tablets and books’. Pliny means that he has been in his study. He was a prolific writer of letters and speeches - he was a lawyer and wrote speeches to deliver in court. Writing tablets were the Roman equivalent of a notebook or laptop. They were made of two or three pieces of wood tied together with string. A recess in the piece of wood was coated with wax, and you would write on the wax with a stylus, a sharp piece of metal. There is a picture of writing tablets (**tabulī**) and styluses (**stilī**) in *Cambridge Latin Course Book 1*, Stage 10, page 141.

**libellōs:** **libellus** is the diminutive form of **liber**, so it means ‘little book’. Pliny is not using the word literally - he does not mean that his books are small in size. The diminutive may express affection, or it may be dismissive (suggesting unimportance - possibly ironic mock humility).

**2 inquis:** Pliny is addressing his question to the recipient of the letter, a friend of his called Rufus.

**urbe:** Rome

**quemadmodum ... potuisti?:** ‘How could you [do that]?’ Supply ‘do that’ to complete the thought. Pliny often expresses himself concisely, especially when quoting real or imagined conversation. In another letter he complains about the time taken up by the busy round of social duties in Rome.

**3 circēnsēs erant:** ‘the chariot races were taking place’. **circēnsēs = lūdī circēnsēs**, ‘games in the circus’, i.e. chariot-racing. Pliny probably means the Circus Maximus, the largest circus in Rome. Chariot races were held in a circus, which was an oval-shaped open-air track with seats for spectators round the sides.

**3-4 quō genere ... teneor:** ‘by which kind ... I am captivated’. The literal meaning of **teneō** is ‘hold’. Pliny means that his attention is held. The Explorer and the interlinear translation provided in the *Eduqas Resources* have ‘captivated’. This is a good opportunity to ask students to supply their own ideas for alternatives, e.g. ‘gripped’ or ‘entertained’.

**3 nē levissimē quidem:** ‘not even in the slightest’. **nē ... quidem = ‘not even’.**

**4 nihil novum:** add **est**. When translating, begin this sentence with ‘There is ...’. Omitting **est** is another example of Pliny’s concise style of writing.

**4-5 nihil quod nōn semel spectāsse sufficiat:** ‘nothing which it is not enough to have seen once’, i.e. ‘nothing worth seeing more than once’. This sentence is a good example of Pliny’s use of rhetorical techniques to enhance meaning. He emphasises the negativity of his view of chariot-racing by repeating negative words: **nihil ... nihil ... nihil ... nōn**. The sentence is in three parts, each beginning with **nihil [est]**. Repeating the same word at the beginning of adjacent phrases, clauses or sentences is called anaphora. A sentence made up of three similarly structured parts is called a tricolon. When, as here, the third part of the sentence is longer than the first two it is a tricolon crescendo, because the final part is the climax. Here Pliny is combining the rhetorical techniques of word repetition, anaphora and tricolon crescendo to stress his disdain for the repetitiveness of chariot-racing. Concentrate on first reading and understanding what Pliny is saying and defer analysing style until a later more critical reading. At that point students could be asked:

- How does Pliny, by his style of writing, emphasise the idea that chariot-racing is dull?

**nihil quod ... sufficiat:** the subjunctive is generic, a kind of result clause: ‘nothing [of the sort] which is enough’. See *Cambridge Latin Grammar* page 68, Section 23.3.

**5 spectāsse: = spectāvisse,** ‘to have watched’. Perfect active infinitive.

**quō**: literally 'by which'. Translate as 'because of this' or 'for this reason' or 'that is why'. The ablative case without a preposition is used to express the reason or cause. The extensive use of the ablative is something that students will gradually become familiar with as they read more Latin literature. At this stage it is unnecessary, indeed counterproductive, to burden them with an analysis of the various uses of the ablative. They could be given a useful rule of thumb: the ablative can be translated as 'in', 'on', 'by' 'with', 'from' or 'at'.

**5-7 mīror tot mīlia virōrum ... cupere ... vidēre**: 'I am amazed that so many thousands of men want to see ...'. It may be difficult for students to see the skeleton of the accusative and infinitive construction. Use comprehension questions to help elucidate the meaning.

**5 tot mīlia virōrum**: the Circus Maximus could hold 150,000 spectators.

**tot ... tam**: these words add emphasis, 'so many thousands', 'so childishly'. The repetition of the *t* sound (alliteration) makes the words stand out to the listener. Try reading the sentence aloud twice - first missing out the words **tot** and **tam**, then including them - to hear the effect. A suitable question to encourage students to see the effect would be:

- How does Pliny emphasise his amazement at the behaviour of the crowd at the Circus?

**7-8 sī ... traherentur, esset**: 'if they were attracted ... there would be ...'

**vēlōcitāte equōrum ... hominum arte**: the arrangement of words here is a good example of the highly polished style of Pliny's writing. The order is: ablative noun (A), genitive noun (B), genitive noun (B), ablative noun (A). This kind of word pattern (ABBA) is called chiasmus. It is difficult to reproduce in English, but you could translate as: 'the speed of the horses, the men's skill'.

**8 ratiō nōn nūlla**: 'not no' is equivalent to 'some'. The double negative is emphatic.

**8 nunc**: 'as it is', dismissing the hypothetical attractions of chariot-racing just mentioned.

**9 pannō, pannum**: the word **pannus** means 'garment' and refers to the coloured shirts or tunics worn by the charioteers, like a modern football strip or jockey's shirt. Four teams of chariot racers competed regularly with each other: green, blue, red and white. Each team consisted of one, two or three chariots. Each of the rival chariot-racing teams (**factiōnēs**) had its own passionate supporters, like modern football fans. The wall painting in Picture 1 shows a charioteer from each of the four teams.

**favent pannō, pannum amant**: the same idea (supporting a team) is repeated to add emphasis. The chiasmic word arrangement, with **pannō** and **pannum** (the same word in different cases) placed next to each other, puts particular stress on the 'piece of cloth' or 'tunic'. Pliny is suggesting that all the fans care about is the team they support, not the skill of the charioteers.

**in ipsō cursū mediōque certāmine**: both phrases refer to the middle of the race.

Again Pliny is using repetition for emphasis. Teachers could ask students to look out for more examples of this device in the letter.

**10 color**: referring to the coloured tunics worn by the charioteers

**hic color illūc ille hūc trānsferātur**: = *hic color illūc [trānsferātur], ille [color] hūc trānsferātur*. Compressed expression: the verb has to be supplied in the first clause, the subject in the second.

**studium favorque**: another example of repeated expression; the two nouns are virtually synonymous here.

**11-12 agitātōrēs ... equōs ... relinquent**: the subject is again 'they', referring to **tot mīlia virōrum**, as in **favent** at the start of the sentence. Because the subject is not expressed in a separate word, some students may be tempted to try to take **agitātōrēs** as the subject. This can be preempted by asking a comprehension question before translating, for example:

- If the teams were to swap their tunics mid-race, how would the crowd treat the charioteers and the horses?

**11 agitātōrēs illōs equōs illōs:** add **et**; = *agitātōrēs illōs [et] equōs illōs*. The omission of the connective (asyndeton) adds force.

**quōs procul nōscitant:** the fans recognise the horses and charioteers from a distance because of the coloured tunics worn by the charioteers.

**12 quōrum clāmitant nōmina: clāmitō** is the frequentative form of **clāmō**, suggesting that the action is done repeatedly.

**12-13 tanta grātia tanta auctōritās in ūnā vīlissimā tunicā:** compressed expression; = *tanta grātia [et] tanta auctōritās [est] in ūnā vīlissimā tunicā*. The repetition of **tanta**, the superlative adjective, the inclusion of the unnecessary **ūnā**, the omission of the verb and the asyndeton all combine to make the expression forceful. One way to help students appreciate the effect is to ask them to compare with a version of the sentence stripped of these rhetorical techniques: *tanta grātia et auctōritās est in vīlī tunicā*.

**grātia:** here = 'popularity'

**13 mittō apud vulgus:** 'I don't mean among the common crowd'. This is an emphatic way of saying **nōn apud vulgus**, and it stresses Pliny's personal opinion. The use of the 1st person singular verb disrupts the structure of the sentence, giving it a conversational tone. Pliny is saying that he is disregarding the ordinary people. He dismisses them because he is not surprised by their enthusiasm for something he regards as so trivial.

