



CSCP Support Materials for Eduqas GCSE Latin

Component 2: Latin Literature and Sources (Themes) Theme A: Romans in the Countryside



For examination in 2024-2026

PUBLISHED BY THE CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL CLASSICS PROJECT

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<http://www.CambridgeSCP.com>

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Acknowledgement

Mosaic: Piazza Armerina, Sicily. Photograph by Roger Dalladay.

First published 2023

version date: 10/03/2023

This document refers to the official examination images and texts for the Eduqas Latin GCSE (2024 - 2026). It should be used in conjunction with the information, images and texts provided by Eduqas on their website:

[Eduqas Latin GCSE \(2024-2026\) Component 2 Theme A: Romans in the Countryside](#)

Useful additional material relevant for this Theme, may be found in the online versions of the 4th edition Cambridge Latin course: [Book V, Stage 35](#)

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Introduction

Specification

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

- traditional peasant farming;
- country villas;
- hunting.

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

Exploration of the theme

In this theme, the following topics will be covered. While the main bullet points below coincide with the Eduqas specification, those further indented do not constitute part of the syllabus but are suggested here as a means of exploring the main themes:

- Traditional peasant farming
 - self-sufficiency and the joys of country living
 - looking back to a better, simpler past
 - farmers of the past as leaders
- Country villas
 - luxury of country villas and gardens
 - management of country estates
 - tenant farmers, sharecroppers and farm workers
 - types of produce and farming activities
 - farm animals and farming equipment
- Hunting
 - elite Roman hunting experience
 - hunting equipment and techniques
 - animals hunted and used in hunting

This introduction contains notes on all these topics to assist in the teaching of the literature. **Candidates will only be examined on the content of the prescribed material.**

Some links between texts and images and the theme's three bullet points are suggested in the following sections.

Traditional Peasant Farming

Like most growing settlements, Rome had humble beginnings and agriculture was an important part of supporting early Roman civilisation. In early Roman history, peasants owned smallholdings and worked them to be self-sufficient in producing the variety of products and food they needed to survive. The ideal of self-sufficiency and the benefits of simple traditional farming life can be seen in **Virgil's** account of **the self-sufficient small farm** and **Ovid's** family celebrating **a rustic festival**.

In the early years of the Roman Republic, only landowners could be soldiers and these soldier-farmers showed qualities like diligence, determination and sheer hard work which would later be heralded as important Roman virtues from the past. The idea of Rome's farmer-heroes creating the conditions for the empire enjoyed by later generations can be seen in **Cicero's** and **Livy's** description of consuls called from the plough to serve. They also praise the values that these traditional farmers adopted to help the empire flourish. **Horace**, in ***The changing face of the countryside***, criticises the encroachment of vast country estates on land once used for farming and looks back to past generations who spent money on works of benefit to the public rather than on private estates. ***The pleasures of country life*** again expresses nostalgia for a 'golden age' of the self-sufficient farmer who enjoys the fruit of his labours, free of debt, obligation to a patron, or any other kind of stress. It is evident that, even for Horace (himself a dilettante smallholder), this picture is a pipe-dream and projects the city man's idealisation of what country living might be, but probably never was.

Country Villas

Pliny is an example of a wealthy landowner with several country estates. His account of ***The burdens of an estate owner*** provides insight into his lifestyle in the countryside, his responsibilities, and the concerns of those who work on his land. He mentions tenant farmers, who paid rent to farm sections of his land, and sharecroppers who paid the owner of the land a percentage of the harvest. Some typical farm-worker activities and the varied produce of large estates can be seen in **Picture 3**. This picture also shows the contrast between the leisure of the wealthy estate owner and the productive work of those who served him. **Picture 4** too illustrates the hard physical work of farm labourers and the use of animals and equipment to till the land. **Picture 5** demonstrates the use of oxen, labour and equipment in wine making, a further example of estate production.

The extravagant scale of some villas is evident in **Picture 1** and **Picture 3** (centre). In ***The changing face of the countryside***, Horace describes mansions with comfortable porticos, extensive lakes for recreational fishing, and gardens like the wall-painting shown in **Picture 2**, planted for ornament rather than agriculture. In ***The burdens of an estate owner***, it is clear that Pliny thought of his country estates partly as a retreat from the business of the city, an aim also suggested by the tranquillity of the garden in **Picture 2**, painted on the wall of a suburban villa's dining-room.

Hunting

Pliny's description of ***A day's hunting***, **Picture 6** and **Picture 3** exemplify the apparatus of men, dogs, nets and spears entailed in hunting. They also give an impression of the meaning of country living for the wealthy and the role of those who served them.

Some suggestions for further reading on *Romans in the countryside*

Pliny, *Letters* 5.6 and 2.17, gives lengthy descriptions of his villas in Tuscany and nearby Laurentum – confusing to follow in detail, but giving a useful impression of their extent and luxury to compare with those shown in **Pictures 1 and 3**.

U.E. Paoli, *Rome: its people, life and customs* (1967), provides extensive detail on these two villas (Ch.3) and on hunting (Ch.22).

The World of Rome (edited by P. Jones and K. Sidwell, CUP 2008) has interesting things to say about Roman agriculture (pages 185-192) .

J. Shelton, *As the Romans did: a sourcebook in Roman social history*, OUP 2022) contains good material on villas (pages 71-78) and agriculture (pages 71-78).

Suggestions for teaching

Key aims are:

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

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

- Read the Latin aloud to emphasise phrasing and stress word groups
- Break up more complex sentences into constituent parts for comprehension
- Focus on comprehension of the text and understanding the content through questioning and using the vocabulary
- Look closely at how the Latin is expressed and the ways in which the literary devices enhance the meaning.

Although a sample translation is provided in the course resources, teachers might want to encourage their students to make their own version after various options have been discussed and evaluated. The first step is a literal translation, then something more polished in natural English that is as close to the structure and vocabulary of the original Latin as possible. Students will soon see that a degree of paraphrasing may be required when the Latin does not readily translate into correct and idiomatic English.

Students will bring their own knowledge and experience of today's countryside to this topic. Explorations which compare ancient and modern country living and pursuits will help with student engagement and can cast fresh light on attitudes to the countryside in both periods.

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

.

About the Teacher's Notes

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

The notes are designed to provide for the needs of a wide spectrum of teachers, from those with limited knowledge of Latin and who are perhaps entirely new to reading Latin literature, to teachers experienced in both language and literature. It is hoped that all will find something of use and interest. **Teachers should not feel that they need to pass on to their students all the information from these notes; they should choose whatever they think is appropriate.**

Some of the information contained in the notes is for general interest and to satisfy the curiosity of students and teachers. **The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.**

The Teacher's Notes contain the following:

- An Introduction to the author and the text, although students will only be asked questions on the content of the source itself.
- Notes on the text to assist the teacher.
- Discussion suggestions for students and overarching Themes which appear across more than one source.
- Suggested Questions for Comprehension, Content, Style and Culture to be used with students.
- Further Information and Reading for teachers who wish to explore the topic and texts further. None of this is intended for examination.
- Acknowledgement of resources used.

Picture 1: a lavish country villa

Wall-painting: House of Lucretius Fronto, Pompeii

This fresco (wall-painting) from Pompeii shows an extravagant country house. In front of the house is a formal garden. Directly behind are trees, clearly well-ordered to act as decoration behind the villa. In the distant background are hills on which several other villas with colonnades can be seen.

Points for students

The fresco illustrates the grand scale of country villas built for the Roman élite. Students should consider in what ways this image matches elements of Roman country living described in the prescribed texts – in particular, Horace’s description of the effect of country mansions in *The changing face of the countryside*. They might also usefully discuss possible reasons for including images of country villas within a town house.

Additional information for teachers

The fresco is part of a series on the north wall of the *tablinum* of the house of *Lucretius Fronto* in Pompeii. It shows an extravagant country house with a Π-shaped wing design and *tholos*-type structures (i.e. rounded with conical roofs) on both ends and in the middle. All facades boast colonnades supported by pillars, on both the ground and upper storey. The garden has well-defined, broad paths and rectangular cultivated beds with linear perspective, echoing the shape of the villa.

The landscape painting sits within a frame painted onto the wall of the *tablinum*. The house itself is well known for its refined ‘third style’ decorations, characterised by their elegance, colourful decoration and symmetry and dating from approximately 20-10 BC.

Photographs of the north wall of the *tablinum*, including some showing this villa image within its elaborate painted frame, can be seen on the ‘Pompeii in pictures’ site on the page [here](#). Scroll down and look at the fourth, fifth, tenth to fifteenth and twenty-seventh pictures to see this fresco in context.

There is a useful overview of country villas in CLC Book V, available [here](#)

Picture 2: rus in urbe

Wall-painting from House of Livia: Museo Massimo, Rome

The image is one of a series of similar paintings which fill the walls of a *triclinium*. This was built partially underground, dug into the rock, thus keeping the room cooler in the summer. It shows a garden full of exotic trees and bushes, with colourful birds against a pale blue sky. Besides looking attractive, the intention was probably to trick viewers into imagining they were dining in an airy garden rather than a somewhat claustrophobic indoor space.

Points for students.

It is clear from literary sources that wealthy Roman citizens enjoyed private gardens like this one in their villa estates. Horace, in *The changing face of the countryside*, expresses disapproval of such extravagant use of land. Students might usefully consider whether or not the details he mentions match this painting.

Additional information for teachers

The painting was found in a villa at Prima Porta, 7.5 miles north of Rome. It is believed to have been owned by Livia, the wife of the emperor Augustus. The house provided a summer refuge from the heat of Rome. It comprises a grand suburban complex on a hill overlooking two roads, the *Via Flaminia* and the *Via Tiberina*.

The plants, flora and birds are painted with scientific accuracy. In this section, there is a prominent pomegranate tree and to its right an Italian cypress and young date palm. In the background are a mix of box and laurel trees. At the bottom of the image can be seen the flower of a yellow chrysanthemum. Some 24 different plant species have been identified in the full fresco. The plants are also deliberately placed in an ordered fashion throughout the fresco, perhaps highlighting the planning put into such gardens.

All plants are ripe and lush, despite the fact many did not bloom together in the same season in reality. This could be compared with Virgil's use of artistic licence when describing the old Cilician gardener, who appears to harvest roses outside their regular season (*A self-sufficient farm*, line 10).

In the whole fresco, 69 species of birds have been identified. In this section there is a jay to the left, a blackbird at the top, a golden oriole in the middle, and a black-eared wheatear between the cypress and the palm tree. Although the birds here seem to be free and wild, in keeping with the natural setting created by the impression of the garden, Varro provides evidence that aristocrats kept aviaries too (*On Agriculture* Book 3).

The fresco is in the 'second style' of Roman wall-painting, dating from the 1st century BC, which introduced the illusion of three-dimensional space. The vegetation at the front of the scene is crisp and detailed, whereas the vegetation which is further back is hazy.

Further information can be found in the [museum catalogue](#).

Picture 3: the activities of a villa

Mosaic: Bardo Museum, Tunis

This picture shows a floor mosaic, found in the estate of Dominus Julius in Carthage (modern Tunisia), dated to the 4th century AD. The building in the middle of the mosaic is a luxurious country mansion. Around this are scenes of rural activities. This image demonstrates the lifestyle of wealthy landowners who did not labour on the farm themselves but had others who did this for them, whether enslaved workers, freedmen or tenant farmers. The owner and a woman, presumably his wife, are shown receiving produce from these people.

Points for students

Students should try to find as many typical farming activities as they can – without worrying about some that are very difficult to make out! They could also make suggestions regarding what the purpose of having such a floor mosaic might have been, apart from looking attractive.

Top row: Farm-workers collect produce to give to the *domina*, who is the central seated woman fanning herself. On the left side, workers collect olives from trees, while others bring gifts, including olives and a duck. On the right, another person brings the woman a lamb, while on the far right, a shepherd sits in front of a hut with his flock.

Middle row: The *dominus* of the villa arrives on horseback with a man on foot. The central villa is impressive, with a colonnade on the façade and domes to the rear (probably indicating the presence of baths). The villa is typical of the luxurious country houses of élite landowners as described by Horace in *The changing face of the countryside*. On the far right, two figures and two dogs are on their way to a hunt.

Bottom row: An impressively clothed *domina* (wearing a headband, pendant earrings and jewels on the neckline of her dress) has just stood up from her chair. On her left a man carries roses in a basket. To her right, a woman with a box holds out a necklace, while at her feet, a man (very damaged) offers fish. On the right-hand side, the *dominus* sits between two men. One (far right) brings a basket of grapes and a rabbit; the other holds a scroll (very hard to see) inscribed IU[LIO] DOM[INO] ('for the master Julius').

Additional information for teachers

This image was originally located in a room used for entertaining, so it would have been viewed by guests and clients as well as household members. Its significance is debated: some interpret it as a display of the wealth of the owner; others believe that it was intended to reinforce the sharp contrast between the master and enslaved workers in Roman culture.

The mosaic exemplifies several themes from the prescription: the non-specialised nature of farms, producing all manner of farming products; country living – including the villa and activities of the owner such as horse-riding and hunting - the division of labour between master, enslaved workers, hired help or tenant farmers. In addition, the prominence of cultivated trees perhaps points to the fashion for sophisticated gardens.

