

Eduqas Support Materials: Translation

Eduqas GCSE Latin Component 3A

Latin Literature (Prose) Livy: Hannibal Crosses the Alps

For examination in 2026 – 2027

Using this Document

Each section of the Latin text is displayed in three columns.

In the left-hand column is the Latin text. Line numbers corresponding to the official examination text are indicated in square brackets.

In the centre column is an accessible interpretation of its English meaning (not a literal translation). The purpose of this is to help students enjoy and engage with the meaning of the poem.

Where the interpretation in the central column is significantly different from a literal translation of the Latin, a literal translation is provided in the right-hand column. Where this occurs, the relevant words of the Latin text, English meaning and literal translation are all marked with a dotted line underneath. This is intended to form a bridge for the teacher between the Latin and the English interpretation, and to make it possible for any

student who wishes to do so to see how the Latin gives rise to the English meaning.

Please note that students will not be expected to translate a section of text in this examination, although they are expected to show detailed knowledge and comprehension of the text throughout, and that they understand the meaning of any quotations they use.

Where a word in the English meaning column enhances readability, but is not explicitly included in the Latin, it is given in square brackets: [...].

There are also a number of occasions where, in order to make the passage read more naturally in English, Latin verbs in the (historic) present tense have been translated as if they were in a past tense.

N. B. The coloured passages in italics are summaries of events to support understanding of the narrative. They are not part of the prescription.

Hannibal Crosses the Alps

Livy, History, 21. 1, 4, 22, 28, 32, 35-37

Rome fought three bitter wars with the Carthaginians. The most famous of which is probably the Second Punic War involving Hannibal and his famous crossing of the Alps in 218 BC. (The Carthaginians were descended from Phoenicians, hence, Punic.) The Roman historian Titus Livius (Livy) tells the story around 150 years after the event, when Hannibal's name could still instil fear in Romans so close did they believe they had come to defeat. After his epic crossing of the Alps with around 37 elephants, only one of which survived, Hannibal inflicted several defeats on the Romans, culminating in the battle at Cannae in 216 BC. During this campaign, it is said that Rome lost one fifth of its entire population of male citizens. There was panic in the city. However, Hannibal did not march on Rome; instead, he spent time trying to gain the support of Italian cities and the march on Rome did not happen until 211 when two heavy rainstorms stopped the fighting. Hannibal later withdrew his forces and after various battles in southern Italy, where the Romans were able to retrieve their superiority, Hannibal was recalled to North Africa in 203. After failed negotiations with the Romans, the Carthaginian forces were defeated by Scipio at the battle of Zama in 202. Hannibal spent some time as a magistrate in Carthage and then went into voluntary exile in Asia Minor sometime after 195. He died around 183, possibly of poison after discovering that the castle where he lived was surrounded by Roman soldiers.

A (History 21.1)

I can say at the beginning of this part of my work, what many historians have stated at the beginning of the whole of theirs, that the war I am about to describe was the most memorable of all; that is the war which was waged against the Roman people when Hannibal was leader of the Carthaginians. For neither have any states or peoples who met in battle been stronger in resources nor have they been stronger in manpower or might, and they were not at all inexpert in the arts of war as they had met in the first Punic war, and the varying fortunes of war were so doubtful that those who had been in danger were those who conquered. They even fought with greater hatred than most men, with the Romans being indignant at an unprovoked attack by a beaten enemy and with the Phoenicians [Carthaginians] believing that they were being ruled by an arrogant and avaricious people. To demonstrate this, there is a story that after the campaign in Africa, when Hannibal's father, Hamilcar, was preparing to make a sacrifice, Hannibal, being about nine years old, begged him in his childish way to take him to Spain. Hamilcar led him to the altar and having laid his hand upon the sacred objects, made him swear that when he was old enough, he would be an enemy of the Roman people.

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Hamilcar's early death in 220BC before Hannibal was old enough to take command, meant that his son-in-law, Hasdrubal took over and pursued a policy of peaceful, negotiated expansion. However, this did not save him from an early and violent death and Hannibal was the army's choice as successor. Years before, Hannibal, when still quite young was, at Hasdrubal's command, summoned to join the army in Spain.