**13-14 quod vīlius tunicā:** add **est. quod** = 'who'; the antecedent is **vulgus**, which is neuter. **vīlius tunicā** = 'more worthless than a tunic'. **vīlius** is the neuter comparative form of **vīlis**. **tunicā** is ablative to express comparison (= **vīlius quam tunica**). The ablative case can be used as an alternative to **quam** to express the idea of comparison. See *Cambridge Latin Grammar* page 53, Section 6f.

**14 quōsdam:** this word is significant. Pliny assumes that some (probably most, as **quōsdam** implies they are the exception) serious or respectable men share his lack of interest in chariot-racing. **gravitās** (seriousness of conduct or temperament, strictness of life or morals) was considered a traditional Roman value.

**quōs:** = **[et] hōs**, 'and ... they'. The literal meaning is 'whom', referring back to **hominēs**. The relative pronoun is often used in Latin to connect a sentence to the previous one.

This is called a connecting relative. See *Cambridge Latin Grammar* page 21, Section 5.7.

**14-16 quōs ego cum recordor ... dēsīdere:** 'and when I consider (that) they are sitting'. The postponement of the conjunction **cum** ('when') could present problems, especially when combined with the connecting relative and the possible confusion with **cum** meaning 'with'. Perhaps help students by rearranging the word order: *[et] cum ego recordor hōs ... dēsīdere*. The personal pronoun **ego** is added for emphasis. The effect of the word order is to stress the contrast between Pliny and those of his class who enjoy chariot-racing.

**15 rē:** encourage students to suggest an alternative to 'thing' as a translation of **rēs**. Here 'business' or 'entertainment' would be suitable.

**inānī frīgidā assiduā:** the omission of a connective such as **et** to join the three adjectives (asyndeton) makes the expression more forceful and emotional. Another rhetorical technique Pliny uses here is the group of three words, which adds emphasis.

**inānī:** the literal meaning is 'empty'. Here it is being used in a metaphorical sense, 'pointless' or 'foolish'.

**frīgidā:** literally 'cold'. In a metaphorical sense 'boring' or 'dull'.

**assiduā:** 'never-ending', in the sense that the races are repetitive.

**16 quod:** 'because', 'in that'

**16-17 capiō voluptātem ... voluptāte nōn capior:** notice the elegant arrangement of words: two different forms of **voluptās** are placed inside two different forms of **capiō**.

This has the effect of emphasising the clever word play: **capiō** is being used in two slightly different senses, 'I take' and 'I am captivated', or, to reproduce the wordplay in English 'I am taken in'.

**17 per:** here = 'during'

**18 quōs:** the antecedent is **hōs diēs**.

iii: 'those men', i.e. the respectable people who enjoy watching chariot-racing.

### *Discussion*

The main interest will lie in Pliny's attitude to chariot-racing and its fans. Encourage students to analyse Pliny's attitudes and his criticisms carefully. His main objections to chariot-racing are that it is boring because it is repetitive, and watching it is unproductive. He also criticises the spectators on the grounds that they are attracted to the sport because of partisanship rather than a serious interest in the skill of the participants. Notice that it is not the sport itself which Pliny objects to - there is no mention of the danger to the drivers and horses, and possible cruelty involved. What he condemns is the moral effect on the spectators. Teachers can invite students to compare modern sports and their fans, such as football or the Olympic Games. Why do so many people enjoy watching sport? To what extent is the attraction a feeling of allegiance to a team or country? Have you ever had the experience of feeling part of a crowd and having your individual identity subsumed in the group, perhaps at a pop concert or a sporting event?

Pliny's dismissal of the ordinary people as **vīlius tunicā** is likely to provoke a strong reaction in some students. Explore with students Pliny's social attitudes. He was a senator and belonged to the social and intellectual élite, and evidently he thought that reading and writing were superior activities. Is his attitude snobbish and patronising? To what extent might his attitudes have been shared by other members of his social class? Are there people today with similar attitudes?

As well as providing evidence for the passions provoked by attending the Circus, the letter can be used to elicit information about how the races were organised into rival teams, each with its own supporters.

This letter, like many of Pliny's, resembles a literary essay or a personal comment column in a modern newspaper or magazine. It is confined to a single theme and has almost none of the personal detail, either of author or recipient, that one would expect in a private letter. The introductory and closing remarks about Pliny's own writing serve as a peg on which to hang his thoughts about chariot-racing and its fans. The style of the letter is highly polished, with its combination of the conversational and the rhetorical. The hypothetical direct speech is a lively touch. Examples of rhetorical figures such as anaphora, asyndeton and chiasmus are mentioned in the notes. Although it is important to help students analyse Pliny's style, avoid hunting for figures of speech and rhetorical techniques. Instead, focus questioning on how Pliny achieves his effects. e.g. How does he emphasise a point? How does he make his writing lively or forceful? How does he bring out a contrast? The notes contain a couple of examples of this type of question.

### *Questions*

1. Which aspects of chariot-racing does Pliny object to? Why? Pick out and translate some words and phrases in Latin to support your answer.
2. What impression of Pliny have you gained from reading this letter? Support your answer with evidence from the text.



## Juvenal, *Satire 11*, lines 197-204: *The crowd in the Circus*

### Introduction

Decimus Iunius Iuvenalis wrote sixteen *Satires*, published in the early part of the second century AD. He lived in Rome, but virtually nothing is known about his life. In the *Satires* Juvenal attacks and mocks the faults of Roman society. The *Satires* are written in verse, often in a highly rhetorical style and with a bitter and pessimistic tone.

### Summary

While the rest of Rome, especially the young, enjoy watching the chariot races in the Circus, the poet prefers to stay at home relaxing.

### Text

These lines are taken, unadapted, from near the end of a long poem.

### Suggestions for teaching

#### Context

Some background knowledge about the Circus Maximus and the organization of the races by teams is required. Individual teachers will use their judgement to decide how much information to give students before starting reading the poem. Picture 2 shows a model of the Circus Maximus, the largest of the three chariot-racing tracks in Rome in the first century AD. The Circus Maximus held about 150,000 spectators, which makes it much larger than any modern football stadium. (Wembley stadium has a capacity of 90,000 and

Camp Nou in Barcelona is the largest stadium in Europe with a capacity of 99,354.) However, the total population of Rome in the first century AD was about one million. Four teams of chariot-racers competed regularly with each other: green, blue, red and white.

The charioteers wore coloured tunics to show which team they belonged to, like a modern football strip or jockey's shirt. The green team was the one supported by the common people. Each team consisted of one, two or three chariots. A day's programme normally consisted of twenty-four races. Each of the rival chariot-racing teams (**factiōnēs**) had its own passionate supporters, like modern football fans.

### Translations

Peter Green, *Juvenal: the Sixteen Satires* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967; repr. 1998) Niall Rudd (trans.) and William Barr (ed., intro. and notes), *Juvenal: the Satires* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

### Metre

Dactylic hexameters

### Notes

**1 tōtam hodiē Rōmam circus capit:** the word order and unfamiliar meaning of **capit** ('hold', 'contain', 'welcome') are difficult. The usual order of subject and object is reversed and the adjective **tōtam** is separated from the noun it describes, **Rōmam**. So that students do not lose confidence at the very start of the poem, it is worth giving them considerable guidance. Perhaps use comprehension questions, such as:

- Pick out the word which shows what time the action of the poem is taking place. What does it mean?
- The word **capit** here means 'hold'? What does the circus hold or contain today?
- 'Today the Circus contains the whole of Rome.' What do you think that means? Put it in other words.

This clause is a good example of how word order can be used to enhance meaning. **tōtam** is the first word in the sentence, which is an emphatic position in Latin. The adjective has additional stress because it is also the first word in the line of verse - also an emphatic position. Juvenal is stressing the idea that the whole of Rome is in the Circus. **circus**: a circus is a circle or course for chariot-racing. The track was in fact an oval, not a circle, with two long sides. Juvenal is almost certainly referring to the Circus Maximus here, since he says that the whole of Rome is attending. See *Context* above for more information about the Circus.

**tōtam ... Rōmam**: Juvenal is exaggerating. See *Context* above.

**aurem**: advise students to translate as 'my ear', as if Juvenal had written **meum aurem**. When a possessive adjective such as **meum** ('my') can be understood from the sense of the sentence, Roman writers often left it out.

**2 ēventum viridis quō colligō pannī**: give help with word order. The relative pronoun is postponed (usually it is the first word in the clause) and the adjective **viridis** is separated from the noun it qualifies, **pannī**: *quō ēventum viridis pannī colligō*.

**quō**: = **ex quō**, 'from which', i.e. from the loud noise made by the spectators. **quō** refers back to the whole idea contained in the previous clause, the noise made by the spectators. **viridis ... pannī**: **pannus** can be translated here as 'team'; it means 'garment' and refers to the coloured tunics worn by the charioteers. The green team was the one supported by the common people. See *Context* above for more information about the teams.