Further information can be found in the [museum catalogue](#).

Picture 4: farmer ploughing

Mosaic: Saint-Germain-en-Laye

Two barefoot labourers in short tunics are in the process of ploughing the soil and sowing the seed. One drives the two oxen, guiding the plough with his left hand and steering the two oxen with his right. The oxen are attached to the plough itself and its blade can be seen breaking up the soil between the back legs of the oxen. The man on the left holds a basket of seed, which he sows into the newly ploughed soil.

Points for students

This image gives some idea of the constant hard physical work involved in farming. It should be considered alongside texts alluding to ploughing and sowing – Cicero's *Traditional values*, and Livy's *Cincinnatus, summoned from the plough*. The hard work of farming in general is well represented in Virgil's *A self-sufficient farm*.

Additional information for teachers

The image comes from a rustic calendar mosaic depicting the four seasons. It was found at Saint-Romain-en-Gal, eastern France, dated to the 3rd century AD and is now kept in the Musée d'Archéologie Nationale, Saint-Germain-en-Laye. The whole mosaic had 40 panels, set out in a four by ten array, within an ornate decorative border. Only 27 survive, each image measuring just under 60 cm x 60cm. In the centre are four panels depicting personifications of the four seasons riding on mythical beasts. Around them were 7 scenes as representations for each season: this scene is one of those representing autumn.

Unlike modern ploughs, this 'ard plough' would not bring nutrient-rich soil to the top and push decaying crops/ weeds to the bottom. Instead it would break a strip of soil and cut a shallow furrow.

Only wealthy landowners could afford oxen, and even fewer recently invented ploughs such as the 'coulter' (literally 'knife' in Latin) or wheeled plough. Poorer landowners may only have had a simple plough pulled by a donkey. Ploughing took place typically once every two years, more frequently if crops were rotated.

Further information can be found in the [museum catalogue](#).

Picture 5: the wine harvest

Ceiling mosaic: church of Santa Constanza, Rome

A ceiling mosaic (hence the curving perspective) dated to 4th century AD. At the top of the image are vine branches with men climbing the vines to collect the grapes and lowering them down to the ground in baskets on ropes. Below on the left is a man driving oxen, pulling a cart of harvested grapes. On the right, men in loincloths tread the grapes with their feet, the juice pouring down lionhead spouts into large earthenware vessels (*dolia*) before being further processed to make wine.

Points for students

The mosaic shows how important livestock were for any agricultural pursuit; here the oxen enable the harvested grapes to be carried to the next stage of processing. It also illustrates some of the physical work required to produce wine, and the large number of labourers involved.

Additional notes for teachers

Grapes were put into a large vat (*palmento*), one of which can be seen here under cover of a roof, and crushed with feet to produce must, the name for the squeezed grape juice waiting to be turned into wine. After this, the must could be transferred to separate cisterns to ferment or, as it appears here, into *dolia* (pots). *Dolia* of must were often buried into the floor of a warehouse, left to ferment for varying amounts of time (usually dictated by regional conditions), before transferring the fermented wine into amphoras in a process known as 'racking' where any sediment from leftover skin, seeds etc from the grapes were removed. Amphoras might then be stored to allow the wine to continue to be aged or the wine might be drunk or sold at this stage.

Further information on Santa Constanza can be found at the Byzantine Legacy site [here](#).

There is a neat description and diagram of the Mausoleum of St Constantina (thought to be the original purpose of what is now a church) in Amanda Claridge's (1998) *Rome, Oxford Archaeological Guide* (pp. 375-376).

Picture 6: a boar hunt

Mosaic: Piazza Armerina, Sicily

The image shows four men in coloured tunics hunting a boar. A man in a yellow tunic is lying wounded, bleeding from his leg. The man in a red tunic attacks the boar with a spear, assisted by two hunting dogs. The figure in a brown tunic behind the boar appears to be throwing a large rock, while the man in a green tunic holds his head in distress.

Points for students

Almost all hunting was done on foot and masters were accompanied by enslaved helpers. Dogs were used to track the scent of the animal. Once tracked, nets were set up where it might be expected to run. Beaters and dogs would chase the animal into the nets where hunters would use weapons, usually spears, to kill the animal.

This image might usefully be compared with Pliny's account of his capturing three boars, in *A day's hunting*, where he describes himself waiting at the nets while others drive the boar towards him.

Additional information for teachers

The mosaic, dated to the 4th century AD, is situated in the Roman villa, *Romana del Casale*, about 2 miles from the town of Piazza Armerina in Sicily. The villa is famous for its mosaics, with 3500 square metres of decorated floors. This image is part of a mosaic called the 'Small Hunt' which occupies a whole room.

For those on foot the pursuit would have been exhausting and there would have been a risk of being attacked by other wild animals while in pursuit. The danger of injury can be seen in this mosaic, but this provided the hunter with the opportunities to display Roman virtues of bravery, endurance and ability with weapons. Boars were often hunted as a challenge to show the heroism of the hunter (the tusks are particularly vicious and could disembowel a man). Easier prey might include hare, deer, wild goats, wolves, and birds.

There is a useful overview of hunting, including more details on this image on page 13 of CLC Book V accessible online [here](#).

Further information about the site of the mosaic can be found [here](#) and a clear version of the mosaic itself can be seen on the same site [here](#).

This private travel site describes the 'Small Hunt' mosaic in more detail: [here](#).

Cicero: *pro Roscio Amerino* 50, 74-75 - Traditional values

Cicero explains how rustic men have good qualities for the state and for the individual

Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC- 43 BC) was a prominent orator and statesman. He came from an equestrian family in Arpinum, initially struggling in his political ambitions due to his lack of familial influence and connections. In 80 BC, at the age of 26, he established his reputation by defending Sextus Roscius Amerinus who had been falsely accused of the murder of his father by influential conspirators who actually carried out the murder in order to acquire his father's land. After the surprising success of this speech (*pro Roscio Amerino*), he was given a flood of commissions.

The prosecution alleged that Roscius Amerinus killed his father because he was going to disinherit him. They claimed that he had a savage and boorish nature and had therefore been dismissed to look after the family estates in the countryside. This gave Cicero the opportunity to defend Roscius' character by defending country living. He argued that the rustic nature of Roscius' situation showed he was incapable of murder. In our extract, which comes from two separate parts of the speech, he first looks back to the importance of agriculture for those individuals who established the Roman state, pointing out that they assiduously cultivated their own farms without 'greedily laying claim to others' (as the conspirators had done). In the second part of the extract, he claims that crimes were committed more frequently in the city than the country because of its corrupting nature, in comparison to the good influence of rustic living.

Text

accusator esses ridiculus, si illis temporibus natus esses cum ab
aratro arcessebantur qui consules fierent. tu enim, qui praeesse
agro colendo flagitium putes, profecto illum Atilium, quem sua
manu semen spargentem illi qui missi erant convenerunt,
hominem turpissimum atque inhonestissimum iudicares. at 5
hercule maiores nostri longe aliter et de illo et de ceteris talibus
viris existimabant itaque ex minima tenuissimaque re publica
maximam et florentissimam nobis reliquerunt. suos enim agros
studiose colebant, non alienos cupide appetebant; sic et agris et
urbibus et nationibus rem publicam atque hoc imperium et populi 10
Romani nomen auxerunt.

et simul tibi in mentem veniat quem ad modum vitam huiusce
 depinxeris – hunc hominem ferum atque agrestem fuisse,
 numquam cum homine quoquam collocutum esse, numquam in
 oppido constitisse. sed in rusticis moribus, in victu arido, in hac 15
 horrida incultaque vita maleficia istius modi gigni non solent. ut
 non omnem frugem neque arborem in omni agro reperire
 possis, sic non omne facinus in omni vita nascitur. in urbe
 luxuries creatur, ex luxuria existat avaritia necesse est, ex
 avaritia erumpat audacia, inde omnia scelera ac maleficia 20
 gignuntur. vita autem haec rustica quam tu agrestem vocas
 parsimoniae, diligentiae, iustitiae magistra est.

Notes

- 1 – 2 accusator ... arcessebantur:** if the second part of this sentence is considered first: *si ... firent*, followed by *accusator esses ridiculus*, it is easier to understand the conditional nature of the sentence: ‘if you had been born in those times when men were summoned from the plough to become consuls, you would be a ridiculous prosecutor.’ Both *esses* and *natus esses* are subjunctives because they are potential consequences of the conditional clause.
- Note the translation of *cum* as ‘when’ with an imperfect indicative verb.
- 2 qui consules fierent:** a purpose clause using the relative pronoun (*qui*) and subjunctive (*fierent*).
- accusator ... fierent:** Cicero criticises the prosecutor by ridiculing his claim (made before this extract) that an agricultural lifestyle is associated with poor moral character. His insult is strengthened by drawing on the historical tradition of applauding the moral fibre of Roman heroes in the past who were well-known for their agricultural pursuits.
- 2 – 3 tu ... putes:** Cicero starts emphatically with *tu*, this is their opinion which Cicero will dispute.
- praesesse agro colendo,** *praesum* takes the dative and *colendo* is gerundive: literally ‘to be responsible for a farm to be cultivated’.
- putes** introduces indirect speech with *flagitium* accusative complement of *praesesse agro colendo* and *esse* understood as an infinitive.
- 3 – 5 profecto ... iudicares:** you would certainly judge (*profecto ... iudicares*) that Atilius (*illum Atilium*) whom (*quem*) those who had been sent (*illi qui missi erant*) came across (*convenerunt*) sowing seed with his own hand (*spargentem semen sua manu*) to be (*esse* understood) a most shameful and very low-class man (*turpissimum atque inhonestissimum hominem*).
- Atilius* refers to *Gaius Atilius Regulus Serranus*, consul 257 and 250 BC. Those who were sent refers to the delegation sent from Rome to inform him that he had been re-elected as consul.

The inclusion of *sua* with *manu*, emphasises that Atilius uses his own hand, highlighting the difference between the Rome's of past times where, according to legend, even the most powerful citizens farmed their own land, and contemporary Rome, where slaves and hired freedman did this work.

Note the use of superlatives to describe the prosecutor's potential opinion of Atilius (*turpissimum* and *inhonestissimum*). This is leading towards Cicero's contrasting praise of those who live and farm in the countryside, in particular Roscius Amerinus.

- 5 – 8 at ... reliquerunt:** it may help to split this long sentence up for comprehension. Work first through *at ... existimabant* and then *itaque ... reliquerunt*.
- 6 Hercule:** Cicero calls upon the god, showing outrage at the prosecutor's lack of appreciation of those who live the rustic life.
- longe:** ancestors thought *far* differently. Cicero is emphasising the contrast between historic and contemporary attitudes to the countryside. Cicero makes the disagreement even more pronounced by using *et ... et* (both ... and) to emphasise the ways that contemporary Romans have strayed from historic sentiment.
- 7 minima tenuissima ... maximam et florentissimam:** note again Cicero's use of superlatives. The superlatives here emphasise how historic values helped to grow the Roman republic from a very small (*minima*) and very insignificant (*tenuissima*) state to the biggest (*maxima*) and most flourishing (*florentissimam*).
- 8 – 9 suos ... alienos:** Cicero juxtaposes *suos* (their fields) to *alienos* (other people's fields). The people who expanded by taking other's land are characterised as *cupide* (greedy). This is a very relevant observation as those who accused Roscius did so in order to get away with appropriating his father's land.
- 9 – 11 sic ... auxerunt:** Cicero uses several conjunctions (here *et*) in close succession (*polysyndeton*) and a list of three (*tricolon*) to place emphasis how much those who farmed the land had achieved.
- 12 – 13 et ... depinxis:** this is a complicated clause starting with a iussive subjunctive *veniat* (it should come to mind). *veniat* also introduces an indirect question, with the interrogative *quem ad modum* (in what way) and the perfect subjunctive *depinxis* (you have depicted).
- 13 – 15 hunc ... constitisse:** the words 'saying that' can be assumed at the start of this phrase which then takes the form of an indirect statement with *hunc hominem* (this man) in the accusative and *fuisse* (to have been) in the infinitive with accusative complements *ferum* (rough) and *agrestem* (uncouth). This format then continues *hunc hominem* understood as the subject of with further infinitives *conlocutum esse* (to have spoken) and *constitisse* (to have stayed) .

Cicero uses two words (*ferum* and *agrestem*) to describe one idea (*hendiadys*). He also repeats the word *numquam*. The overall effect is emphasis on the notion that rustic men are uncivilised, both in terms of socialising and appreciating life in the city.

15 – 17 in rusticis ... vita: The first part of the sentence gives a list of three descriptions of country life (*tricolon*). The third (*in hac horrida incultuaque vita*) echoes the description of Roscius that Cicero attributes to the prosecutor in line 13 (*ferum et agrestem*). He will turn this description against them in the following lines.

The second part of the sentence translates literally as: crimes of that kind (*maleficia istius modi*) are not usually (*non solent*) to be produced (*gigni* - present passive infinitive).