Latin		English	Literal Translation
<p>missus Hannibal in Hispaniam <u>primo statim</u> adventu omnem exercitum <u>in se convertit</u>; Hamilcarem iuvenem redditum esse sibi veteres milites crediderunt;</p> <p style="text-align: right;">eundem</p> <p>vigorem in vultu vimque in oculis, habitum oris lineamentaue intuebantur. <u>dein brevi effecit ut pater in se minimum momentum ad favorem conciliandum esset.</u></p>	5	<p style="text-align: center;">B (History 21.4)</p> <p><i>Hannibal was sent to Spain, <u>and no sooner</u> had he arrived than <u>he won over</u> the whole army; the old soldiers believed that Hamilcar had been returned to them in the person of this young man;</i></p> <p><i>they saw that he had the same liveliness in his face and energy in his eyes, the same appearance of face and features. After a short time, <u>his resemblance to his father was the least important factor in gaining him popularity.</u></i></p>	<p><i><u>immediately on his first arrival</u></i> <i><u>he turned to himself</u></i></p> <p><i><u>he made it that the father in him was the least factor in uniting them to his popularity</u></i></p>

Latin	English	Literal Translation
<p>numquam ingenium idem ad res diversissimas, parendum atque imperandum, habilis fuit. itaque haud facile discerneres utrum imperatori an exercitui carior esset;</p> <p>neque Hasdrubal alium quemquam praeficere malebat ubi quid fortiter ac strenue agendum esset, neque milites alio duce plus confidebant aut audebant. plurimum audaciae ad pericula capessenda, plurimum consilii <u>inter ipsa pericula erat.</u></p> <p>nullo labore aut corpus fatigari aut animus vinci poterat. caloris ac frigoris patientia par; cibi potitionisque desiderio naturali, non voluptate modus finitus;</p> <p style="text-align: right;">vigiliarum</p> <p>somnique nec die nec nocte discriminata tempora; <u>id quod gerendis rebus superesset</u> quieti datum; ea neque molli strato neque silentio arcessita; multi saepe militari sagulo</p>	<p><i>never was the same nature more suitable to such diverse things as obeying and commanding, therefore you could not easily decide whether he was more popular with the general or the army.</i></p> <p>10 <i>Hasdrubal preferred no one else in command whenever something had to be done bravely and promptly, and nor, under any other leader, were the soldiers more confident or daring. He had the most recklessness in grasping at danger, and the most tactical sense <u>when in the midst of dangers himself.</u></i></p> <p>15 <i>Neither his body nor his spirit could be tired out by any task. His endurance was the same in heat or cold; his way of eating and drinking was limited by natural need, not by pleasure.</i></p> <p><i>His time for waking or sleeping was not determined by day or night; <u>whatever time was left from doing tasks was given to rest, which was not summoned by a soft bed or silence. Often, many saw him lying on the ground,</u></i></p>	<p><i>...when he was amongst <u>the dangers themselves.</u></i></p> <p><i><u>only that [time] left over</u></i></p>

Latin		English	Literal Translation
<p>opertum humi iacentem inter custodias stationesque militum conspexerunt.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>vestitus nihil inter aequales excellens</u>: arma atque equi conspiciebantur. equitum peditumque idem longe primus erat; princeps in proelium ibat, ultimus conserto proelio excedebat.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>has tantas viri virtutes ingentia vitia aequabant</u>, inhumana crudelitas, perfidia plus quam Punica, nihil veri, nihil sancti, nullus deorum metus, nullum ius iurandum, nulla religio.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">cum hac indole virtutum atque vitiorum triennio sub Hasdrubale imperatore meruit, nulla re quae agenda videndaque magno futuro duci esset praetermissa.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>25</p> <p>30</p>	<p><i>wrapped in a military cloak, amongst the guards and sentry points of the soldiers.</i></p> <p><i>His clothing in no way outshone that of his companions: but his weapons and horses attracted attention. He was by far both the first of the cavalry and the infantry to enter battle and the last to leave it once battle was joined.</i></p> <p><i>His huge vices were equal to his virtues, great as they were; his inhuman cruelty, his treachery was more than Punic, he had no care for the truth, no care for moral goodness, no fear of the gods, no care for an oath sworn, no religious scruples.</i></p> <p><i>With these innate good and evil qualities, he served for three years under Hasdrubal, and nothing was omitted which should be done or seen by a future great leader.</i></p>	<p><i>...was in no way outstanding among his companions...</i></p> <p><i>his huge vices were equal to these so great virtues</i></p>