**3 sī dēficeret ... vidērēs**: 'if it lost ... you would see'

**3-4 maestam attonitamque vidērēs hanc urbem**: an indirect statement (accusative and infinitive); add **esse**. The words could be arranged to aid understanding: *vidērēs hanc urbem [esse] maestam attonitamque*. Or, ask students:

- If the green team lost, what would be the reaction?

**4 velutī**: = **velut**

**velutī Cannārum in pulvere**: **velutī** introduces a comparison between the (imagined) defeat of the green team and the defeat of the Roman army at the Battle of Cannae, which took place in 216 BC, about four hundred years before the time Juvenal wrote this poem. At the time Rome was at war with the city of Carthage in North Africa, a series of wars known as the Punic Wars. The Roman army was defeated by the Carthaginian general, Hannibal, at Cannae, in Apulia in southern Italy. Cannae was regarded by the Romans as one of the worst defeats they had ever suffered. Comparing the defeat of the green team to one of the most notorious defeats of the Roman army is an exaggeration. **Cannārum in pulvere** is a vivid way of saying 'at the Battle of Cannae'. Dust suggests the heat, confusion and death of battle.

**4-5 victīs cōsulibus**: students may not recognise the ablative absolute. Perhaps use comprehension questions, such as:

- What happened at the Battle of Cannae? (The consuls were defeated)
- How does that fit into the sentence? (When the consuls were defeated)

Alternatively, start with a literal translation ('with the consuls having been defeated') then ask students to rephrase in more natural English ('when the consuls were defeated'). The leaders of the Roman army at Cannae were the two consuls Lucius Aemilius Paullus and Gaius Terentius Varro. One of the duties of the consul was to command the army.

**5 spectent iuvenēs**: 'let the young men watch'. The present subjunctive form of the verb expresses a command (jussive subjunctive). See *Cambridge Latin Grammar* page 48, Section 12.3 and 4. Take care with word order. The regular word order would be **iuvenēs spectent**: the order of subject and verb is reversed. Only context makes clear that **iuvenēs** is the subject of the sentence (nominative), not the object (accusative).

**5-6 quōs clāmor et audāx spōnsiō**: = *quōs clāmor et audāx spōnsiō [decet]*. The verb **decet** has to be understood from the next clause. Roman writers often leave out a

word when it can be supplied from the context by the reader. Establish the meaning of **decet**, then use a comprehension question:

- What two things are appropriate (or suitable) for young men?

**quōs ... quōs**: the antecedent is **iuvenēs**.

**6 spōnsiō**: the spectators would bet on which chariot they thought would win, just as nowadays people bet on horse-races.

**decet**: 'it is suitable'. This refers to behaviour which is appropriate.

**quōs cultae decet adsēdisse puellae**: the adjective (**cultae**) is separated from the noun it qualifies (**puellae**), as often in poetry. Use a comprehension question to help elicit meaning:

- What is it appropriate for young men to do?

Women attended the chariot races, and men and women sat together. Compare Ovid *Amores* 3.2. (*A good day at the Circus*) on the opportunities for meeting girls at the Circus. **adsēdisse**: 'to have sat beside', so 'to be sitting beside'. You could translate as 'to sit beside'. **adsēdisse** is the perfect active infinitive of **adsedeō**.

**7 nostra bibat verum contracta cutīcula sōlem**: the intricate word order, along with the jussive subjunctive verb, makes this a difficult line. One noun + adjective phrase (**contracta cutīcula**) is placed inside another (**verum ... sōlem**); another adjective (**nostra**) is separated from the noun it qualifies (**cutīcula**). Comprehension questions will help students see the meaning:

- **nostra ... contracta cutīcula**: what does this phrase tell us about Juvenal?
- What does Juvenal want to happen to his wrinkled skin?

**nostra**: = **mea**. Latin poets often use the plural form to refer to themselves.

**nostra ... contracta cutīcula**: this is Juvenal's way of telling the reader that he regards himself as old, in contrast to the young men watching the racing.

**7-8 bibat ... effugiatque**: 'let [my skin] drink ... and keep away from'. Jussive subjunctive verbs. See the note on line 5 above, **spectent iuvenēs**.

**7 cutīcula**: the diminutive form of **cutis** ('skin'). The effect of the diminutive could be translated as 'my poor skin'.

**8 togam**: the toga was the garment worn by male Roman citizens on formal occasions, including business - the modern equivalent would be wearing a suit and tie. Not wearing a toga was therefore a sign of relaxation.

### Discussion

Perhaps compare with Pliny's letter for a different perspective on not attending the Circus. Juvenal mentions the partisanship, in particular that of the ordinary people who tended to support the green team, the availability of betting and the opportunity the circus offered to meet girls, but there is no trace of criticism or moral outrage. The biting satire that one might expect of Juvenal is absent here. The extract provides evidence for the passionate partisanship aroused by chariot-racing, its widespread popularity, and other activities that could be enjoyed at the Circus, such as betting and conducting love-affairs.

### Questions

1. Why isn't Juvenal at the Circus?
2. **velutī Cannārum in pulvere** (line 4). How effective do you think this simile is?
3. What can you learn from reading these lines about what happened at the Circus?

## Suetonius, *Caligula* 55: *Caligula's favourite racehorse*

### Introduction

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (born c. AD 70) was secretary at the imperial palace in Rome. He wrote *The Lives of the Caesars*, biographies of Julius Caesar and the first eleven emperors of Rome.

Caligula was the nickname of Emperor Gaius Iulius Caesar Germanicus (AD 12-41, emperor AD 37-41). He was given the nickname Caligula (which means Little Boot) when he was a child, by the troops stationed on the Rhine under the command of his father, Germanicus, because of the military boots he wore. As emperor his behaviour was despotic, irrational and extravagant, and after ruling for just four years he was murdered.

### Summary

Caligula was such a passionate fan of chariot-racing that he used to have dinner in the stable, gave an extravagant gift to a charioteer, and treated his horse lavishly.

### Text and adaptations

The Latin has been adapted to make it accessible to students at GCSE level. The word order has been simplified in a few places and some changes have been made to the syntax.

### Names

<b>Caligula</b>	Roman emperor (see <b>Introduction</b> to this passage)
<b>Eutychnus</b>	popular charioteer
<b>Incitātus</b>	Caligula's favourite racehorse; it raced for the green team

### Suggestions for reading and teaching

#### Context

The passage starts with a reference to the green team, so it would be useful to preface the reading with at least the minimum information about the way chariot-racing was organized into teams, if students have not yet come across this. Chariot races were held in a circus, which was an oval-shaped open-air track with seats for spectators down both sides.

Picture 2 shows a model of the Circus Maximus in Rome. Four teams of chariot-racers competed regularly with each other: green, blue, red and white. The charioteers wore coloured tunics, like a modern football strip or jockey's shirt, to show which team they belonged to. Picture 1 is a mosaic showing the charioteer from each of the four teams with their coloured shirts and caps. Each team consisted of one, two or three chariots. A day's programme normally included twenty-four races. Each of the rival chariot-racing teams (**factiōnēs**) had its own passionate supporters, like modern football fans.

It is not necessary for students to have any knowledge of Caligula except that he was a Roman emperor; his extravagant and irrational behaviour will emerge from the reading.

### Translation

Robert Graves (revised with intro. and notes by J.B. Rives), *Suetonius, The Twelve Caesars* (London: Penguin, 1957; rev. 2007)

## Notes

**1 prasinæ factiōnī ita addictus et dēditus:** add **erat**. Roman writers frequently miss out forms of the verb **esse** ('to be'). The subject of the sentence is Caligula ('he'). The phrase **prasinæ factiōnī** is in the dative case because it goes with **addictus** and **dēditus**. **addictus et dēditus:** these two words are virtually synonyms. Using a pair of words instead of one is a literary device to add emphasis.

**1-2 ita addictus et dēditus ut ... cēnāret et manēret:** students often do not recognise a result clause and will try to translate as a purpose clause when they see **ut** + subjunctive verb. In the initial reading, stress **ita** and **ut**. Then ask comprehension questions, such as:

- What was Caligula's attitude to the green team?
- How did his obsession affect his behaviour?

**2 cōmisātiōne quādam:** 'at a party'. Literally, 'at one party' or 'at a certain party'. The word **quādam** adds a sense of indefiniteness - no particular party is being referred to. The ablative case is used by itself without a preposition to express the idea of 'at'.