17 – 18 ut non ... nascitur: note that *ut* here is translated as just as, introducing a simile, with a potential subjunctive (*possis*) you *could* not be able to find. Cicero repeats *omnis* four times in different cases (*polyptoton*), to build towards his explanation for crimes being more prevalent in the city than the country.

18 – 21 in urbe ... gignuntur: the repetition of words referring to extravagance and greed (*luxuries, luxuria, with avaritia* occurring twice) are characterising the city as a place of excessive wealth and a damaging level of luxury, leading to crimes and misdeeds. The use of two words (*scelera ac maleficia*) for one idea (*hendiadys*) strengthens the impression of wrongdoing. Note the powerful verb (*erumpat*) describing violent behaviour as a product of greed. The style of these lines suggests words spilling out with increasing intensity from Cicero, mimicking the escalating behaviour he is describing.

19 ex luxuria ... necesse est: literally 'out of extravagance emerges greed it is unavoidable.'

21 – 22 vita ... est: these final lines are important in showing Cicero's positive opinion of country living. He reminds the court that his accusers have said rustic men are backward (*agrestem*) but he himself describes country living as the teacher of good qualities: of thrift (*parsimoniae*), of hard work (*diligentiae*) and of good conduct (*iustitiae*) in a list of three (*tricolon*).

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then re-read each line or couplet, asking questions so that the class is led to comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

accusator esses ridiculus, si illis temporibus natus esses cum ab aratro arcessebantur qui consules fierent. (lines 1-2)

- Cicero mentions a time when farmers were summoned from the plough. What were they summoned to do?
- How does Cicero say the prosecutor would be described if he had been born in those times?

tu enim, qui praeesse agro colendo flagitium putes (lines 2-3)

- What does Cicero say the prosecutor considers to be a disgrace?

profecto illum Atilium, quem sua manu semen spargentem illi qui missi erant convenerunt, hominem turpissimum atque inhonestissimum iudicares.

(lines 3-5)

- What was Atilius doing when those who had been sent found him?
- What does Cicero say the prosecutor would judge him to be? Give two adjectives in English.

at hercule maiores nostri longe aliter et de illo et de ceteris talibus

viris existimabant (lines 5-7)

- Who did their ancestors think differently about?

itaque ex minima tenuissimaque re publica maximam et florentissimam nobis reliquerunt (lines 7-8)

- How does Cicero describe the state initially?
- How does he describe the state left to the Roman people by their ancestors?

suos enim agros studiose colebant, non alienos cupide appetebant (lines 8-9)

- How does Cicero say these men grew the state?
- What, according to Cicero, did they not do?

sic et agris et urbibus et nationibus rem publicam atque hoc imperium et populi Romani nomen auxerunt. (lines 9-11)

- State three things which Cicero said the early Roman farmers used to cause expansion.
- State three things that were consequently expanded by early Roman farmers.

et simul tibi in mentem veniat quem ad modum vitam huiusce depinxeris – hunc hominem ferum atque agrestem fuisse (lines 12-13)

- How does Cicero say that the prosecutor described country men? Give two adjectives.

numquam cum homine quoquam collocutum esse, numquam in oppido constitisse. (lines 14-15)

- What two things do these rustic men not do according to the prosecutor?

sed in rusticis moribus, in victu arido, in hac horrida incultaque vita maleficia istius modi gigni non solent. (lines 15-16)

- What are not usually committed in rustic lives?
- How is rustic life described here?

ut non omnem frugem neque arborem in omni agro reperire possis, sic non omne facinus in omni vita nascitur (lines 16-18)

- What two things is Cicero comparing in this simile?

in urbe luxuries creatur (lines 18-19)

- What are created in the city?

ex luxuria existat avaritia necesse est (line 19)

- What emerges from extravagance naturally?

ex avaritia erumpat audacia (lines 19-20)

- What erupts from greed?

(audacia) inde omnia scelera ac maleficia gignuntur (lines 20-21)

- What is produced from recklessness?

vita autem haec rustica quam tu agrestem vocas (line 21)

- How does Cicero say that the prosecutor has described rustic folk?

(vita rustica) parsimoniae, diligentiae, iustitiae magistra est. (line 22)

- Of what three virtues does Cicero believe country living is the teacher?

Questions on Content and Style

- (lines 1-5) How does Cicero effectively demonstrate the differences between what he believes and what the prosecutor believes about country folk?
- (lines 5-11) Is Cicero persuasive in claiming the importance of an agricultural lifestyle to Rome's growing empire? Refer to both Cicero's style and content to explain your point of view.
- (lines 12-17) How does Cicero present the stereotype of the 'rough and uncouth'? Would these characteristics be considered uncivilised today?
- (lines 17-22) How effective is Cicero at portraying the divide between city and country?

Discussion

Themes: country life, city living, the nature of country people, ancestral virtues

Cicero's case here presents two views of country living. On the one hand, the prosecutor has claimed that people who live in the country are backwards and uncivilised. On the other hand, Cicero believes that life in the country fosters good attributes in a person, especially thrift, hard work and good conduct. This could be compared and contrasted with others set texts to explore where other authors agree with the prosecutor or with Cicero, or have a different understanding of city life altogether.

One of the arguments that Cicero uses in defence of Roscius is that jurors should look to the example of their ancestors to ascertain what is admirable behaviour. Cicero gives Atilius as an example of a Roman to be admired because he was an active farmer and also used his knowledge of country ways to help him be a leader of the Roman republic. A similar case of a famous leader in the past who was 'called from the plough' is given in Livy's account of Cincinnatus – another of our prescribed texts. Cicero states here that the product of the old agricultural lifestyle was the flourishing empire that was left to the Roman state. Appealing to examples from the past is a theme throughout the texts studied in this prescription.

Students may like to debate whether Cicero is presenting a realistic view of Roman history and also the implications this has for our understanding of the Roman country lifestyle. While other texts may present country living as separated from state concerns or as increasing the glory of Rome, Cicero goes beyond this to suggest that country living is in fact what has made the Roman state great.

An important aspect of Cicero's defence is his claim that country living fosters less crime than life in the city. Cicero does this by setting out exactly how he believes city living, through cause and effect, leads to violent behaviour. Students might like to consider whether the nature of an area can affect crime rates. Do we now see more crime in the city or in the countryside? Do students find Cicero's argument persuasive in proving that city living is more likely to cause crime than country living? Do other texts support Cicero's assertion that country living encourages thrift, hard work and good conduct?

Questions on the whole passage

1. What two opinions of country living are presented in this text? Are these viewpoints supported by any of the other texts studied?
2. Does Cicero believe that country living is compatible with state affairs?
3. Is Cicero presenting an idealised or realistic account of Rome's past? Does his reference to Rome's past help his argument in favour of country living?
4. How does Cicero present the contrast between country living and city living? Is his argument on the causes of crime persuasive in suggesting there is more crime in the city?
5. Do you think that Cicero has demonstrated in his writing that country life teaches 'thrift, hard work and good conduct'? Use examples from the text to support your point of view.

Further Information and Reading

The Cambridge Latin Course, Book V, Stage 35 on Roman Country Villas contains a detailed discussion of life in a country villa in English. A digital version of this section can be found [here](#).

More detail on the circumstances and structure of Cicero's defence of Roscius Amerinus can be found in this introduction from the University of Vermont: <https://www.uvm.edu/~bsaylor/latin/RosciusCommIntro.pdf>

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Notes

metre: iambic (each line of iambic trimeter is followed by a line of iambic dimeter)

$$\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|} \hline \nu & - & \nu & - \\ \hline \nu & - & \nu & - \\ \hline \nu & - & \nu & - \\ \hline \nu & - & \nu & - \\ \hline \end{array}$$

1 **beatus:** an expression of congratulations on having good fortune (the ellipsis of *est* is characteristic of such expressions). These are usually underscored by a rejection of alternate lifestyles.

negotium: can be translated as trouble or worry, although pupils are more likely familiar with translating it as business. *negotium* usually has negative connotations in Horace, especially when used to describe city life.

2 **ut:** note the translation of *ut* as like (without a subjunctive).

prisca gens mortalium: Horace suggests that the past was happier due to living a rural life. The idea of a toil-free rural golden age ushered in by Saturn is found in several Augustan works.

3 **paterna:** another cherished notion that one inherits land from family (as opposed to the tenant-farmer who works someone else's land). Horace did not inherit his land from his father. His father's land in Venusia was confiscated and given to Augustus' veterans. He would later be given land in the Sabine Hills by his patron, Maecenas.

4 **solutus omni faenore:** It was not unusual for farms to be expropriated due to debt. The first 4 lines of *Epode 2* are fanciful. They present a Roman fairytale of reaping the rewards of the ancestral land, free from debt.

5 - 6 **neque ... neque (line 6):** Horace begins to list negative lifestyles that should be avoided. He repeats the negative *neque* to emphasise how unfavourable these lifestyles are.

excitatur classico miles truci: Horace compares farming to warfare, stating it is better to live in the countryside than be at war. The trumpet was traditionally blown at the onset of battle. The juxtaposition of farming and warfare is a common trope in Latin literature. It is often suggested that peace is necessary for farming. There is a more complex link between farming and warfare as armies are traditionally drawn from agriculture and farmers are said to be the best soldiers.

Horace did fight in the battle of Phillipi in 42 BC so would be familiar with this noise.

6 **horret iratum mare:** Horace's second comparison – farming is better than seafaring. is a particularly vivid way to express the fear (shown by the *horret*) of a stormy and dangerous sea (*iratum mare*). The sea is personified as *iratum* 'angry' which suggests it is unpredictable and dangerous. Horace may be tapping into an idea that it is against nature to seek to gain control of the sea in crossing it via boat. Farming, in contrast, does not endanger life.

7 **forumque:** the site of Rome's political, legal and commercial activities (see Stage 4 of the Cambridge Latin Course for more information). Horace finishes

his list of 3 (*tricolon*) places he would rather not be compared to farming: soldiering, seafaring and in the city.

- 8 **superba ... civium potentiorum limina:** this is referring to *salutationes* (see Stage 31 of the Cambridge Latin Course). Each morning a *cliens* would visit their *patronus* to complete the *salutatio*. A *cliens* may receive aid from showing favour to his *patronus* and the *patronus* would gain prestige from such display of favour towards them. It is interesting that rather than the patron being described as *superba* it is the *limina* itself – the steps. This may refer to the treatment of clients by the slaves working for the patron's household. Regardless, *superba* is nearly always negative in Horace and when referring to the powerful.

Lines 9 to 22 of *Epode 2* have been omitted here and the extract continues at line 23 (numbered 9 in this extract). In the missing lines, Horace describes other farming tasks.

- 9 **libet:** *libet* is in a prominent position at the beginning of a couplet. This places emphasis on the delight of the countryside.

antiqua ilice: the idyllic past is prominent in this poem (see lines 2-3) and shown here through the *ancient* tree. The *illex* can grow to a great age.

modo ... modo (line 10): repetition of *modo* gives a sense of choice, freedom and playfulness.

- 10 **tenaci:** the grass is deep enough to wrap around the person, just as how you might imagine yourself sinking into a sofa.

- 11 **labuntur altis interim ripis aquae:** gliding streams are a stock element of the rural idyll. *Interim* 'between' is literally placed between the noun and adjective. The *aquae* here is distinct from the *fontes* later.

- 12 **queruntur in silvis aves:** both birdsong (*aural imagery*) and woods are conventional features of the idyllic landscape. The verb *queror* is used elsewhere in Horace to mean lamentation or complaining which could be giving a discordant tone (and perhaps hinting at the surprise at the end of the poem).

In lines 9-12, each line finishes with a noun – *ilice* (holm-oak), *gramine* (grass), *aquae* (waters), *aves* (birds). Each line finishes with Horace's shopping list of key ingredients for the rural idyll.

- 13 **fontesque ... lymphis:** two words for water in quick succession. The water is central to Horace's idea of pleasance.

obstrepunt: usually a loud noise, an alternative translation could be 'roar'. Another suggestion perhaps that the scene is not as relaxing as it first seems.

- 14 **somnos quod invitet leves:** consecutive relative clause with the subjunctive *invitet* 'that which invites gentle sleep'. It is not clear what the *quod* is which induces "slumber", whether it is referring to all of lines 11-14 or just line 13. It could be read as a *tricolon* (list of 3) which lead to sleep. The adjective *leves* adds a new level – the sleep is carefree and easy.

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each line or couplet, asking questions so that the class is led to comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

Lines 9 to 14 of this poem describe scenes of the countryside. It may be helpful for students to draw what Horace describes or to listen out for the noises he mentions if a suitable location or recording is available so that they can imagine enjoying the literary ambience Horace creates, the literary trope of the pleasant place.

beatus ille qui procul negotiis (lines 1):

- What word describes the farmer and what does it mean?
- What is the man far from? Can you suggest more than one interpretation for this word?

ut prisca gens mortalium (line 2)

- What is the life of the farmer compared to?
- What does this suggest about life in the past?

paterna rura bobus exercet suis (line 3)

- Who did the farm previously belong to?
- What does the farmer do to the land and with what?

solutus omni faenore (lines 4):

- What is the farmer free from?

neque excitatur classico miles truci (line 5):

- What occupation is compared with farming here?
- What symbolises this occupation?

neque horret iratum mare (line 6):

- What does the farmer not have to dread?
- How is the *mare* described?

forumque vitat (lines 7):

- What place does the farmer avoid?
- What does the *forum* represent?