From the beginning of his command, Hannibal behaved as though he had orders to make war on Rome. By 218 the Carthaginians controlled the land up to the Ebro river -all except Saguntum, an ally of Rome. Hannibal's siege and brutal sack of the city showed the Romans that he meant business.

C (History 21. 22)

Hannibal marched his army to the Ebro River and the coast. There, the story goes, in a dream he saw a young man of godlike appearance, who told him he had been sent by Jupiter to guide him to Italy and that he should follow him and never take his eyes off him. At first he was afraid but did not look left or right nor behind as he followed; then with natural human curiosity, since he had been forbidden to look back, he was unable to control his eyes. He saw, behind him, a snake of amazing size, bringing dreadful destruction to trees and bushes, and a storm-cloud with a thunderclap. He asked what the monster was and what it meant and learnt that it showed the destruction of Italy: he was told to proceed onwards and not enquire further but to allow fate to remain in darkness.

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Meanwhile Cornelius Scipio had sailed with an army to Massilia (Marseilles) unaware, until he reached there, that Hannibal had begun to cross the river Rhône with his army.

D (History 21.28)

I believe various methods were used for transporting the elephants across the river; there are certainly different accounts of how it was done. One account tells us that the elephants were gathered at the riverbank and one of them, the most ferocious, was goaded by his driver to pursue him into the river as he swam 5 off, so that the rest of the herd followed, where the force of the current carried them to the further bank, as each one in terror lost their footing in the deep water. It is more generally agreed that they were carried across on rafts. This would seem to be the safer option and easier to believe. A raft 200 feet long and 10 50 feet wide was constructed and launched onto the river where it was tethered to the bank by several strong cables to prevent it being carried downstream. It was then covered with earth like a bridge so that the beasts would happily walk on it as on firm ground. Another raft, equally wide, was constructed, but of 100 15 feet in length, which was suitable for towing across the river, and

was attached to the first raft. Some of the elephants, led by the females, were driven onto the raft and it was detached from the larger raft before being dragged across the river by light craft. The operation was repeated. They did not seem to be afraid 20 while they were being driven onto the raft, but they showed fear when the raft was cast off and was carried into mid-stream. Those on the edge backed away, making the others afraid, until their terror itself quietened them as they looked at the water. Some of them panicked and fell into the river, but stabilised by 25 their weight, and having thrown off their riders, they felt their way to shallow waters and made it to shore.

Latin		English	Literal Translation
<p>Hannibal campestri maxime itinere ad Alpes <u>cum bona pace</u> incolarum ea loca Gallorum pervenit.</p>		<p>E (History 21.32)</p> <p><i>Hannibal advanced mostly across open country towards the Alps <u>with no opposition</u> from the <u>Gallic tribes</u> local to these places.</i></p>	<p><i><u>with good peace from the Gallic inhabitants ...</u></i></p>