**2-3 in apophorētis:** 'as a gift'

**vīciēs sēstertium:** 'twenty times one hundred thousand sesterces', i.e. two million sesterces. To give some idea of what a huge sum of money this was, we can compare a soldier's pay. An ordinary legionary was paid 900 sesterces a year, of which half was deducted for living costs.

**3 circēnsēs:** = **lūdī circēnsēs**, 'games in the circus', i.e. chariot-racing

**3-4 nē ... inquiētārētur:** 'so that ... was not disturbed'. **nē** introduces a negative purpose clause, with a subjunctive verb.

**4 Incitātus:** the horse's name means 'Swift'.

**4-5 silentium vīcīniae ... indicere:** 'to enforce silence on the neighbourhood'

**4 per milītēs:** 'by means of soldiers', i.e. the soldiers were given the task of enforcing silence.

**5-7 eī ... dedit:** the subject of the sentence is still Caligula. **eī** refers to his horse.

**eī praeter equīle marmoreum et praesaepe eburneum praeterque tegumenta purpurea ac monīlia ē gemmīs facta domum et familiam et supellectilem dedit:** tackle this long clause by first reading it through to the end, then breaking it down into its parts.

Once students see the meaning of **eī ... dedit** the rest will follow easily. Use questions, such as:

- What does **dedit** mean?
- Who gave the gifts?
- Who received the gifts?
- Which word shows the recipient/the horse/Incitatus?
- What was the first gift?

The list is in two parts. The first four items on the list all go with **praeter**, 'in addition to'. The last three items go with **dedit**. The first group are things which are suitable gifts to a horse,

even if extravagant, whereas the second group - a house, a household and furniture - are things fit only for a human.

Ask:

- What is the difference between the first group and the second group?

**6 purpurea:** purple dye was expensive and purple clothes were therefore a status symbol. The dye was produced from a shellfish, and was imported to Rome from Phoenicia in the eastern Mediterranean.

**7 familiam:** 'a household', i.e. a set of slaves - not a family.

**9 cōsulātum etiam trādītur eī dēstināsse:** 'it is said that [Caligula] ...'. The word order, unfamiliar meaning of **trādō**, and concise expression make this short sentence quite

difficult. **trāditur** here means 'it is said', 'the story is told'. It is followed by an indirect statement (accusative and infinitive) construction, but the expected accusative (**Caligulam** or **eum**) is omitted. **cōsulātum** is placed first word in the sentence for emphasis. Translate in the order: *etiam trāditur [Caligulam] cōsulātum eī dēstināsse*. Suetonius is reporting a story he has heard about Caligula without attributing it to any specific source or vouching for its truth himself.

**dēstināsse**: a shortened form of **dēstināvisse**, the perfect active infinitive

### *Discussion*

The main theme is the passionate following chariot-racing aroused in some of its fans, even at the highest levels of society. For the involvement of emperors with chariot-racing, compare the other extract from Suetonius about Nero. The passage is also evidence for the star status and potential wealth of the most popular and successful charioteers, and perhaps the special treatment of star horses - here, of course, grossly exaggerated.

### *Questions*

1. Look at lines 5-7, **eī ... dedit**. Pick out three words or phrases that show Caligula's extravagance. Write down the Latin words and translate them.
2. **domum et familiam et suppellectilem** (line 7). Why did Caligula think the horse needed these things?
3. Look at lines 5-9, **eī ... dēstināsse**. How does Suetonius show the increasing incredibility of Caligula's behaviour. Consider both what he says and how he says it (e.g. choice of words, word order). Quote some words and phrases in Latin and translate them to support your answer.

## Suetonius, *Nero 22: Nero's passion for chariot-racing*

### Introduction

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (born c. AD 70) was secretary at the imperial palace in Rome. He wrote *The Lives of the Caesars*, biographies of Julius Caesar and the first eleven emperors of Rome.

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (AD 37-68) became emperor in AD 54 when he was just sixteen.

### Summary

Nero's passion for chariot-racing began when he was a schoolboy. When he first became emperor he attended every race-meeting. He even became a charioteer himself and eventually performed in the Circus Maximus.

### Text and adaptations

The Latin text is complete with only two minor changes to vocabulary and syntax.

### Translation

Robert Graves (revised with intro. and notes by J.B. Rives), *Suetonius, The Twelve Caesars* (London: Penguin, 1957; rev. 2007)

### Notes

**1 equōrum studiō ... flagrāvit:** the subject of **flagrāvit** is Nero.

**equōrum studiō:** 'a passion for horses'

**ab ineunte aetāte:** 'from an early age'. Literally 'from [his] age beginning'.

**flagrāvit: flagrō = 'be on fire',** here with excitement and passion. The metaphorical use of the verb conveys the excitement of Nero's passion for chariot-racing.

**2 illī:** 'his'. Literally, 'for him'.

**vetārētur:** presumably by his teacher

**circēnsibus: = lūdīs circēnsibus,** 'games in the circus', i.e. chariot-racing. Chariot races were held in a circus, which was an oval-shaped open-air track with seats for spectators down both sides. Picture 2 shows a model of the Circus Maximus, the largest of the three chariot-racing tracks in Rome in the first century AD.

**3-5 et quondam ... ēmentītus est:** a complex sentence, but reading the whole sentence aloud with careful phrasing will help students see how the words fall into groups. Next, read each clause or phrase again with comprehension questions, such as:

- What had happened to the charioteer?
- Which team did he belong to?
- What did Nero think about that?
- Who was present when he was complaining?
- How did his paedagogus interfere?
- How did Nero cover up for what he had said?

**3-4 tractum prasinum agitātōrem ... querēns: tractum [esse] prasinum agitātōrem** is an indirect statement (accusative and infinitive) dependent on **querēns**, 'complaining [that]'. **tractum** is a shortened form of the perfect passive infinitive **tractum esse**; the verb **esse** is often omitted. The idea that the charioteer was dragged is emphasised by the position of **tractum** near the beginning of the sentence. Teachers could draw students' attention to this example of the way word arrangement can enhance meaning by comparing a more regular word arrangement: *inter condiscipulōs querēns prasinum agitātōrem tractum [esse]*.

**3 tractum:** the charioteer raced with the reins tied tightly round his body, so that he

could use his body weight to control the horses. In his belt he carried a knife. If he crashed his life might depend on how quickly he could cut himself free from the wreckage; if he failed to cut himself free he would be dragged along behind the horses.

**prasinum agitātōrem:** four teams of chariot-racers competed regularly with each other: green, blue, red and white. The charioteers wore coloured tunics to show which team they represented, like a modern football strip or jockey's shirt. Each team was made up of one, two or three chariots. A day's programme normally consisted of twenty-four races. Each of the rival chariot-racing teams (**factiōnēs**) had its own passionate supporters, like modern football fans. Picture 1 is a wall painting showing a charioteer from each of the four teams.

**4 obiurgante paedagōgō:** ablative absolute with present participle. One way of dealing with an ablative absolute phrase is to start off with a literal translation, 'with the paedagogus telling [him] off'. Then, rephrase for a more natural English version, e.g. 'when his paedagogus told him off'.

**paedagōgō:** a paedagogus was a slave who accompanied a boy to school and supervised his behaviour.

**Hectore:** Hector was one of the leading heroes in *The Iliad*, an epic poem by the Greek poet Homer about the capture of Troy by the Greeks. He was the son of Priam, King of Troy, and was defeated in a duel by the Greek hero, Achilles. After killing Hector, Achilles dragged his body around the walls of Troy behind his chariot. Studying *The Iliad* was an important part of a Roman boy's education.

**4-5 sē loquī ēmentītus est:** 'he pretended that he was talking'. **sē loquī** is an indirect statement, going with **ēmentītus est**. **sē** is accusative ('he') and **loquī** is the infinitive of the deponent verb **loquor**.

**5 inter initia:** 'at the beginning'. Nero became emperor when he was sixteen years old.

**5-6 cum ... lūdere:** **cum** means 'although'. It can be translated as 'as well as'.

**6 etiam minimōs:** 'even the most unimportant'

**8 nēminī dubium esset:** 'no one doubted'. Literally, 'it was doubtful to no one'.

**affutūrum:** add **esse**, 'he would be present'. Future infinitive of **adsum**; **esse** is often omitted.

**8-9 neque dissimulābat:** 'And he didn't try to disguise [the fact that] ...'. The imperfect tense here can be translated as 'tried to ...'.