(vitat) superba civium potentiorum limina (lines 7-8):

- What else does the farmer avoid?
- Who would visit the *civium potentiorum*?

libet iacere modo sub antiqua ilice (line 9):

- Where is it pleasant to lie?
- How is the tree described?

(libet iacere) modo in tenaci gramine (line 10):

- Where else might the farmer lie?

labuntur altis interim ripis aquae (line 11):

- What is on either side of the waters?

queruntur in silvis aves (line 12):

- What is chattering in the woods?

fontesque lymphis obstrepunt manantibus (line 13):

- What else might the farmer see and hear in his rural idyll?

somnos quod invitet leves (line 14):

- What can all the sights and sounds of the rural countryside do for a person?
- How is the sleep described?

Questions on Content and Style

- (lines 1-4) How does Horace try to convince the reader that the life of a farmer is blessed? How realistic might this seem to a Roman reader?
- (lines 5-8) How does Horace show us his apparent disdain for other lifestyles?
- (lines 9-14) How effective is Horace at portraying the tranquillity of country life? Use examples from the text to explain your point of view.
- (lines 1-14) How does Horace argue that the country life is better than any other? Is Horace persuasive?
- (whole text) Do you think that Horace is earnest in his belief that the life of a farmer is preferable to others?

Discussion

Themes: farm life / past vs present / city life / the rural idyll

The lines of *Epode 2* presented here fit into three sections: expressing congratulations for farm life, giving examples of negative lifestyles to be avoided and presenting the rural idyll.

This poem builds on a point raised by several other ancient authors – getting back to the old simple way of life. Students may wish to consider whether going back to what life was like in the past is something they would want to do. Does the phrase ‘rose tinted glasses’ come to mind here? Horace is considering the so called mythical ‘Golden Age’ and so is appealing to a story the Romans told themselves about the past, rather than perhaps reality.

Horace mentions inheritance of ancestral property. It is important to note the sense of identity Horace is deriving from the cultural and familial past. It may be useful to consider lines 2-4 with lines 7-8 – the ‘ancient race of mortals’ farmed the land whereas contemporary Romans spend time in the forum and at people’s doorsteps. Does this contrast persuade his readers of the benefits of going back to the ways of the past?

Horace also highlights the importance of being free from debt, which Horace relates to the life of the farmer. With the current rise of inheritance tax, expensive student loans and difficulties in getting on the housing ladder, he may have a point for modern readers!

Horace seeks to show how well the farming lifestyle compares with other lifestyles. Students may not be able to relate to the dangers of warfare, seafaring and the cumbersome duties of contemporary Roman city life and will need to spend some time considering the drawbacks of each lifestyle. It will be clear that soldiering and seafaring would have been dangerous and therefore less appealing.

Students might wish to consider how people in our own time go to the country to relax and how cities can feel as if they never sleep. They could spend time imagining the rural idyll described in lines 9-14 – the sights and the sounds described by Horace. Is this their idea of paradise? Also, how does the idleness described in these lines fit in with the tilling mentioned in line 3? Do people who live off the land really lie in meadows and sleep listening to streams? Is this a fantasy?

It is difficult to pin down what Horace actually thinks. Is Horace's tone straightforward here? His description of farming life is almost too good to be true: family ties, the good old days, free from debt, time to laze around, always full rivers, birds in the trees, grass like a sofa! Does Horace genuinely believe this is what life is like in the countryside or is he actually undermining the view of the countryside that is idolised? It is worth considering that Horace himself was a soldier and was given his land rather than inheriting it – so he himself did not have this way of life.

Questions on the whole passage

1. What is the ideal lifestyle according to Horace?
2. What are the drawbacks of contemporary Roman life for Horace?
3. Is Horace describing a fantasy or reality of country living?
4. Considering other texts in this collection, do you think Horace's readers would agree with what he has written in this poem?

Further Information and Reading

The Cambridge Latin Course, Book V, Stage 35 on Roman Country Villas contains a detailed discussion in English. A digital version of this section can be found [here](#).

The Cambridge Latin Course Book V Stage 39 provides a short introduction to Roman poets, including the patronage of Maecenas. A digital version of this section can be found [here](#).

Acknowledgement of resources used:

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Horace: Odes 2.15 – The changing face of the countryside

Horace contrasts the decadence of Rome's aristocrats to the old simple way of life

Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65 BC – 8 BC) was a lyric poet writing under the emperor Augustus. Horace was born in southern Italy, at that time an area still closely associated with the Greek world, and he grew up steeped in Hellenistic culture. Following the assassination of Julius Caesar, he fought alongside Brutus against Antony and Octavian (the later Augustus). When Brutus was defeated, Horace accepted a pardon from Octavian and returned to Italy, but his family estates had been confiscated, as had those of many others during the civil wars. Horace later received the patronage of Maecenas, one of Augustus' closest advisers and was given a country estate in the Sabine hills, east of Rome. The first three books of the *Odes* appeared in 23 BC.

In this poem, Horace is concerned that small farms have been taken over by sprawling country mansions with vast pools and frivolous trees and flowers that are replacing more productive crops such as vines or olives. In contrast, Horace mentions Romulus and Cato, prominent figures from Rome's past, as examples of those who believed in personal poverty and public wealth, rejecting private porticoes for turf huts, and spending money on the town and temples.

Text

iam pauca aratro iugera regiae

moles relinquent, undique latius

extenta visentur Lucrino

stagna lacu platanusque caelebs

evincet ulmos; tum violaria et

[5]

myrtus et omnis copia narium

spargent olivetis odorem

fertilibus domino priori;

tum spissa ramis laurea fervidos
 excludet ictus. non ita Romuli [10]

praescriptum et intonsi Catonis
 auspiciis veterumque norma.

privatus illis census erat brevis,
 commune magnum; nulla decempedis
 metata privatis opacam [15]

porticus excipiebat Arcton,

nec fortuitum spernere caespitem
 leges sinebant, oppida publico
 sumptu iubentes et deorum
 templa novo decorare saxo. [20]

Notes

metre: Alcaic metre, named after the Greek poet Alcaeus. Stanzas of four lines, the first two with 11 syllables, the third with 9, and the fourth with 10.

v	—	v	—	—		—	v	v	—	v	v
v	—	v	—	—		—	v	v	—	v	v
v	—	v	—	—	—	v	—	v	—	v	v
—	v	v	—	v	v	—	v	—	v	—	v

This poem is split into 2 complex sentences. The first 10 lines (to ictus) depict contemporary ostentation in contrast to the second 10 lines which depict the simple way of life of Rome's great men of the past.

- 1 **iam:** ‘Before long’ a time marker, added to by the word *tum* repeated later in the poem (lines 5 and 9). The adverb draws attention to the hyperbole of the first section, warning of future decadence.

pauca: paired with *iugera* ‘a few acres’.

aratro: ploughing was to be encouraged as traditional hard work providing food although it was more economical to import grain in bulk from Africa.

regiae: translated as ‘aristocratic’ in describing the owners of the mansions. It can also be translated as ‘princely’ and it associates the wealthy landowners with kings. The Romans had been keen to avoid kings after the beginning of the Republic, despite Augustus’ consolidation of power as a sole ruler by the time of the poem. This therefore sets a derogatory tone, highlighting the power and arrogance of the wealthy, despite the fact most became wealthy from business (comparison could be made with modern day leaders).

- 2 **moles:** translated as ‘mansions’ but literally means a great mass. This emphasises the sheer amount of space taken up by the houses while the blandness of the word suggests the uselessness of the houses.

relinquent: notably future tense rather than present tense. A dire prophecy or warning.

Lines 1-2 describe the decline in the number of small holdings in Italy. There could be a number of reasons for this: the death of the landowners and destruction of land in the recent civil war, the increasing number of affluent Romans with large estates and the decrease in profitability of small holdings due to an increase in goods imported from Rome’s provinces.

undique latius extenta: three words to emphasise the scale of the spread of such pools on what was previously farmland.

- 3 **visentur:** as with ‘**relinquent**’ in the previous line, the future tense suggests a dire prophecy or warning.

Lucrino: a lake close to Baiae. Horace has perhaps chosen it due to it being a well-known large lake and because Baiae was known for its decadent *villae*. *Lucrino* and *lacu* in the next line are ablatives of comparison after *latius*. When Horace wrote this poem, the lake had recently been joined to Lake Avernus to form the naval harbour ‘portus Iulius’, built by Agrippa, making its extent even more spectacular (Nisbet and Hubbard. 1978, p245).

- 4 **stagna:** paired with *extenta* ‘the extended pools’. Horace has deliberately used *stagna* literally ‘standing water’, derived from *stare* (Nisbet and Hubbard, 1978, p. 245), to imply stagnation. It is important to note that these ‘pools’ are used for raising fish for the rich man’s table. Horace may be making a variety of points with his choice of this word. Creating such pools to farm fish could be considered to be interfering with the order of nature (emphasised by the *stagna* interrupting the natural pairing of *Lucrino* with

lacu). Also, the excessive size of these pools which are growing ever bigger reflects the excessively extravagant lifestyles of the wealthy.

platanusque caelebs: the plane tree was an ornamental tree imported from Greece and Asia, attested to be placed in private gardens in numerous works of Latin literature (Cicero *De Oratores* 1.28, Seneca *Epistles* 12.2, Pliny the Younger *Epistles* 5.6.20). It is *caelebs* 'solitary' because, unlike elms (*ulmos*), it could not be used to support vines. *Caelebs* (which can also be translated as unmarried) stands in contrast to the *fertilibus* in line 8. In Catullus 62.54 the process of supporting vines is called 'marrying' the tree to the vine. After Augustus' moral reforms encouraging childbirth, *caelebs* would be particularly evocative of uselessness and self-indulgence.

- 5 **envincet**: another future tense verb. Placed in the unusual position at the beginning of a line and before the end of the clause. Showing the subversion of the natural order by the wiping out of elms.

Lines 1-5 Horace has used a *tricolon* (losing land for farming, large pools for fishing and the spread of plane trees) to show the encroachment of wealth on the old simple way of life before *tum* in line 5.

tum: marks the start of a new thought as Horace moves onto *horti*. Horace has used the language of prophecies – a prediction followed by things that will naturally occur should it come true. Here, Horace warns of the loss of viticulture and olive growing caused by creating gardens for the pleasure from the aroma and shade from trees.

violaria: along with *myrtus* in line 6. Both violets and myrtles were used to make garlands, often worn at parties. Horace may be hoping to link them to the luxury of having time to party, rather than working the land.

et...et: the repetition of *et* here (*polysyndeton*) emphasises the numerous smells from the flowers assaulting the nostrils.

- 6 **copia narium**: literally 'wealth of the nostrils' with *narium* being the possessive genitive as if the nostrils owned the abundance. A very striking way to emphasise the aroma of smells being taken in. Horace is highlighting the smells to make the point that they are being grown for their scent, rather than as crops.

- 7 **spargent**: another future tense verb. It can be used to describe the sowing (or sprinkling) of seed but here it is the smells rather than the seed which is scattered.

olivētis: paired with *fertilibus* in line 8. An ablative of place indicating the smells take the place of olives (growing olives would have been a more productive use of the land).

8 **priori**: an important word contrasting the warning of the future with the traditional, productive work of the former master.

9 **tum**: repetition from line 5 leads the reader on through the sequence of changes that indicate decline from productive farming to wasteful decadence.

spissa ramis laurea: *ramis* is an ablative explaining why the tree is thick 'the laurel tree thick with branches.' Horace may be criticising the practice of cutting back to promote new growth to give denser shade. It is ironic that that a tree whose branches symbolised victory in athletic competition is now used to provide shade for idle Romans.

10 **ictus**: paired with *fervidos*, literally 'burning darts', here used to indicate the rays of the sun (*metonymy*).

non ita: this emphatic phrase moves us to the idyllic ways of the past. Note the verbs now change to the past tense.

Romuli: Romulus symbolises Rome at its mythical foundation in 753 BC. Horace here claims that Rome was founded on traditional values of farming the land. Romans believed that Romulus had lived in a single-roomed hut, preserved on the Palatine hill. Horace may also be bringing to mind and obliquely praising Augustus who himself lived on the Palatine Hill, near this hut.

11 **intonsi Catonis**: Barbers had not been introduced to Rome until 300 BC. This is echoing the idea that it is extravagant to spend time clipping back trees in line 9, here it is extravagant to cut hair. Horace is invoking the stern older Cato when he had been *ensor*. Cato was almost a synonym for the ideas of returning to old Roman virtue and he had himself boasted that he had a hard upbringing on the Sabine hills.

Nisbet and Hubbard (1978, p243) refer to Horace's choice of Romulus and Cato as exemplars as follows: 'nothing is known of the former and too much of the latter.'