<p style="text-align: right;">tum,</p> <p>quamquam fama prius, qua incerta <u>in maius vero ferri</u> solent, praecepta res erat,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">tamen ex propinquo visa</p> <p>montium altitudo <u>nivesque caelo prope immixtae</u>, tecta informia imposita rupibus, pecora iumentaque torrida frigore,</p> <p>homines intonsi et inculti, animalia inanimaque omnia rigentia gelu, cetera visu <u>quam dictu foediora</u> <u>terrorem renovaverunt.</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">erigentibus in primos agmen</p> <p>clivos apparuerunt imminentes tumulos insidentes montani,</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10</p>	<p><i>Then, although the situation was anticipated and known to his men beforehand by rumour, (by which uncertainties are <u>accustomed to be exaggerated</u>),</i></p> <p><i>even so, seen from close to, the height of the mountains, <u>the snow-clad peaks almost</u> <u>merging with the heavens</u>, the basic huts placed on the rocks, the cattle and mules shrivelled with cold,</i></p> <p><i>the men unshaven and unkempt, everything, alive and inanimate stiff with frost, everything else was more dreadful to see than <u>they could say</u>, and <u>they were</u> <u>terrified again.</u></i></p> <p><i>To the men leading the column up to the first slopes, there appeared looking over them, posted on the heights, men of the mountain,</i></p>	<p><u>... in greater [things] than</u> <u>truth ...</u></p> <p><u>the snows mixed near the</u> <u>sky</u></p> <p><u>... than to say ...</u> <u>they renewed their terror</u></p>
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<p>qui, si valles occultiores insedissent, coorti ad pugnam repente ingentem fugam stragemque dedissent.</p>	<p><i>who, if they had taken possession of the more hidden valleys and suddenly leapt out to battle, would have inflicted huge flight and slaughter.</i></p>	
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By means of a clever trick, Hannibal captured the high passes held by the local tribesmen. After a skirmish, he was able to continue his journey, only to encounter another tribe, which he just managed to defeat to allow his army to proceed.

Latin	English	Literal Translation
<p>nono die <u>in iugum Alpium</u> pervenerunt per invia pleraque et errores, qui acciderunt aut propter ducentium fraudem aut, <u>ubi fides iis non esset</u>, valles intrabant temereque iter faciebant.</p>	<p>F (History 21.35)</p> <p><i>On the ninth day they reached <u>the summit of the Alps</u>, by means of a lot of trackless ground and wanderings which happened either because of a deception of those guiding them or whenever <u>they did not have faith in the guides</u> they entered valleys and journeyed without due care.</i></p>	<p><i>... <u>the ridge of the Alps</u>...</i></p> <p><i>... <u>where there was not faith in them</u>...</i></p>

<p>praegressus signa Hannibal in promunturio quodam, unde longe ac late prospectus erat, <u>consistere iussis militibus</u> Italiam ostentat <u>subiectosque Alpinis montibus Circumpadanos campos,</u></p> <p>moeniaque eos tum transcendere non Italiae modo sed etiam urbis Romanae;</p> <p>cetera plana, proclivia fore; uno aut summum altero proelio arcem et caput Italiae in manu ac potestate habituros.</p> <p>procedere inde agmen coepit iam <u>nihil ne hostibus quidem praeter parva furta</u> per occasionem temptantibus.</p>	<p>15</p>	<p><i>Hannibal, who had gone on ahead of the standards, was at a vantage point from where there was a view far and wide, <u>ordered them to stop</u>, and pointed out Italy and <u>just below the foothills of the Alps, the Po Valley.</u></i></p> <p><i>[He said that], at that moment, they were crossing the ramparts not only of Italy but also of the city of Rome;</i></p> <p><i>that the rest would be level and downhill; and that in one or two battles at most, they would have the most important citadel and capital of Italy in their hands and in their power.</i></p> <p><i>The column then began to make progress, with <u>nothing more than a few surprise raids from the enemy</u> as the opportunity presented itself.</i></p>	<p><i><u>... the soldiers having been ordered to stop...</u></i></p> <p><i><u>... and the plains around the river Po lying below the mountains of the Alps ...</u></i></p> <p><i><u>... of the Roman city;</u></i></p> <p><i><u>... not even from the enemy anything more than a few stealthy raids...</u></i></p>
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G (History 21.36)