**9 velle sē:** the usual word order would be **sē velle**.

**palmārum:** the winning charioteer received a palm branch and a wreath as a sign of victory. There was also a monetary prize for the driver and the team, which was given later. Picture 6 is a mosaic showing the victorious charioteer driving his chariot towards the magistrate who will present him with the palm branch and wreath. Next to the magistrate is a trumpet player who announces the victory.

**quārē:** 'and therefore', 'and for this reason'

**10 multiplicātis missibus:** a day's programme normally consisted of twenty-four races, each lasting seven laps (about five miles) and taking about quarter of an hour to run.

**10-11 nē dominīs quidem ... dignantibus:** 'and not even the managers thought it was worthwhile'. **dominīs dignantibus** is an ablative absolute. Literally, 'with the managers thinking it worthwhile'. **nē ... quidem** = 'not even'.

**11 dominīs ... factiōnum:** the managers of the four teams (**factiōnēs**: the reds, the greens, the blues and the whites) organised the training.

**12 et:** here = 'even'

**ipse:** Nero

**12-13 ipse aurīgāre ... voluit:** charioteers were usually slaves. Romans considered it a disgrace for respectable people to display themselves in public as entertainers.

**13-14 positōque ... rudīmentō:** 'after he had put on a trial run'; ablative absolute. The participle and noun are separated by two prepositional phrases. Reading aloud with



Careful phrasing, followed by language and comprehension questions will help students grasp the meaning. For example:

- **positō**: translate ('having been placed'). Then, leave to be solved until later in the sentence.
- Where did this happen?
- Which two groups of people were present?
- **rudimentō**: what happened in the gardens? Now, translate **positō ... rudimentō**.

**14 sordidam plēbem**: literally, 'the dirty common people'. Possible translations would be 'some filthy riff-raff' or 'a vulgar rabble'.

**14-15 ūniversōrum sē oculīs ... praebuit**: the more regular word order would be **ūniversōrum oculīs ... sē praebuit**. The effect of placing **sē** between **ūniversōrum** and **oculīs** is, firstly, to contrast Nero with everyone else, and, secondly, to focus on the fact that Nero is being watched by everyone.

**in Circō Maximō**: the Circus Maximus was the largest of the three chariot-racing tracks in Rome in the first century AD. The word **circus** means 'circle'. However, the track was in fact oval-shaped. It was open-air with seats for spectators around. Picture 2 shows a model of the Circus Maximus.

**15-16 aliquō libertō mittente mappam unde magistrātūs solent**: 'with some freedman dropping the cloth from [the place] where the magistrates normally [drop it]'. The patron of the games, usually the emperor himself or a magistrate, would drop a white cloth to signal the start of the race.

### *Discussion*

Like the other extract from Suetonius, about Caligula, this passage is evidence for the popularity of horse-racing with all levels of society, even emperors. It can be contrasted with Pliny's expression of elitist disdain for the Circus and those who attend. However, despite Nero's passion for racing, some elitism can be detected in Suetonius' account. At first Nero attended the races secretly (**clam**); he even (**et**) wanted to be a charioteer himself (the Roman reader would know that charioteers were usually slaves); his first attempts are associated with a lower class audience (**inter servitia et sordidam plēbem**).

### *Questions*

1. Look at line 1. Pick out and translate the word which shows how intensely Nero felt about chariot-racing.
2. Show the various stages of Nero's involvement with chariot-racing.
3. Pick out any words or phrases which suggest that Nero's interest in chariot-racing may have met with disapproval. Explain your choices.

## Virgil, *Aeneid* 5.139-158, 223-243: A boat race

### Introduction

Publius Vergilius Maro (70-19 BC) was born in Mantua in Cisalpine Gaul. His chief work is the *Aeneid*, an epic poem of almost ten thousand lines in twelve books. The *Aeneid* tells the story of the Trojan hero Aeneas, the legendary ancestor of the Romans. After the Greeks captured the city of Troy, Aeneas and a band of loyal followers escaped and set off westwards by sea. During their wanderings they landed on the island of Sicily, where Aeneas' father Anchises was buried. Aeneas held a festival of games, including a boat race, to celebrate the anniversary of Anchises' death.

The boat race is a self-contained episode and students do not need any knowledge of the author or the poem in order to understand and enjoy it. The narrative is presented here as two sections of Latin text linked by a passage of English summary. The Latin is unadapted.

Most teachers will probably decide to make it the last passage they read with the class for several reasons. It differs from the others in the selection in three ways. First, it describes a boat race, whereas horse-racing is the subject of the other pieces. Secondly, the race is fictional. Thirdly, it is set in the remote, legendary past in Sicily, whereas the other passages are set in recent or contemporary Rome. As the boat-racing is compared to a chariot race, some knowledge of chariot-racing is assumed.

Virgil's funeral games are closely modelled on those in Homer's *Iliad* (although Homer's games do not include a boat race). However, there is also a Roman model as games were included in the funeral celebrations of important Roman citizens, and funeral games were sometimes celebrated on the anniversary of funerals. These games generally comprised gladiatorial combats and athletic contests; a boat race was not generally a part of athletic contests.

### Summary

There are four boats in the race:

Boat	Commander
Pristis	Mnestheus
Chimaera	Gyas (helmsman: Menoetes)
Centaur	Sergestus
Scylla	Cloanthus

The course is out to sea, round a rock which acts like the **mēta** (turning-post) in the Circus, then back to shore again. At first Gyas takes the lead, followed closely by Cloanthus, with Mnestheus and Sergestus vying for third place. Gyas is first to reach the rock which acts as the turning point, but his helmsman cautiously takes a wide course around the rock, allowing Cloanthus to slip past on the inside and gain the lead. In a fit of anger, Gyas throws his helmsman overboard. Meanwhile, in the battle for third place, Sergestus goes too close to the rock and his boat is so badly damaged he has to drop out. Mnestheus then seizes the opportunity to close the gap on the two leaders. He soon overtakes Gyas, who is hampered now by his lack of a helmsman, and almost succeeds in catching Cloanthus. But Cloanthus prays to the gods of the sea; his prayers are answered and he comes home the winner.

### Reading and teaching

Start with a diagram on the board showing the four boats at the starting line on the shore and the rock which acts as the turning point. Put up the names of the boats and their captains as well, for reference whilst reading the episode. Gyas' helmsman, Menoetes, could be included. Show the students a picture of a Roman boat (a trireme), pointing out

the oars, sail and the prow. Triremes were so-called because they had three rows of oars; it is important for students to know that triremes were powered by rowers. The names of the boats could be discussed at this point. Each is named after a monster from mythology, and students may be familiar with some of them. The monster was represented on the ship's carved figurehead. As the race proceeds the positions of the boats can be traced on the diagram. Generally it is advisable to use comprehension questions before proceeding to translation. Some ideas are given in the notes and questions below, but teachers will want to devise their own.

### Further reading

#### Commentaries

R.D. Williams, *The Aeneid of Virgil, Books 1-6, edited with introduction and notes* (Macmillan, 1972; repr. Bristol Classical Press, 1996)

R. D. Williams, *Virgil: Aeneid V, edited with a commentary* (1960; repr. Bloomsbury 2013)

### Metre

Dactylic hexameter.

### Notes

**Lines 1-5** (*Aeneid* 5.139-143)

*At the signal the boats set off together.*

**1 clāra dedit sonitum tuba:** the more familiar word order is: **tuba clāra sonitum dedit** (subject, adjective, object, verb). **clāra ... tuba** is the first example of a split adjective + noun phrase, a common feature of Latin poetry. Teachers may want to draw students' attention to this arrangement of noun and adjective, which is common in poetry. The unfamiliar word order will be a difficulty for students when reading this passage. It is best to start with a comprehension question:

- What was the starting signal? Was it loud or quiet?

**clāra:** translate here as 'loud'. Literally 'clear'.

**1-2 finibus omnēs (haud mora) prōsiluēre suīs:** again, use a question before translating:

- What do the words **haud mora** and **prōsiluēre** indicate about the way in which the competitors set off?

**finibus ... suīs:** = **ē finibus suīs**. Another split noun + adjective phrase. The ablative case is sometimes used without a preposition (**ē**) to express the idea of 'from', especially in poetry. The ablative case can be translated in various ways, and this is one of the difficulties students face when they first read Latin poetry. Help them with this rule of thumb: translate the ablative case by 'in', 'on', 'by', 'with', 'from' or 'at' - choose whichever is most appropriate in the context.

**2 haud mora:** add **erat**. The phrase is parenthetical (there is no grammatical connection to the rest of the sentence), which produces a sense of bustling activity. The concise expression echoes the meaning.