12 **auspiciis**: the choice of the word '*auspicium*' for instruction evokes an almost religious tone. Leaders of expeditions, such as war campaigns, were expected to take the auspices – that is interpret signs from the gods. In this way, it also implies a sense of the good leadership of past generations.

norma: literally means a set square, it adds a sense of precision and order, echoed also in line 14 *decempedis*.

- 13** **privatus:** this word is an emphatic addition as '*census*' already implies private wealth.

illis: refers back to the '*veteres*' (past generations) mentioned in line 12.

The final two stanzas (lines 13 to 20) highlight how old rural ideals privilege the state over the individual and make a sustained contrast between private and public. Lines 13-14 compare *privatus* with *commune* (both placed in prominent positions at the beginning of the line).

- 14** **decempedis:** literally ten feet to indicate a ten-foot ruler used by surveyors and architects. Terms of measurement (also line 12 *norma*) give the second half of the poem an ordered and precise feeling. It also makes the private colonnades feel excessively large.

- 15** **privatis:** *anaphora* (repetition) of *privatus*. Continuing the contrast of public vs private.

opacam: paired with *Arcton* (line 16) 'the shady Northern light'. *Arctos* is the constellation of Ursa Major so the wind blowing from there would be the North Wind and therefore cold.

- 16** It is not entirely obvious what Horace means in lines 14-16. On the surface, it appears that he is criticising privately built colonnades for not providing shade. It is more likely that he is pointing out that in the past colonnades were built using public funds and provided shade for the public good.

- 17** **nec:** this is the third negative (*non* line 10 and *nulla* line 14) word used since the change to discussing the traditional past. It gives these lines a reprimanding tone.

fortuitum: something you might stumble upon and is therefore re-used. This is in contrast to *novo* (the new material) in line 20.

caespitem: both grass and a building material which could be used to build walls but more commonly as a roofing material. There were many houses in country districts with this type of roof. It may also allude to the house of Romulus mentioned above which would have been built in this fashion.

- 18** **leges sinebant:** this is hyperbole. The law did not prevent this, but it did restrict the use of expensive materials.

- 19** **publico:** paired with *sumptu*. Horace believes it is more important to use money for public funds to be spent on public building projects, rather than on private accumulation of wealth and property.

20 novo decorare saxo: reusing old materials had been normal Roman practice so having new stone would have been considered extravagant. In the Roman past, the law had restricted the use of marble to only temples. The Romans believed spending money on temples would help to keep the gods on Rome's side. Augustus is keen to demonstrate this in his *Res Gestae*, focusing on his building projects, especially of temples.

In Rome's past, *villae* were plastered with stucco or perhaps faced with second hand marble. Horace implies here that *villae* in his day are faced with new stone, just like the public areas and temples of old.

The contrast of the past and contemporary Rome are also emphasised by the verb *decorare*. In the past, newly cut stone was considered decoration, an additional ornament, whereas in Horace's day many *villae* were faced with this. Horace may also be hinting at Augustus' famous quote 'I found Rome a city of bricks and left it a city of marble.'

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each line or couplet, asking questions so that the class is led to comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin

iam pauca aratro iugera regiae moles relinquent (lines 1-2):

- What will soon replace farmland that used to be ploughed?
- How are the owners of the mansions described and how does that affect the way we view them?

undique latius extenta visentur Lucrino stagna lacu (lines 2-4):

- What will be seen everywhere and how big are they compared to the Lucrine Lake?
- What is a 'stagnum' and how might it be used for a leisurely and decadent life?

platanusque caelebs evincet ulmos (lines 4-5):

- What is going to wipe out the elms?
- Why is it extravagant to have the *platani* rather than elm trees?

tum violaria et myrtus et omnis copia narium spargent ...ordorem (lines 5-7):

- What other plants do the aristocrats have in their gardens?
- What effect do these plants have?

olivētis ... fertilibus domino priori (lines 7-8):

- What are the violets and myrtle bushes replacing?
- Who had planted the olive groves?
- How are the *olivētis* described and why are they are described in this way?

tum spissa ramis laurea fervidos excludet ictus (lines 9-10):

- What tree is providing shade?
- What did the Romans do to the *laurea* to make it better at providing shade?
- What are the burning darts (*fervidos ictus*)?

non ita Romuli praescriptum et intonsi Catonis auspiciis veterumque norma (lines 10-12):

- What two Romans are used as examples of the old Roman way of life?
- Why were each of these Romans chosen as examples?
- What are the *auspiciis* and *veterum norma*?

privatus illis census erat brevis, commune magnum (lines 13-14):

- For past generations, which was bigger, public or private wealth?

nulla decempedis metata privatis opacam / porticus excipiebat Arcton (lines 14-16):

- What porticoes do not receive the shady northern light?
- What does *opacam Arcton* literally mean? What is its meaning in these lines?

nec fortuitum spernere caespitem leges sinebant (lines 17-18):

- What does Horace say the law prevented Romans from doing?
- What does *fortuitum* imply about the origins of the turf?
- What can *caespes* (turf) be used for?

oppida publico sumptu iubentes (decorare) (lines 18-19):

- What did the laws order past generations to do to their towns?
- What money was used to do this to the towns?

et deorum templa novo decorare saxo (lines 19-20):

- What else were the Romans supposed to decorate?
- What material should have been used to decorate these?

Questions on Content and Style

- (lines 1-5) How does Horace show his disapproval at the use of land by the wealthy?
- (lines 5-10) How does Horace suggest the uselessness of the flowers growing in gardens?
- (lines 1-10) How does Horace effectively warn his readers of an unproductive future?
- (line 1-10) Is Horace criticising leisure time? Use examples from the text to explain your point of view.
- (lines 10-12) How does Horace show his wish that Romans return to the ways of the past?
- (lines 13-20) How does Horace's style and content show what he considers the Romans in his day should be spending money on?
- (lines 10-20) What impression does Horace give of life in Rome's past? Do you think that Horace would persuade Romans to go back to this way of life?

Discussion

Themes: wealth, leisure/work, use of land, private/public

Horace here is comparing life in the past to life in his own time. Students may wish to consider whether they would like to go back to an old way of life. Has modern consumerism and leisure time damaged us and our values? In particular, is it wasteful to use land for personal wealth, comfort and enjoyment?

Horace also criticises Romans who use their wealth to appear like kings. Should people with wealth 'have a chip on their shoulder'? Does wealth indicate higher status?

Horace calls upon legendary figures in Romulus and Cato. Romulus founded Rome after killing his brother and Cato was notorious for his strict moral code. Do we have any figures in our own past that exemplify how we should act? Are these actually good role models?

The last part of Horace's poem discusses the issue of public vs private. Should we use wealth on our public services? In our own times, we may choose to spend taxes on the NHS, the police or other public services like libraries but Horace believes public funds should be used on religious buildings and public buildings like porticoes. Is it right to expect those with wealth to spend it not on themselves but for the good of everyone?

It is notoriously difficult to pin down what Horace actually thinks. Is Horace's tone straightforward here? Does he really believe that private wealth has gone too far, that too much time is spent on leisure and that Romans should return their focus to their duty to the state? Are there any parts of his poem that appear exaggerated and perhaps disingenuous?

Horace's relationship with Maecenas, who supported writers on behalf of Augustus, is well attested. Horace was part of a circle of poets who were under the patronage of Maecenas, and so Augustus. Augustus instituted a series of moral reforms, focussed on rebuilding the traditional Roman way of life which he believes will restore Rome, the Romans' relationship with the gods and stop the moral degradation it had undergone previously. Is Horace writing a poem to put forward these ideas and support the Augustan regime?

Questions on the whole passage

1. What attitudes does Horace have about how Romans should use their land, wealth and time? How does this fit with the other sources you have studied?
2. What can we learn from this poem about how Romans contemporary to Horace used their land, wealth and time? Is Horace describing a problem with all of Roman society or just a part of it?
3. Considering other texts in the specification, do you think Horace's readers would agree with what he has written in this poem?

Further Information and Reading

The Cambridge Latin Course Book V Stage 35 on Roman Country Villas contains a detailed discussion in English. A digital version of this section can be found [here](#).

The Cambridge Latin Course Book V Stage 39 provides a short introduction to Roman poets, including the patronage of Maecenas. A digital version of this section can be found [here](#).

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Livy: History 3.26 – Cincinnatus, summoned from the plough

Cincinnatus, while busy working on his land, is summoned to restore the Roman state.

Titus Livius (59 BC - AD 17) was born in Patavium (modern day Padua). He was a historian and his work *Ab Urbe Condita* (From the Founding of the City) covered Roman history from the legends of the origins of Rome's founding to historical accounts of Livy's own times. The work covers up to the year 9 BC in 142 books but not all of these survive.

In this text, Livy explains how Cincinnatus was made dictator temporarily in 458 BC to restore the Roman state. When he is summoned to this duty, he is found busy in attending to his farmland. Having donned his toga, Cincinnatus is hailed as dictator. It is uncertain whether this episode is legendary or historical.

Text

vis Sabinorum ingens prope ad moenia urbis infesta populatione

venit. foedati agri, terror iniectus urbi est. tanta trepidatio fuit

quanta si urbem, non castra hostes obsiderent. itaque civibus

dictatorem dici placuit qui rem percussam restitueret, et Lucius

Quinctius Cincinnatus consensu omnium dicitur.

5

spes unica imperii populi Romani, Quinctius trans Tiberim,

contra eum ipsum locum ubi nunc navalia sunt, quattuor iugerum

colebat agrum, quae prata Quinctia vocantur. ibi ab legatis – seu

fossam fodiens palae innixus, seu cum araret, operi certe (id

quod constat) agresti intentus – salute data in vicem redditaque

10

rogatus est ut togatus mandata senatus audiret. admiratus

rogitansque 'satin salve?' uxorem togam propere e tugurio

proferre iubet. qua simul absterso pulvere ac sudore velatus

processit, dictatorem eum legati gratulantes consalutant, in

urbem vocant; qui terror sit in exercitu exponunt.

15

The text is adapted.

Notes

- 1 – 3 vis Sabinorum ... obsiderent:** the peril and fear of the Romans in the city is emphasised in the opening sentences of this extract to show how important Cincinnatus' leadership will be.
- 1 vis Sabinorum ... populatione:** the Sabines were a group of people living north-east of Rome with whom Rome had been intermittently in conflict since the legendary founding of the city by Romulus. The size and destructive nature of the attacking force is emphasised by *ingens* (huge), *infesta* (terrible) and *populatione* (devastation).
- 2 foedati agri:** understand *sunt*: 'the fields [were] laid waste'. *foedati* is a particularly evocative word which suggests the fields have been defiled or polluted.
- 2 iniectus est:** a passive form, literally 'terror was instilled in the city.'
- 2 – 3 tanta ... obsiderent:** there was such great panic (*tanta trepidation fuit*) as much as if (*quanta si*) the enemy were besieging the city (*urbem ...hostes obsiderent*), not the camp (*non castra*).
- 3 – 4 itaque ... restitueret:** *placuit civibus* (it seemed good to the citizens) introduces an indirect statement with the accusative *dictatorem* and passive infinitive *dici* (a dictator be named). See the vocabulary sheet for less familiar meanings of *placet* and *dico*. *qui ... restitueret* is a purpose clause 'so that he would restore the shattered state'.
- 4 – 5 Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus:** According to Livy, Cincinnatus was summoned to be dictator temporarily in 458 or 457 BC. He then took 15 days to assemble an army, defeat the enemy and lay down the office to return to his plough. Cicero claims that Cincinnatus was summoned from the plough in 439 BC and this may be a second incident or a disagreement in chronology. These and various other differing versions of similar episodes suggest that the story of a leader coming from the farm to serve his people, only to relinquish power when he is no longer needed, is an important tradition in Roman culture.
- 6 – 15** In the remaining paragraph, Livy emphasises Cincinnatus' agricultural lifestyle and humility, suggesting that these traits are closely linked with his quantities as a leader.
- 6 spe unica imperii populi Romani:** Cincinnatus' unique importance to the restoration of the state is emphasised through Livy's description of him as the only hope (*unica spe*) of the Roman people.
- 6 – 8 Quinctus trans ... vocantur:** there are a number of interrelated clauses here that might be best read separately before bringing them together.
- Quinctus quattuor ... iugerum colebat agrum:** Cincinnatus was cultivating four acres of land. (This is equivalent to about 600 parked cars or a little less than three football pitches).
- quae prata Quinctia vocantur:** which are called the Quinctian meadows.

trans Tiberim, contra eum ipsum locum ubi nunc navalia sunt: across the Tiber, opposite the very place where the docks now are.

The detail of a specific location in contemporary Rome, would add vividness and realism to the account and would remind Livy's audience that, in the past, the city of Rome itself contained agricultural land.

9 – 10 seu ... intentus: these words describe what Cincinnatus is doing on the farm when he is found. Livy uses a list of three (*tricolon*): leaning on a spade, digging a ditch or ploughing. This, along with the final phrase, 'certainly engrossed in some farming task (as is generally accepted)', emphasises the numerous tasks Cincinnatus carries out on the farm and his diligence in completing them. He displays the agricultural virtue of persistent hard work.