Then they came to a much narrower cliff, so nearly perpendicular that a lightly armed soldier feeling his way with his hands and holding onto bushes and stumps which stuck out, could scarcely have got himself down it. The ground was naturally steep before, but a recent landslide had snatched it away to a drop of nearly 1,000 feet. There the cavalry halted as though they had come to the end of the road, and it was reported to Hannibal that the cliff was impassable. He set off to look at the place himself. After inspection, there was no doubt that the column would have to march around it over trackless and untrodden routes even if it was a long detour; but that way too was difficult, for above the old, unmelted snow was a new layer of moderate depth and soft; the infantry in the front found the going easy, but when it had been trampled down by so many men and beasts, they began to advance through the bare and liquid slush of melting snow underneath. It was a dreadful struggle on a road slippery with ice, not affording a foothold and on a downward slope making their feet slide from under them more quickly; when a man tried to help himself stand up by hands or by knees, he tumbled down again, nor were there stumps or roots by which a man could pull himself up by foot or hand; and so, they rolled about on what was

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nothing but smooth ice and melting snow. The pack animals sometimes cut through the deep snow as they went and fell more heavily, kicking up their hooves in their struggles to rise, and they would break through it, so that as often as not they were held as in a trap, in hard, deep-frozen snow. 25

Latin		<i>English</i>	<i>Literal Translation</i>
<p>tandem nequiquam iumentis atque hominibus fatigatis castra in iugo posita, aegerrime <u>ad id ipsum</u> loco purgato; <u>tantum nivis</u> fodiendum atque egerendum fuit.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">inde ad</p> <p>rupem muniendam per quam unam viam facere poterat milites ducti,</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">H (History 21.37)</p> <p><i>At last, with the animals and men worn out to no purpose, after a space had been cleared with great difficulty <u>for that purpose</u>, a camp was pitched on a ridge, <u>a great deal of</u> snow had to be dug out and cleared away.</i></p> <p><i>Then the soldiers were brought out to secure the rock, through which alone it was possible to make a path.</i></p>	<p><i><u>... for the thing itself</u></i></p> <p><i><u>... so much of snow</u></i></p> <p><i>...</i></p>

<p><u>cum caedendum esset saxum, arboribus circa immanibus deiectis detruncatisque struem ingentem lignorum faciunt eamque, cum et vis venti apta faciendo igne coorta esset, succendunt ardentiaque saxa infuso aceto putrefaciunt.</u></p> <p>ita torridam incendio rupem ferro pandunt molliuntque anfractibus modicis clivos ut non iumenta solum sed elephantum etiam deduci possent.</p> <p>quadriduum circa rupem consumptum, iumentis prope fame absumptis; nuda enim fere cacumina sunt et, si quid est pabuli, obruunt nives.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10</p>	<p><i>Since they had to cut through the rock, they felled some large trees round about, cut off their branches and made a huge pile of logs and since the strength of the wind had risen up and was helpful in setting it on fire, they set them on fire and made the glowing rocks crumble with the <u>application of vinegar</u>.</i></p> <p><i>In this way they opened out with iron the rock dried-out with fire, and they made the slope easier with short zigzags, so that not only the mules but also the elephants were able to be led down it.</i></p> <p><i>Four days were spent around the cliff, with the pack animals nearly worn out with hunger, for the peaks were mostly bare and if there was any pasture, the snow hid it.</i></p>	<p><i><u>Since it was necessary for the rock to be cut ...</u></i></p> <p><i><u>... having poured on vinegar.</u></i></p>
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<p>inferiora valles et apricos quosdam colles habent rivosque prope silvas et iam humano cultu digniora loca.</p> <p>ibi iumenta in pabulum missa et quies muniendo fessis hominibus data.</p> <p>triduo inde ad planum descenderunt et iam locis mollioribus <u>et incolarum ingeniis.</u></p>	<p>15</p>	<p><i>The places lower down have valleys, and some hills exposed to the sun, and streams running by woodland nearby and by this point places more suitable for cultivation by men.</i></p> <p><i>There the animals were put out to pasture and rest was granted to men tired from their roadbuilding.</i></p> <p><i>Over the course of three days, they descended from there onto the plain, and now to more gentle places <u>which matched the character of the inhabitants.</u></i></p>	<p><i><u>...and with the characteristics of the inhabitants.</u></i></p>
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