**prōsiluēre:** an alternative form of the 3rd person plural perfect **prōsiluērunt**.

Ensure students do not confuse this form with the present infinitive **prōsilīre**.

**ferit:** Roman writers often use the historic present tense for events or actions which take place in the past. The effect is to make events more exciting and vivid. Tell students that they can choose whether to use a past tense in English or retain the tense of the Latin. What is important is consistency.

**ferit aethera clāmor:** a good example of how the flexibility of Latin word order can enhance meaning. The word order here is: verb, object, subject. The more regular order would be **clāmor aethera ferit** (subject, object, verb). The verb, **ferit**, is the first word in the sentence, which is an unusual position, and the order of subject and object is

reversed. The effect is to emphasise the phrase **ferit aether**. The first word in the sentence is in an emphatic position.

**aethera**: **aethēr** is a Greek word and **aethera** is a Greek accusative form.

**1-2 inde ubi clāra dedit sonitum tuba, finibus omnēs (haud mora) prōsiluēre suīs; ferit aethera clāmor**: the first two lines have the maximum number of dactyls. This gives a sense of speed and energy. The elision in the first foot (**inde ubi**) gets the passage off to a hurried start.

**2-3 ferit ... lacertīs**: appropriate comprehension questions would be:

- What are we told here about (a) the shouting of the sailors; (b) the appearance of the sea; (c) the movements of the rowers?
- What is the connection between the movement of the rowers and the appearance of the sea?

**clāmor nauticus**: 'the shouts of the rowers'

**3 adductīs ... lacertīs**: describes the movement of the sailors' arms as they row the ships, churning up the water. Literally 'with their arms drawn up (to their chests)'. Possible translations include 'as they draw up their arms' or 'as they move their arms' or 'by their heaving arms'. The ships were triremes, which had oars as well as sails. Triremes were so-called because they had three rows of oars.

**4 ĩnfindunt ... sulcōs**: a metaphor from farming. The ships cut through the waves like a plough cutting furrows through the soil. Ask students:

- What usually is said to cut through furrows?
- In what way are these ships like ploughs?

**4-5 tōtumque ... aequor**: split adjective + noun phrase

**rōstrīsque tridentibus**: the prow is the pointed front part of a ship, used for ramming another ship in battle, with the aim of sinking it. The prows are described as **tridentibus** because they had three prongs.

**aequor**: 'a level surface'. When used, as here, to mean 'sea' it usually refers to the level surface of the sea or the sea when it is calm and flat. Here, it is referring to the level surface of the sea before it is churned up by the oars.

**convulsum rēmīs rōstrīsque tridentibus aequor**: the three spondees at the start of this line create a heavy rhythm and slow down the pace, perhaps suggesting the effort involved in moving the ship through the waves.

### Questions

1. Study lines 1-3. How does the style of writing convey the sense of excitement at the start of the race? Pick out some words and phrases in Latin and translate them to support your ideas.
2. Study lines 4-5 (**ĩnfindunt ... aequor**). Does this kind of language help you to picture what is going on?

### Lines 6-12 (*Aeneid* 5.144-150)

*The boats are compared to racing chariots. The surrounding woods, shores and hills echo the sound of shouting.*

**6-8 nōn tam ... nec sīc**: these phrases introduce similes.

**6-9 nōn tam ... pendent**: Virgil is comparing the racing ships to a chariot race - not even chariots are as fast as these boats. Most students will have read the other passages in the selection and have enough knowledge to understand the references to chariot-racing here without further explanation. Chariot-racing was the most popular spectator sport among the Romans, more popular than gladiatorial contests.

**6-7 praecipitēs ... currūs**: split adjective + noun phrase. Translate **praecipitēs** here as 'fast' or 'with such headlong speed'. The delayed subject, **currūs**, is likely to be difficult for students. One approach is to break up lines 6-7 into phrases and ask for a translation

of each, as follows: **nōn tam praecipitēs/biiugō certāmine/campum corripuēre/ruuntque/effūsī carcere currūs**. The word **praeceps** suggests risk, rushing forward without hesitation or thought of the danger involved.

**6 biiugō certāmine:** = **in biiugō certāmine**. This was a chariot race in which each chariot was drawn by two horses yoked together. Racing chariots could be drawn by two or, more commonly, four horses - occasionally more.

**6-7 campum corripuēre:** 'take the field', 'tear off across the field' i.e. set off at speed. In Virgil's time chariot races took place not in a field but in a **circus**, an open-air track surrounded by seating. Refer students to Picture 2 which shows a model of the Circus Maximus, the largest of the three chariot-racing tracks in Rome.

**7 corripuēre:** = **corripuērunt**. Remind students of **prōsiluēre** in line 2 if they do not recognise the alternative form of the 3rd person plural perfect. Perfect tense, but could be translated here as present. Cf. **concussēre** (= **concussērunt**), line 9.

**effūsī ... currūs:** split participle + noun phrase

**effūsī carcere:** = **effūsī ē carcere**. The ablative case without the preposition **ē** expresses the idea of 'from'.

**carcere:** at one end of the **circus** were twelve stalls, one for each of the chariots in the race. The chariots lined up in these stalls waiting for the race to start. At the front of each stall, facing the track, was a wooden gate. The gates were spring-loaded and would spring open simultaneously when the signal was given to start the race.

**corripuēre ruuntque effūsī carcere currūs:** the line begins with two dactyls, suggesting the speed with which the chariots set off. The elision in the third foot (**ruuntque effūsī**) continues the sense of speed.

**8-9 nec sīc ... iugīs:** the split participle + noun phrase **immissīs ... iugīs** which frames the first clause will need careful handling. Comprehension questions could be used as a starting point, e.g.

- What does the phrase **nec sīc** tell us about what follows? (Hint: compare **nōn tam** in line 6)
- Now it is no longer the chariots which are being compared to the ships. What or who is the focus of the comparison now? (the charioteers)
- What are the charioteers doing? (shaking the reins)
- Are the reins tight or loose? Which word shows this?
- When is this happening? (when the horses have been let loose)
- So, what are the charioteers doing here to make the horses go fast?

**immissīs ... iugīs:** 'when the horses have been let loose', i.e. when they have been given free rein. **iugum** is a pair of horses yoked together to pull a chariot. The charioteer would tighten the reins to slow down the horses and loosen them to let the horses go at full speed.

**8 undantia:** **undāre** means 'to ripple' or 'to move like a wave'; it has the same root as the noun **unda**, 'wave'. The choice of word therefore connects the simile to the main narrative, the boat race.

**9 prōnīque in verbera:** 'leaning forward to use their whips'. Literally 'leaning on to whips'. A comprehension question (What are the charioteers doing?) will steer students to a translation of this phrase. The charioteer would whip his horses to encourage them to go faster, just like a modern jockey. Picture 1 shows charioteers with their whips.

**prōnīque in:** the elision mirrors the posture of the charioteers stretching out to whip their horses.

**prōnīque ... pendent:** **pendent** is a striking word choice. **pendeō** ('hang') presents an image of the charioteer in a precarious position as he leans forward, hanging out of the chariot as far as he can, to whip the horses. The alliteration of *p* emphasises the words, adding to the striking effect of the image.

**10 tum:** this word marks the return from the chariot-racing simile to the main narrative. **10-11 plausū ... nemus:** the subject (**nemus**) is delayed until the end of

the clause, which begins with a series of ablatives. Comprehension questions could be used, such as:

- What sounds were there?
- What is the effect of these sounds on the natural surroundings?

The second question could be extended to cover the rest of the sentence, the shores and the hills.

**10 plausū ... fremitūque ... studiīsque:** these ablatives are explained by the verb **cōnsonat** in the next line, 'resounds *with*'. If necessary, remind students that when a noun in the ablative case is used without a preposition, it can often be translated as 'in', 'on', 'by', 'with', 'from' or 'at' - whichever suits the context best.

**virum:** = **virōrum**; alternative form of the genitive plural

**faventum:** 'supporters'. The present participle **faventēs** ('supporting') is used as a noun, 'those people supporting', i.e. 'supporters'.

**11 vōcem:** strictly **vōx** means 'voice', but it is often used to mean 'sound' in general.

**inclūsa:** the shores are enclosed by the surrounding cliffs and hills, so therefore 'sheltered' or 'curved'. The idea is that the sound echoes off the surrounding cliffs and hills.

**12 lītora:** poetic plural; it is common in poetry for the plural to be used for the singular or *vice versa*. It could be translated as singular.