10 – 11 salute data ... reddita: Both the envoys and Cincinnatus display awareness of Roman social norms and courtesy.

8 – 12 ibi ab legatis ... audiret: returning to the the beginning of the sentence on line 8, we have: There (*ibi*), he was asked (*rogatus est*) by the envoys (*ab legatis*) that (*ut ...*), wearing his toga (*togatus*), he should listen to (... *audiret*) the commands of the senate (*mandata senatus*).

The envoys indicate that Cincinnatus should dress in a toga before hearing them. A toga was a formal piece of clothing, reserved for events such as addressing the senate so Cincinnatus realises that the message is important. This explains why he is bewildered (*admiratus*) and the concern he expresses with '*satin salve?*' (is everything all right?).

12 – 13 uxorem ... iubet: Cincinnatus asking for his toga from his wife lets the reader know that Cincinnatus is a family man and that his wife was possibly already present with him in the fields.

13 – 14 qua simul abstergo ... vocant:

qua ... velatus: dressed in which (i.e. the toga).

simul abstergo pulvere ac sudore: an ablative absolute construction indicating he had wiped off the dust and sweat before putting on the toga with **simul** suggesting the haste with which he cleaned himself.

That he needed to wipe off dust and sweat confirms his hard physical work on the farm. He makes sure that his appearance is appropriate for entering into political activity.

15 qui terror ... exponunt: they explained (*exponent*) what terror there was (*qui terror sit*) in the army (*in exercitu*). *qui* with the subjunctive is used for this indirect statement.

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then re-read each line or couplet, asking questions so that the class is led to comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

vis Sabinorum ingens prope ad moenia urbis infesta populatione venit (lines 1-2).

- What came almost to the walls of the city?
- *infesta populatione*: what did they come with?

foedati agri, terror iniectus urbi est (line 2)

- What happened to the fields?
- What feeling was instilled in the city?

tanta trepidatio fuit quanta si urbem, non castra hostes obsiderent (lines 2-3)

- The enemy were actually besieging the camp but what does Livy say the fear they provoked was as great as?

itaque civibus dictatorem dici placuit qui rem percussam restitueret (lines 3-4)

- What did the citizens feel it was good to do?
- What did they want this person to do?

et Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus consensu omnium dicitur (lines 4-5)

- By whose consent was Cincinnatus chosen?

spes unica imperii populi Romani, Quinctius (line 6)

- How is Cincinnatus described?

trans Tiberim, contra eum ipsum locum ubi nunc navalia sunt (lines 6-7)

- Where was Cincinnatus' land?

(Quinctius) quattuor iugerum colebat agrum (lines 7-8)

- How many acres did Cincinnatus cultivate?

quae prata Quinctia vocantur (line 8)

- What was Cincinnatus' land called in Livy's day?

seu fossam fodiens palae innixus, seu cum araret, operi certe (id quod constat) agresti intentus (lines 8-10)

- What two activities might Cincinnatus have been doing when he was found by the envoys? What was he certainly doing?
- How is Cincinnatus' concentration on his farming work described?

ibi ab legatis ... salute data in vicem redditaque rogatus est ut togatus mandata senatus audiret (lines 10-11)

- What happened first when the envoys reached Cincinnatus?
- What did the envoys ask Cincinnatus to listen to?
- How did they say Cincinnatus should be dressed to listen to them?

admiratus rogitansque 'satin salve?' uxorem togam propere e tugurio proferre iubet (lines 11-13)

- How does Cincinnatus feel when he hears the request of the envoys?
- What question does Cincinnatus ask the envoys?
- What does Cincinnatus ask his wife to fetch quickly from their cottage?

qua simul absterso pulvere ac sudore velatus processit (lines 13-14)

- What does Cincinnatus do before he steps forward?

dictatorem eum legati gratulantes consulant, in urbem vocant (lines 14-15)

- What do the envoys hail Cincinnatus as?
- Where do they call him to?

qui terror sit in exercitu exponunt (line 15)

- What do the envoys explain?

Questions on Content and Style

- (lines 1-5) How does Livy suggest the peril to the Roman state? Refer to style and content.
- (lines 6-15) How does Livy emphasise Cincinnatus' role as a farmer?
- (lines 6-15) How does Livy portray Cincinnatus as the ideal Roman leader?

Discussion

Themes: Roman identity / virtues of a Roman farmer

It may be useful to consider this text alongside Cicero's portrayal of Atilius in his defence of Roscio Amerino (also in this prescription) to see how farming and service to the state are closely linked in Roman culture.

In this extract, Livy uses the trope of the call from the plough to serve the Roman state. He characterises Cincinnatus as someone who works the land and who is therefore the ideal candidate to come to the aid of the state, in time of need.

Livy emphasises the excellent reputation of Cincinnatus before the reader first meets him at line 9. The terrible situation that Rome finds itself in and the fact that everyone agrees Cincinnatus is the best man to restore the state sets up the expectation that he is going to be an impressive person. This expectation is met when the reader finds him working diligently on a substantial parcel of land (4 acres), seemingly

without the help of enslaved people or freedmen. Attention may draw out from the text the values that Livy claims for Cincinnatus including his strong work ethic, diligence, civilised social interactions and his being a family man. They may also discuss whether these are still values that we look for in our leaders today or whether we hope for other virtues from them. It may be particularly interesting to discuss the virtues that departing prime minister Boris Johnson was claiming when, in September 2022, he referred to himself as ‘a Cincinnatus’ (see Further Reading below).

The idea of going back to the values of the past is discussed in a number of the examined texts. Students may discuss whether we can still learn lessons from the ancient past or whether some values or assumptions from past times are now inappropriate.

Questions on the whole passage

1. How significant is Cincinnatus for the Roman state?
2. Does being someone who works the land prepare Cincinnatus for public office?
3. What values do Romans who work the land display in Livy’s text?
4. Is Livy’s argument that a farming life is a good background for a leader made more or less persuasive by appealing to a historical figure?
5. Does Livy’s description of Cincinnatus and his farming life agree with other descriptions of rustic folk in the ‘Romans in the Countryside’ prescription? Does Livy use similar or different techniques to illustrate his opinion?

Further Information and Reading

The Cambridge Latin Course, Book V, Stage 35 on Roman Country Villas contains a detailed discussion in English. A digital version of this section can be found [here](#).

Britannica page on Livy, Roman Historian: [here](#). See the useful ‘brief summary’ link directly under the ‘Summary’ heading.

World History Encyclopedia, entry on Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus: [here](#).

In September 2022, resigning UK prime minister, Boris Johnson, referred to himself as ‘a Cincinnatus’ in his departure speech. Students may like to consider the implications of this for his longer-term plans as a politician. A Guardian article from the time includes some interpretations: [here](#).

Acknowledgement of Resources used:

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Ovid: Fasti 2.641-658 – A rustic festival

Rustic families conduct rituals in honour of the god of boundaries, Terminus

Publius Ovidius Naso (43BC – AD17) was born in Sulmo, inland from Rome, to a wealthy equestrian family. His works include love poems, the *Metamorphoses* (a collection of myths around the theme of transformation), laments, letters and his *Fasti*, the Roman calendar. In the *Fasti*, Ovid lists day-by-day what Roman customs are observed and how they began. Each book of the *Fasti* covers a month but only the first six months were ever published, because in 8 BC Ovid was exiled by the emperor Augustus.

In this text, he observes the private religious rites to *Terminus*, the god of boundaries, as carried out in the countryside (not the public ritual carried out by the state). *Terminus* is represented by either a post or stone in the ground on the boundary between two properties. The landowners from either side and their families, dressed in white, conduct rituals such as placing garlands and sacrificial cakes, creating an altar, throwing crops and honey-comb into fire, libations and blood sacrifices, before singing a prayer. It is likely that Ovid chose this setting to show the countryside as the ‘repository of old-fashioned Roman virtues’ (Robinson, 2011 p. 412).

Text

Termine, sive lapis sive es defossus in agro

stipes, ab antiquis tu quoque numen habes.

te duo diversa domini de parte coronant,

binaque sarta tibi binaque liba ferunt.

ara fit: huc ignem curto fert rustica testo [5]

sumptum de tepidis ipsa colona focis.

ligna senex minuit concisaque construit arte,

et solida ramos figere pugnat humo;

tum sicco primas irritat cortice flammam;

stat puer et manibus lata canistra tenet. [10]

inde ubi ter fruges medios immisit in ignes,

porrigit incisos filia parva favos.

vina tenent alii: libantur singula flammis;

spectant, et linguis candida turba favet.

spargitur et caeso communis Terminus agno, [15]

nec queritur lactans cum sibi porca datur.

conveniunt celebrantque dapes vicinia simplex

et cantant laudes, Termine sancte, tuas.

Notes

metre: elegaic couplets (pairs of lines, one of six feet, followed by one of five feet)

— $\underline{v}v$ | — $\underline{v}v$ | — $\underline{v}v$ | — $\underline{v}v$ | — v | — \underline{v}
— $\underline{v}v$ | — $\underline{v}v$ | — | — v | — v | —

- 1 **Termine:** *Terminus* is the god of boundaries. This god is particularly important in the countryside where it was necessary to be clear on who owned what land and especially in early Roman history when society was predominantly agricultural. Numa, a king of Rome after the legendary Romulus, created public and private boundaries, made it a serious offence to remove boundary markers and created the first temple to *Terminus*. By the time of Ovid, land confiscations had been an unpopular and widely used practice.
- 1 - 4 **Termine ... ferunt:** the vocative *Termine* alongside repetition of *tu* in different cases (*polyptoton*) indicates that this is a prayer to *Terminus*.
- 1 - 2 **lapis ... defossus ... stipes:** note that grammatically *defossus* agrees with *lapis* and *stipes*, so both the rock and post are fixed in the ground. Care is taken to list the different forms of the god, presumably to show reverence to the god.
- 2 **ab antiquis:** *Terminus* has strong associations with early Roman history. Ovid chooses to mention his ancient origins but is vague, not naming any particular time in the past.
quoque: in addition to other more famous gods, so emphasising *Terminus*' importance by favourably associating him with more prominent gods.
- 3 **domini:** refers to the landowners but literally translates as 'masters' i.e. masters over their land. By using *dominus* rather than *agricola* or another synonym for farmer, Ovid is clear about the autonomy of the farmers.

4 **binaque ... binaque:** repetition. A *pair* of each item is given because each landowner offers one of each item to the god on his side of the post/stone. This shows harmony in the countryside.

liba: a cake of cheese, flour and eggs. Both the cake and garland are traditional offerings to the gods.

5 - 12 **ara ... favet:** This scene of rustic piety is a family affair, involving the *domini* (landowners), a *senex* (old man) presumably the *dominus'* father, *colona* (the wife), *puer* (the boy) here the son of the farmer and *filia* (the daughter). All ages take part, from old to young.

5 - 6 **huc ... focis:** the description here emphasises the simple life (*rustica colona:* simple farmer's wife) and humble belongings of the landowner (*testo curto:* broken pot). Despite this, their life is homely (*tepidis focis:* warm hearth) and they give what they have willingly to show their piety to the god.

7 **concisaque construit:** repetition of the hard c sound mimics the sound of the wood being chopped.

arte: can be understood here as 'methodically' but literally translates as 'with skill'. The old man has made fires like this many times before.

8 **solida ... humo:** the festival was celebrated on the 23rd of February so it would be difficult to insert poles into the cold, hard winter ground to stop the bonfire collapsing. Again, this demonstrates the effort put into showing proper reverence to the god.

9 **irritat:** an interesting choice of word. Literally it means the man 'provokes' the fire to start.

10 **canistra:** a wicker basket used for holding offerings in sacrifices.

11 **ter fruges:** the farmer gives not just one, but three offerings of crops to the god.

immisit: all main verbs in the passage are in the present tense other than *immisit*. This emphasises that the throwing of the crops is done before the holding out of the honey-comb. Note that we do not know who threw the crops into the fire (whether it is the boy or the landowner).

medios ... ignes: both plural. Literally 'into the middle (of the) fires'.

12 **filia parva:** little daughter meaning young daughter to show the contrast in ages from *senex* to *filia*.

13 – 18 Focus now moves out from the family unit to a larger group.

13 **vina:** plural wines or vessels of wine, which explains how they go into the flames one by one (*singula*).

14 **linguis ... favet:** at official ritual acts heralds ordered the crowd to *favete linguis* literally 'favour [the act] with your tongues'. This effectively meant be silent so as not to interrupt or say something bad. *candida* means they are dressed in white.

15 **spargitur ... caeso ... agno:** sprinkled with *the blood of* a sacrificed lamb.

communis Terminus: literally the shared *Terminus* - referring to the fact there is one boundary marker and one altar shared between two households. This alongside other words of community (*coveniunt* line 17 and *vicinia* line 18) shows the harmony in the countryside.

16 **nec queritur:** note the anthropomorphic nature of the Roman gods, who echo human behaviour (here not complaining!).

cum sibi porca datur: temporal *cum* when, with indicative to define the time of the action of the main verb (*datur*). *porca* is the subject of the passive verb and *sibi* is the indirect object 'to himself'.

17 **dapes:** it is notable that they honour *Terminus* with a feast, even while living their simple and rustic lives.

simplex: it may be useful to consider the phrase 'the simple life'. This phrase refers to a life with few possessions or modern luxuries but then also free from the worries of consumerism. This echoes lines 5-6 where the wife uses a broken pot to carry fire. The phrase has often been used to describe country living.

18 **sancte Terminus tuas:** again showing reverence to *Terminus* by describing him as *sancte*.

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each line or couplet, asking questions so that the class is led to comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

**Terminē, sive lapis sive es defossus in agro
stipes, ab antiquis tu quoque numen habes. (lines 1-2)**

- What two ways can *Terminus* be represented?
- Since when has *Terminus* been important?
- What power does *Terminus* have?

**te duo diversa domini de parte coronant,
binaque sarta tibi binaque liba ferunt. (lines 3-4)**

- What do the two landowners offer *Terminus*?

**ara fit: huc ignem curto fert rustica testo
sumptum de tepidis ipsa colona focus. (lines 5-6)**

- What is made?
- Who brings the fire?
- What does she bring the fire in?

**ligna senex minuit concisaque construit arte,
et solida ramos figere pugnat humo. (lines 7-8)**

- What does the old man pile up?
- What does he do to the branches to secure the fire?

**tum sicco primas irritat cortice flammis;
stat puer et manibus lata canistra tenet. (lines 9-10)**

- What does he kindle the fire with?
- The farmer's son stands with what in his hands?

**inde ubi ter fruges medios immisit in ignes,
porrigit incisos filia parva favos. (lines 11-12)**

- What is thrown into the fire and how many?
- What does the daughter hold? How is the daughter described?

**vina tenent alii: libantur singula flammis;
spectant, et linguis candida turba favet. (lines 13-14)**

- What is offered as a libation?
- What does the crowd do? Give two details.
- What colour is the crowd dressed in?

**spargitur et caeso communis Terminus agno,
nec queritur lactans cum sibi porca datur. (lines 15-16)**

- What two sacrifices are made for *Terminus*?
- How is *Terminus* described?

**conveniunt celebrantque dapes vicinia simplex
et cantant laudes, Termine sancte, tuas. (lines 17-18)**

- Having come together, what is the community celebrating?
- What do they sing?
- How is the community described?
- How is *Terminus* described?

Questions on Content and Style

- (lines 1 - 4) How does Ovid show the reverence of the farmers for *Terminus*? Refer to Ovid's style and content.
- (lines 5 - 8) How effective is Ovid at showing the simple life of the farmers?
- (lines 9 - 14) Who is involved in the rites to *Terminus* here? What does this tell us about life in the countryside?
- (lines 5 - 15) How does Ovid suggest that a great deal of effort is put into the rites for *Terminus*?
- (lines 15 - 18) Is there a sense of community in the countryside? Use examples from the text to explain your point of view.

Discussion

Themes: country living / community / boundaries / religion / family

It may be useful to remember the passage takes the form of a prayer to the god, *Terminus*. This is evident from the use of the pronoun *tu* in different forms.

The central theme in this passage is religious ritual. The phrase 'rustic piety' is useful as Ovid has particularly chosen to have farmers making a dedication to *Terminus*. By examining the ancient rituals still completed in the countryside, Ovid also conveys the piety, adherence to tradition, and family and community cohesion that are aspects of country living.

To fully understand the passage, students will need to grapple with a fairly obscure Roman god - *Terminus*. Students should consider why the god of boundaries would be so important for country living? Why is it more important to define the confines of land owned in the countryside than in the city? This could lead to an interpretation that the significance of *Terminus* is to secure the boundaries of *private* property and lead to division. However, this is not echoed in the text which instead focuses on the unifying nature of these rites - conducted within and between families. Numa, who is credited as the originator of the rites to *Terminus*, may himself have intended this ritual at boundaries to limit greed and keep the peace. This peace and harmony is shown in the collaboration of neighbours.

The farmers give up a great number of resources in the ritual - garlands, cakes, wood, crops, honey-comb, wine, a lamb and a pig. They are choosing not to lavish their resources on themselves, but rather to invest the resources into securing a future free from any troubles from *Terminus*. Do modern people resist short term self-indulgence to invest in long term happiness? Is this a fundamental difference between 'the simple life' of the country and city life?

Ovid chooses to emphatically mention each individual from the family who is involved (grandfather, father, son and daughter) and in this way includes at least 3 generations. Is it common, in modern times, to find 3 generations of family living and sharing ritual together like this? Is Ovid suggesting that this kind of familial unity comes from country living? Could we liken this to modern day coming together for a festival, for example Christmas?

Terminus is said to have been considered a god 'from ancient times'. Does the ancient origin of *Terminus* make his rituals important? It is a recurring theme in the

set texts that country living goes back to the simple and better life of yesteryear. The farmers here do not have vast amounts of wealth but instead live in a humble life. Does the 'simple life' portrayed in this text appeal to today's students?

Questions on the whole passage

1. Ovid describes the wife and the community as 'rustica' and 'simplex' which can both be translated as 'simple'. What does Ovid mean when he calls them simple?
2. How does Ovid describe the lived experience for residents of the countryside in his text?
3. What values are important to those that live in the countryside in this text?
4. How does Horace show the devotion of the rustic inhabitants to *Terminus*?
5. From reading the other 'Romans in the Countryside' texts, do you think Ovid's readers would agree with his representation of people who live in the countryside?

Further Information and Reading

The Cambridge Latin Course, Book V, Stage 35 on Roman Country Villas contains a detailed discussion in English. A digital version of this section can be found [here](#).

The Cambridge Latin Course Book V Stage 39 provides a short introduction to Roman poets, including the patronage of Maecenas. A digital version of this section can be found [here](#).

The Cambridge Latin Course Book III Stage 23 contains a discussion on Roman religion. A digital version of this section can be found [here](#).

The following web links provide more information on sacrifices and Terminalia:

Roman Sacrifice in the Oxford Dictionary of the Classical World. Accessed [here](#).

Terminus in the Oxford Classical Dictionary. Accessed [here](#).

Warde Fowler, W (1899) *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic. An introduction to the study of the religion of the Romans*. London: Macmillan and Co. Accessed [here](#) and search 'Terminalia'

Acknowledgement of Resources used:

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Pliny: Letters 1.6 – A Day's Hunting

Advice to a friend: a writing expedition

Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus, better known to us as Pliny the Younger (c. AD 61- c. AD 113) was a Roman politician from Comum. Most of his life was spent in Rome, as an orator in the courts, senator, and friend of the emperor Trajan. His wealth came from the country estates, mostly inherited, that he owned all over northern Italy, worked by a large number of tenant farmers.

In this letter, Pliny writes to his friend, the historian Tacitus. At the time of the letter, he was senior to Pliny in terms of senatorial rank and was a leading advocate in the courts. Pliny describes how hunting and being in nature are particularly stimulating for his writing, advising Tacitus that he should also find inspiration in this way.

Text

C. PLINIUS CORNELIO TACITO SUO S.

ridebis, et licet rideas. ego, ille quem nosti, apros tres et quidem pulcherrimos cepi. 'ipse?' inquis. ipse; non tamen ut omnino ab inertia mea et quiete discederem. ad retia sedebam; erat in proximo non venabulum aut lancea, sed stilus et pugillares; 5
meditabar aliquid enotabamque, ut si manus vacuas, plenas tamen ceras reportarem. non est quod contempnas hoc studendi genus; mirum est ut animus agitatione motuque corporis excitetur; iam undique silvae et solitudo ipsumque illud silentium quod venationi datur, magna cogitationis incitamenta sunt. 10
proinde cum venabere, licebit auctore me ut panarium et lagunculam sic etiam pugillares feras: experieris non Dianam magis montibus quam Minervam inerrare. vale.

Notes

- 1 ridebis et licet rideas:** Pliny uses repetition of forms of the word *ridere* (*polyptoton*) to show that the idea of Pliny hunting is laughable as he is well-known as someone who enjoys spending time writing rather than being active outdoors.

rideas is subjunctive after the verb *licet + ut*.

nostis: this is a shortened version of *novisti* – strictly in the perfect tense ('you have known'), but frequently used with present sense ('you know').

- 2-3 apros tres et quidem pulcherrimos cepi:** Pliny emphasises the number (*tres*) and quality of the boars caught (*pulcherrimos* is superlative). It is not entirely clear whether Pliny literally caught three boars or whether the boars were captured by the rest of the hunting-party, for which Pliny claims the credit.

This would be a good opportunity to refer to Picture 6 in the prescribed material, which gives a good representation of the activity of a boar-hunt like the one Pliny describes.

- 3 'ipse?' inquis. ipse:** Pliny uses an imaginary exchange with Tacitus to emphasise how usual it is for him to hunt. Notice how *ipse* has different meanings according to the speaker: first Tacitus' expression of surprise: 'You?', and second Pliny's reply '[Yes], me'.

- 3-4 non tamen ut ... discederem:** 'but not with the result that...' This is an unusual result clause, missing the usual signpost of a correlative before *ut* + subjunctive (*discederem*).

The emphatic *omnino* along with the two words, *inertia* (inactivity) and *quiete*, (peacefulness) used to express one idea (*hendiadys*) make clear Pliny's usual preoccupation with studying and writing. This explains why Tacitus will be surprised to hear of him hunting.

- 4 sedebam:** note that Pliny is sitting rather than standing ready for action next to his nets. These were used to trap the animal before killing it with a spear or javelin. The hunting equipment – *venabulum* (hunting spear) and *lancea* (javelin) – are contrasted with writing equipment, *stilus* (stylus) and *pugillares* (writing tablets). A stylus was used to make marks into wax on wooden boards.

- 6-7 meditabar ... ut si ... reportarem:** a purpose clause with *ut* + subjunctive (*reportarem*).

Notice the pattern (*chiasmus*):
noun (*manus*) adjective (*vacuas*), adjective (*plenas*) ... noun (*ceras*)
with both noun-adjective pairs as objects of the verb *reportarem*. The contrast is strengthened by the inclusion of *tamen* within the second pairing.

- 7-8 non est quod contemnas hoc studendi genus:** *non est quod* + subjunctive (*contemnas*) is a Latin idiom meaning 'there is no reason for you to.'

studendi is a verbal noun (gerund) meaning 'studying'.

- 8** From this point on, Pliny extolls the benefits of countryside pursuits for his thinking.

- 8-9 mirum est ut ... excitetur:** *ut* here means 'how' (not 'so that') and is followed by a subjunctive (*excitetur*), in what amounts to an indirect question.

Pliny mentions both *agitatione* and *motuseque corporis* (movement of the body) to suggest the single idea of strenuous physical activity that stirs up his thoughts.

- 9-10 iam ... sunt:** Pliny includes a list of three (*tricolon*) aspects of hunting that are useful for stimulating the mind: being in the woods, solitude and silence. The silence appears to be a particularly important aspect, emphasised with both *ipsum* and *illud*.
- 11 proinde:** introduces Pliny's summing up with some advice to Tacitus.
- 11 cum venabere:** *cum* means 'whenever' with a future indicative (here deponent) verb.
- 11-12 licebit ... feras:** *feras* is *subjunctive* after the verb *licebit + ut*. Pliny suggests bringing together writing with hunting and outdoor refreshments: *panarium* (basket of bread) and the diminutive *lagunculam* (small bottle).
- 12-13 experieris ... inerrare:** an indirect statement *experieris* (you will discover) *Dianam* (Diana) *non inerrare* (does not roam) *magis quam Minervam montibus* (more than Minerva on the mountains). Diana is the goddess of hunting and Minerva of wisdom. This metaphor implies that both hunting and intellectual activities such as writing can equally be undertaken on the mountainside.

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each line or couplet, asking questions so that the class is led to comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

ridebis, et licet rideas (line 2)

- How does Pliny suggest Tacitus will react to his letter?

ego, ille quem nosti, apros tres et quidem pulcherrimos cepi (lines 2-3)

- What did Pliny catch? How many were there and how are they described?

'ipse?' inquis. ipse; non tamen ut omnino ab inertia mea et quiete discederem (lines 3-4)

- What was Pliny not abandoning?

ad retia sedebam (line 4)

- Where was Pliny sitting?

erat in proximo non venabulum aut lancea, sed stilus et pugillares (lines 4-5)

- What was not near Pliny? What was near Pliny?

meditabar aliquid enotabamque, ut si manus vacuas, plenas tamen ceras reportarem (lines 6-7)

- What was Pliny doing?
- What did Pliny hope to bring back with him?

non est quod contemnas hoc studendi genus (lines 7-8)

- What should Tacitus not frown upon?

mirum est ut animus agitatione motuque corporis excitetur (lines 8-9)

- What rouses the mind?

iam undique silvae et solitudo ipsumque illud silentium quod venationi datur, magna cogitationis incitamenta sunt (lines 9-10)

- What three aspects of the hunt stimulate thought?

proinde cum venabere, licebit auctore me ut panarium et lagunculam sic etiam pugillares feras (lines 11-12)

- What does Pliny say he permits Tacitus to take with him when he next goes hunting?

experieris non Dianam magis montibus quam Minervam inerrare. vale. (lines 12-13)

- Does Diana roam on the mountains more than Minerva?