**10-12 tum ... resultant:** these two lines are a good example of two key features of Virgil's style. First, phrases or clauses are grouped in threes. In line 10 the noise of the spectators is mentioned three times: **plausū ... fremitūque ... studiīsque**. In lines 11-12 three natural features echo to the sound of their shouts: **nemus ... lītora ... collēs**. A grouping of three phrases or clauses is called a tricolon. Secondly, a single idea is reinforced by repetition: firstly, the noise of the spectators, then the echoing of the natural surroundings.

### Discussion

Extended similes are a characteristic feature of epic poetry. This one is unusual in that it is expressed negatively - a chariot race is *not* like this boat race in that the boat race demands even more speed and effort. The simile should be explored in detail with students, analysing how it works and what it contributes to the narrative. A good way of approaching a simile is, first of all, to establish the main point of comparison, then continue the exploration by looking for other similarities and differences. Here the boat race is being compared to a chariot race. There are two points of comparison. First, speed - not even chariots are as fast as these ships. The second point of comparison is less obvious. The charioteers are doing all they can to make their horses go faster. Virgil does not state explicitly what he is comparing the charioteers to. The reader has to make the connection - the charioteers are equivalent to the rowers on the ship. The implicit idea is that even charioteers do not exert themselves as much as these oarsmen. By comparing the boat race to a chariot race Virgil is using a situation with which his readers would be familiar to help them experience the excitement of the less familiar boat race.

### Questions

1. Lines 6-9 contain a simile. What two things are being compared? How effective do you think the simile is?
2. Study lines 10-12. How is the noise made by the crowd of supporters emphasised?

**Lines 13-20** (*Aeneid* 5.151-158)

*The Chimaera, captained by Gyas, takes the lead, closely followed by Cloanthus in the Scylla. The Pristis, captained by Mnestheus, and the Centaur, captained by Sergestus, battle for third place.*

**13-16 effugit ... tenet:** the postponement of the subject of the first part of the sentence, **Gyās**, may cause difficulty. Read the whole sentence aloud with careful phrasing, then ask students:

- Who is in the lead?
- Who is coming second?

Follow up by breaking the sentence into its constituent clauses or phrases and asking for a translation. Students will follow what is going on more easily if the course of the race is marked on the board.

**13 prīmisque ... undīs:** 'over the waves at the beginning' or 'over the first stretch of water'. The ablative case without the preposition **in** expresses the idea of 'on' or 'over'. Take care to ensure that students realise that **prīmīs** is in the ablative case and therefore cannot refer to Gyas.

**effugit ante aliōs prīmisque ēlābitur undīs:** the line begins with two dactyls, suggesting the speed with which Gyas' ship sets off. The elisions in the second and fourth feet add to the sense of haste. Compare line 7.

**13-14 effugit ... ēlābitur ... Gyās:** inversion of the usual order of subject and verb has the effect of emphasising the verb; the first word in the sentence (and in a line of verse) is an emphatic position. The delay in naming Gyas gives a sense of anticipation and suspense, as the reader has to wait to find out who is in the lead. Encourage students to comment on the word order.

**14 turbam inter fremitumque:** the preposition is placed between the two nouns it controls, a common arrangement of words.

**quem:** = **eum**, referring to **Gyās**. The relative pronoun is often used in Latin to connect a sentence to the previous one. This is called a connecting relative. See *Cambridge Latin Grammar* page 21, Section 5.7.

**15-16 melior ... tenet:** use comprehension questions to elicit the meaning.

- What advantage does Cloanthus have?
- What disadvantage?

**15 melior rēmīs:** first translate literally ('better with his oars'), then ask students to suggest a more natural translation, e.g. 'better at rowing' or 'with a better crew'.

**pīnus:** 'ship', because the ship was made from pine wood.

**15-16 pondere pīnus tarda tenet:** add **eum**.

**16-17 post ... priōrem:** start with questions, e.g.

- Where are the Pristis and the Centaurus?
- What are they doing?

**16 aequō discrimine:** literally 'at an equal distance'. The other two ships are at the same distance from the two leaders, so they are neck-and-neck.

**Pristis:** Mnestheus' ship is named after a kind of sea monster. The ships would have figureheads carved to resemble their names.

**17 Centaurusque:** Sergestus' ship is named after the Centaur, a mythical beast which had the head and shoulders of a man and the body of a horse.

**locum ... priōrem:** split noun + adjective phrase

**18-19 nunc ... nunc ... nunc:** the repetition of **nunc** marks the changes in the positions of the two ships. Ask students:

- What is happening at each of the three stages of the struggle introduced by **nunc ... nunc ... nunc**?

Repeating a word at the beginning of two or more phrases, clauses or sentences is

called anaphora. Here the repetition of **nunc** draws attention to the quickly changing positions in the race and adds to the excitement.

**18 habet:** understand **locum priorem**. Translate as 'has it' or 'has the lead'.

**victam:** 'overtaken', referring to the Pristis.

**19-20 unā ... iunctisque frontibus:** 'together and with their prows joined', i.e. 'together and with their prows level' or 'together and prow to prow'. Repeating an idea in different words is a feature of Virgil's style and is sometimes referred to as 'theme and variation'. It has the effect of emphasising an idea.

**19 feruntur:** 'move swiftly'. The passive of **ferō** means 'move', especially 'move quickly'.

**20 longā sulcant vada salsa carinā:** the intricate word arrangement (adjective A, verb, noun B, adjective B, noun A) is difficult. The metre shows that **longā** and **carinā** are ablative singular, while **vada** and **salsa** are accusative plural. Some students might be tempted to take **longā** with **vada**. Teachers can avoid this by asking:

- Pick out the two adjectives. Which one describes the boat and which one describes the sea?

Reading aloud with careful phrasing will help students disentangle the two noun + adjective phrases.

**longā ... carinā:** the ablative without a preposition expresses the idea of 'with'. Singular for plural; translate as plural. The keel is a lengthwise wooden structure attached to the bottom of a boat to keep it more stable.

**sulcant:** a return to the farming metaphor. Compare line 4, **infindunt ... sulcōs**.

### Questions

1. How does Virgil make the description of the race exciting? Pick out some words and phrases in Latin and translate them to illustrate your answer.
2. The literal meaning of the verb **sulcāre** is 'to plough'. Do you think it is appropriate to the description of the movement of the ships? Give your reasons.

### Lines 21-29 (Aeneid 5.223-231)

*Mnestheus overtakes Gyas, and closes in on Cloanthus. The crowd shout their encouragement, as both crews strain for victory.*

**22-4 cōsequitur ... cēdit ... petit ... urget:** there are no nominative nouns to show who or what is the subject of these four verbs. All are 3rd person singular, but the subject changes, so the reader needs to pay careful attention to what is happening to work out what the subject of each noun must be. Help is given in the notes that follow.

**21-22 inde ... cōsequitur:** use comprehension questions, such as:

- What is happening to Gyas and the Chimaera?
- Who is chasing them? (Hint: look back at the final sentence of the linking passage.)
- Which two-word phrase describes the Chimaera? What does it mean?

**21 Gyān:** Gyas is a Greek name and **Gyān** is a Greek accusative. So, although **Gyān** is the first noun in the sentence, Gyas is not the subject.

**ipsamque ... Chimaeram:** split adjective + noun phrase. Some students may be tempted to take **ipsam** with **Gyān**.

**Chimaeram:** Chimaera is the name of Gyas' ship. The chimaera was a mythical fire-breathing monster. It had the head and body of a lion; a goat's head was attached to its back and its tail ended with a snake's head.

**ingentī mōle:** a descriptive ablative phrase, 'with [its] huge bulk'.

**22 cōsequitur:** the subject is Mnestheus, understood from the previous linking passage.

**cēdit ... est:** comprehension questions could precede translation:

- Whom does Mnestheus overtake next?



- How is he able to do so?

**cēdit:** the subject is the Chimaera. This becomes clear only in the following clause - it is the Chimaera which has lost its helmsman.

**cōnsequitur; cēdit:** notice the word order. The juxtaposition of the two verbs draws attention to the swift changes of position in the race. Alliteration of *c* underlines the stress on the verbs.

**spoliāta magistrō est:** 'it has been deprived of its helmsman', i.e. 'it has lost its helmsman'. **magistrō** is in the ablative case because the verb **spoliō** ('deprive of') is used with a noun in the ablative case.

**23 sōlus ... Cloanthus:** the adjective **sōlus** and the noun it describes, **Cloanthus**, frame the line. This is a typical feature of Virgil's style.

**iamque:** postponed. Students may not be troubled by this, but give help if necessary.

**ipsō ... in fine:** 'at the very end'

**24 petit:** the subject is Mnestheus. This should be clear from the context.

**adnīxus:** 'straining'; sometimes English uses a present participle where Latin has a perfect.

**25 sequentem:** 'the one following', i.e. 'the pursuer'. Mnestheus.

**26 studiīs:** strictly **studium** = 'support'. Translate the plural as 'shouts of support' or 'cheers'.

**fragōribus:** poetic plural

**27-8 hī ... teneant:** students will need a lot of help with this. After checking vocabulary, perhaps start with a question before filling in the details:

- How do Cloanthus and his crew feel about the possibility of losing?

Rearranging the word order is another approach; and this can be combined with a focus on the key words in the sentence: *hī indignantur nī teneant ... decus et ... honōrem*.

**27 hī:** the crew in the lead, that is the crew of the Scylla, captained by Cloanthus.

They are contrasted with **hōs** (the crew of the Pristis) in the next sentence.

**proprium decus et partum ... honōrem: partum honōrem** repeats the idea of **proprium decus**. This is an example of theme and variation: a single idea is amplified to give it emphasis. See the note on lines 19-20. Alliteration of *p* helps bind the two phrases together and contributes to the emphasis on the fact that they feel they have already won.

**partum ... honōrem:** 'the honour achieved', i.e. 'the honour which they have achieved'

**27-8 indignantur ... nī teneant:** 'they think it shameful if they don't keep'. **nī = nisi**.

**decus ... indignantur honōrem ... laude:** these two lines reflect the traditional values of the heroes of epic poetry. They were warriors who strove to preserve their honour and to win everlasting fame in battle. They were willing to sacrifice their lives for glory.

**29 hōs:** the crew of the Pristis, commanded by Mnestheus. Notice the contrast with **hī** in line 27.

**videntur:** 'they think'

### Discussion

The first four questions below can be used to help students grasp what is happening.

Mnestheus easily overtakes Gyas, who is handicapped by the loss of his helmsman.

Cloanthus is almost at the finishing line, but Mnestheus and his crew make a final effort to overtake him. Their determination wins the support of the crowd, who spur them on with excited cheering. Virgil says that all the spectators (**cūnctī**) are shouting for Mnestheus, but perhaps this is an exaggeration and isn't to be taken literally - surely Cloanthus' supporters would continue to cheer for him? Cloanthus' crew have been in the lead for the second half of the race and feel that victory is almost theirs; if Mnestheus catches them at the last minute they would be devastated, so they are desperate to hold on.

Mnestheus' men, on the other hand, have the psychological advantage; they have

nothing to lose and their morale has been boosted by their success in the latter part of the

race.

### Questions

1. Why is Gyas overtaken?
2. Which two captains are involved in the final race for first place? Which of them has the better chance? Which phrase in line 23 emphasises this?
3. Look at lines 25-6. What happens to the noise level? Suggest a reason for this. Which competitor does the crowd support?
4. Why are Cloanthus' crew especially anxious not to be beaten? How does Virgil emphasise their determination?
5. What advantage does Mnesteus' crew have?
6. How is the enthusiasm of the crowd emphasised in lines 25-6?

### Lines 30-41 (*Aeneid* 5.232-243)

*Cloanthus prays to the gods of the sea for victory. They hear his prayers and Portunus helps him to victory.*

**30 fors ... rōstrīs:** this could mean either that the race would have been a dead heat or that Cloanthus would have first drawn level, then won.

**aequātīs ... rōstrīs:** split adjective + noun phrase

**31-33 cēpissent ... nī ... Cloanthus fūdissetque ... vocāset:** 'they would have taken ... if Cloanthus hadn't ...'

**30 praemia:** plural for singular. Translate as singular.

**31 palmās ... tendēns utrāsque:** stretching out one's hands was a gesture of prayer.

**pontō:** 'to the sea' or 'over the sea'

**Cloanthus:** the nominative noun is the last word in the clause. Encourage students to read the whole line before attempting a translation. If they need more help, ask:

- Who took the initiative?

**32 fūdissetque ... dīvōsque ... vocāset:** **-que ... -que** means 'both ... and', joining the verb **fūdisset** and the phrase **dīvōs vocāset**. Tell students that there is no need to include 'both' in their English translation.

**vocāset:** = **vocāvisset**; a shortened form of the pluperfect subjunctive.

**dīvōsque in vōta vocāset:** 'had called on the gods in his pleas'. Literally 'had called the gods into his pleas'. This clause more or less repeats the idea in the previous clause to complete the line; an example of theme and variation.

**33 quibus imperium est pelagī:** 'who have control of the sea' or 'who have power over the sea'. Literally 'to whom there is control of the sea'. The dative case (**quibus**) with **est** expresses possession. If students have difficulty with this perhaps give them a simpler example, e.g. **est mihi multa pecūnia**.

**currō:** 'I race across'

**34-35 vōbīs ... reus:** very tricky, so it is perhaps best to help students with comprehension questions

**34 laetus:** 'happily', 'gladly'. Sometimes English uses an adverb where Latin has an adjective.

**hōc ... in lītore:** the preposition (and another word) is sandwiched between the adjective and noun it qualifies. This arrangement of words is common in poetry.

**candentem ... taurum:** the colour of the sacrificial animal was significant in Roman religion. A white bull was sacrificed to the gods of the upper world; a black bull was sacrificed to the gods of the underworld.

**35 vōtī reus:** 'in payment of my vow'. Literally 'as a debtor of my vow'.

**reus** means 'debtor'. A person whose prayer is granted is like someone who owes a debt; he is obliged to pay what he has promised.

**extaque:** after a sacrificial animal was killed the entrails were removed and examined.

Usually they were then burned on the altar as an offering to the gods, while the carcass was butchered and roasted for a feast. Here, however, Cloanthus promises to throw the entrails directly into the sea, because he is praying to the gods of the sea.

**35-6 salsōs ... in flūctūs:** split adjective + noun phrase

**36 vīna:** plural for singular. Translate as singular. Wine was often poured over the altar as an offering to the gods.

**37 dīxit, eumque:** literally 'He spoke, and ...'. Encourage students to use more natural English, e.g. 'After he spoke, he ...' or 'When he had said this, he ...'.

**audiit:** = **audīvit**; a shortened form of the 3rd person singular perfect tense.

**37-8: omnis ... chorus:** split adjective + noun phrase

**38 Nēreidum:** Nereids were sea nymphs, the daughters of the sea god Nereus.

**Phorcīque:** Phorcus was a sea god.

**Panopēaque:** Panopea was a sea nymph, one of the Nereids.

**39 pater ... Portūnus:** the god of harbours

**euntem:** literally 'him going', i.e. 'him as he went'. A more natural translation would be 'him on his way'. The present participle is in the accusative case, so refers to Cloanthus (**eum** in line 37).

**40 illa:** Scylla, Cloanthus' boat. Scylla was a six-headed mythical monster who lived on one side of a narrow stretch of water, with Charybdis, a monstrous whirlpool, on the other. She would snatch sailors from their ships as they passed through. Students who have read or heard about the adventures of Odysseus will be familiar with Scylla and Charybdis; some students may recognise the idiom 'between Scylla and Charybdis', which means caught between two equally dangerous situations. **illa** is feminine nominative singular ('she'), so refers to the boat. **Scylla** and **nāvis** are both feminine gender.

**Notō:** the South wind. The capital letter is used because the winds were regarded as gods.

**Notō citius volucrīque sagittā:** **citius** ('more quickly') is the comparative form of the adverb **cito**. Students may not have met many comparative adverbs before; compare **melius**. **Notō** and **sagittā** are in the ablative case to express the idea of comparison; the ablative is an alternative to **quam** ('than'). See *Cambridge Latin Grammar* page 53, Section 6f.

**41 portū ... altō:** = **in portū altō**. The ablative case is used without a preposition to express the idea of 'in' a place.

**sē condidit:** 'buried itself', i.e. 'anchored'.

### *Discussion*

After all the effort of both crews and the tension generated in the closing stages of the race, the winner is in the end decided by the intervention of the gods. Students might like to discuss whether they find the ending an anticlimax. Do they think Cloanthus' victory is unfair? Is Portunus' final push to be taken literally, or could it be interpreted as a metaphor for a final superhuman effort on the part of the crew of the Scylla?

### *Question*

Do you find the ending satisfying?

### *Questions on the whole passage*

1. Look back at the whole passage (lines 1-41). In what ways is the boat race similar to a chariot race. What differences are there?
2. In this passage how does Virgil keep the reader interested?