Questions on Content and Style

- (lines 2-4) How does Pliny emphasise his reputation as a reluctant hunter?
- (lines 4-7) How does Pliny show the importance of writing to him?
- (lines 8-13) Does Pliny persuade the reader of the benefits of hunting for writing? Refer to Pliny's style and content.
- (lines 4-12) Does Pliny suggest that country living is strenuous or leisurely?
- (lines 12-13) Is the countryside a place only for people who enjoy hunting?

Discussion

Themes: hunting / writing / benefits of country living

In this letter, Pliny brings together the activities of hunting and writing. Both require equipment and both are productive, whether through catching a boar or successfully completing a passage, and both can be successfully undertaken in the countryside.

By carefully reading the first part of the passage, students may be able to visualise a typical hunting scene, seeing the process of putting out nets and waiting for prey which can then be killed with weapons. Students may also contrast the exertion of the hunt with the sedentary nature of writing and with taking time for leisurely eating in the countryside.

Pliny believes that his writing benefits from being carried out in the countryside because he finds the exercise and setting stimulating. Students may wish to consider their own experiences of the countryside and the idea of studying there. How would the relative quiet of the countryside compare to the usual sights and sounds of where they live? Many students will now work while listening to music through headphones. Would they prefer the sounds of nature over their own usual working habits? Do they find that exercise helps to clear their minds so they are able to get on with more academic activities?

Questions on the whole passage

1. According to Pliny, what aspects of the countryside are enjoyable?
 2. How does Pliny's description of countryside pastimes in this passage compare with those in other texts in the 'Romans in the Countryside' prescription?
-

Further Information and Reading

The Cambridge Latin Course, Book V, Stage 35 on Roman Country Villas contains a detailed discussion in English. A digital version of this section can be found [here](#).

Acknowledgement of Resources used:

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Pliny: Letters 9.15 - The burdens of an estate-owner

Pliny describes his unsuccessful retreat to country life

Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus, better known to us as Pliny the Younger (c. AD 61- c. AD 113) was a Roman politician from Comum. Most of his life was spent in Rome, as an orator in the courts, senator, and friend of the emperor Trajan. His wealth came from the country estates, mostly inherited, that he owned all over northern Italy, worked by a large number of tenant farmers. From this letter it is evident that, despite the irksome responsibilities this sometimes entailed, he tried to visit his estates regularly and thought of himself as a model landowner.

Pliny fastidiously composed his letters, editing and rewriting them. This letter, written to his friend and correspondent Pompeius Falco, describes how Pliny had fled to the country but, instead of doing what he wants, he is faced with the complaints and petitions of country folk. These are even more bothersome than revising his speeches and also stop him from doing his account-books. However, he does on occasion manage to ride round some parts of his estate. He finishes this letter by commanding Pompeius Falco to keep him abreast of news from the city.

Text

C. PLINIUS POMPEIO FALCONI SUO S.

refugeram in Tuscos, ut omnia ad arbitrium meum facerem. at
hoc ne in Tuscis quidem: tam multis undique rusticorum libellis
et tam querulis inquietor, quos aliquanto magis invitus quam
meos lego – nam et meos invitus. retracto enim actiunculas 5
quasdam – quod, post intercapedinem temporis, et frigidum et
acerbum est. rationes quasi absente me negleguntur. interdum
tamen equum conscendo et patrem familiae hactenus ago,
quod aliquam partem praediorum, sed pro gestatione percurro.
tu consuetudinem serva, nobisque sic rusticis urbana acta 10
perscribe. vale.

Notes

- 1 The letter is written to Pompeius Falco, a provincial commander and then consul in AD 108.
- 2 **refugeram**: the verb at the beginning of the sentence is emphatic. He did not just leave but he fled - presumably from the hustle and bustle of the city.
in Tuscos: the farm he is referring to was not quite in present-day Tuscany. This is almost a pet name of Pliny's for his residence near *Tifernum Tiberinum* (Tifernum on the Tiber) in the upper Tiber valley.

refugeram ... ut ... facerem: a purpose clause using *ut* and the subjunctive. The *omnia* (with *arbitrium*) emphasises how he wanted to go to his country estate to indulge in leisure.

- 2-3 at ... quidem:** easier to understand by supplying *est* and inserting the word 'possible'. *at* (but) *quidem hoc* (even this) [*est* (is)] *ne* (not) [possible] *in Tuscis* (in Tuscany).
- 3-5** Pliny tells us that, at his country residence, he is unable to do what he wants because the country folk are making requests of him. These are most likely concerns from tenant farmers who rent his land, though it could include giving advice as judge and arbiter (Pliny *Epistles* 7.30.). Pliny seems unsympathetic to them, though tenant farmers were usually not well off and the landowners usually wealthy.
- tam multis ... invitus:** note the number of words here indicating magnitude. The first four (*tam, multis, undique, tam*) show how many petitions he receives and the next couple (*aliquanto, magis*) show his sense of dread at receiving them that surpasses even the dread of revising his own work. Note too the repetition of *invitus* (unwilling) emphasising his reluctance. *multis* agrees grammatically both with *libellis* and *querulis* - 'many petitions and grumbles.' Apparently the tenants both submit their grievances formally in writing and speak to Pliny as he tours the estate. The complaints from *rusticorum* 'people of the countryside' stand in contrast with the news from the city in line 10.
- 5 meos:** in both cases *meos* means 'my own' [cases]. *Lego* is also the main verb in the final clause 'for I read my own unwillingly.' Pliny appears self-effacing and even adds an extra clause to be clear on this matter. The exaggeration of the number of complaints combined with his speaking dismissively of his own work makes this part feel less than serious.
- 5-7 actiunculas ... est:** *actiunculas* is diminutive, from *actio*, meaning speech. The repetitious '*et frigidum et acerbum*' emphasises his displeasure at having to check these again – perhaps for publication.
- 7 quasi absente me:** literally 'as though with me absent' meaning 'as if I wasn't here to do the account-books'. He, as a large estate owner, cannot even manage his own affairs due to the overwhelming concerns of his tenant farmers. Again, he ignores the impact of the hardships on the tenant farmers themselves.

7-9 interdum ... percurro: here Pliny is concerned that he should act as a *paterfamilias*. The term *paterfamilias* has come to mean the male head of a family but is also translated as proprietor and sometimes landowner. This perhaps indicates that riding round the estate is part of these duties. Although, *pro gestatione* 'for the sake of riding' suggests it was simply for the pleasure and exercise of riding.

10-11 tu ... perscribe: here Pliny turns to the person to whom he is addressing the letter (i.e. Pompeius Falco). *tu* is vocative with the imperatives *serva* and *perscribe*. Pliny commands his friend to keep him informed of city matters, while referring to himself as *rusticis* - 'countryfied'. This maintains the derogatory tone established earlier when dealing with quibbles from rustic folk. The contrast of city vs country life is emphasised by the juxtaposition of *rusticis urbana*. It seems Pliny sees city matters as more important than rustic complaints.

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each line or couplet, asking questions so that the class is led to comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

refugeram in Tuscos, ut omnia ad arbitrium meum facerem (line 2)

- Where has Pliny fled to and what does he want to do there?

at hoc ne in Tuscis quidem: tam multis undique rusticorum libellis et tam querulis inquietor (lines 2-4)

- Is Pliny able to do what he wants in 'Tuscany'?
- What is Pliny harassed by?

quos aliquanto magis invitus quam meos lego – nam et meos invitus. (lines 4-5)

- What is Pliny also particularly unwilling to read?

retracto enim actiunculas quasdam – quod, post intercapedinem temporis, et frigidum et acerbum est. (lines 5-7)

- What is Pliny revising?
- How does Pliny describe what he is revising?

rationes quasi absente me negleguntur. (line 7)

- What has Pliny been neglecting?

interdum tamen equum conscendo et patrem familiae hactenus ago, quod aliquam partem praediorum, sed pro gestatione percurro. (lines 7-9)

- What is Pliny able to do sometimes as *pater familias*?
- What does he say he does this for?

tu consuetudinem serva, nobisque sic rusticis urbana acta perscribe. vale. (lines 10-11)

- What orders does Pliny give Pompeius Falco?

Questions on Content and Style

- (lines 2-7) Does Pliny find going to the country relaxing? Use quotes to explain your point of view.
 - (lines 7-9) How does Pliny show his wealth as a landowner?
 - (lines 10-11) Does Pliny suggest that country or city life is more important?
-

Discussion

Themes: landowners / tenant farmers / country life / city affairs

This letter from Pliny shows a different perspective from most of the other texts on the examination. It is not an idealised account of the humble, self-sufficient, pious farmer living according to the *mos maiores* (the ways of his ancestors) but rather focuses on the complaints of a wealthy landowner who grumbles about the demands of his own tenant farmers..

We know from other letters that Pliny enjoyed luxurious Roman villas as retreats to the countryside. However, here Pliny is showing the reality of someone overseeing extensive lands and many tenant farmers. He frequently has to deal with the ongoing issues of failing crops and tenants not meeting rent.

It is interesting to see that Pliny does not seem to have any sympathy for his tenants, seeing their complaints as trivial and time consuming, and as a frustrating obstacle to him overseeing his own affairs. Does this suggest that Pliny identifies being rusticated as being of a lower social status than those engaged in city life? Do rustic matters appear to him to be of less consequence than the affairs of the city?

Students may also notice that Pliny mentions some rustic pursuits which are enjoyable, for example horse riding and taking in the estate.

Questions on the whole passage

1. Does Pliny find visiting the country relaxing or stressful? Use examples from the text to explain your point of view.
2. What views does Pliny have on rusticity as compared to urban matters?
3. Do you think Pliny's account gives a realistic portrayal of the lives of tenant farmers and landowners? What might be exaggerated or omitted?
4. From reading the other 'Romans in the Countryside' texts, do you think other Romans would empathise with Pliny's experience of country living?

Further Information and Reading

The Cambridge Latin Course, Book V, Stage 35 on Roman Country Villas contains a detailed discussion of life in a country villa in English. A digital version of this section can be found [here](#).

Acknowledgement of Resources used:

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Virgil: Georgics 4.125-143 – A self-sufficient farm

The green fingers of the happy old Cilician gardener

Publius Vergilius Maro (70-19 BC) was born in Mantua in northern Italy (then Cisalpine Gaul). Virgil was in his 20s during the turmoil and uncertainty created by the Civil War (though he took no part in them), before seeing the elevation of Augustus into the role of *princeps*.

Virgil's father's land was confiscated in the redistribution of land following the Civil War. This would explain a certain fondness for the life of a farmer as well as his highlighting of the negative impact of war on the countryside in the *Aeneid*, the epic poem for which Virgil is best known. Virgil wrote under the patronage of Maecenas who oversaw literary endeavours during the Augustan principate. The *Georgics* – a didactic poem on farming - was Virgil's second major work and is usually dated to 29 BC.

The following text is a digression from Virgil's main focus on bee-keeping in book 4. He imagines the way of life of an old gardener from Cilicia (southern Turkey) who rescues abandoned land, growing all manners of vegetables, flowers and trees through sustained labours. His work proves productive, as he collects honey from the bees, feasts on his produce, and reaps much fruit from his trees.

Text

namque sub Oebaliae memini me turribus arcis,
qua niger umectat flaventia culta Galaesus,
Corycium vidisse senem, cui pauca relict
iugera ruris erant, nec fertilis illa iuvenis
nec pecori opportuna seges nec commoda Baccho. [5]
hic rarum tamen in dumis olus albaque circum
lilia verbenasque premens vescumque papaver
regum aequabat opes animis seraque revertens
nocte domum dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis.
primus vere rosam atque autumnno carpere poma, [10]
et cum tristis hiems etiamnum frigore saxa
rumperet et glacie cursus frenaret aquarum,
ille comam mollis iam tondebat hyacinthi
aestatem increpitans seram Zephyrosque morantes.
ergo apibus fetis idem atque examine multo [15]
primus abundare et spumantia cogere pressis
mella favis; illi tiliae atque uberrima pinus,
quotque in flore novo pomis se fertilis arbor
induerat, totidem autumnno matura tenebat.

Notes

metre: hexameter (each line has six feet)

| — *vv* | — *v* |

1 namque: introduces an independent episode from the main topic of bees in book 4 of the *Georgics*.

Oebaliae: this is *periphrasis*. Instead of saying Tarentum directly, Virgil indicates the place by naming Oebalus, a king of Sparta. Spartans founded Tarentum. It gives the location of the digression an other-worldly feeling, one placed in the mythical past.

memini me: *memini* 'I remember(ed)' introduces an indirect statement. The infinitive *vidisse* to accompany the accusative *me* does not appear until line 3. 'I remember that I saw...'. Virgil adds extra detail to the location of his imagination before relating what he saw 'beneath the towers...'. Adding '*memini me*' means we are invited into Virgil's imagination, it is intimately personal. The private account of the gardener matches the personal nature of the gardener's work apparent in the rest of the digression.

2 Galaesus: rivers are often used to place the location of a poem.

3 Corycium: a man from Cilicia. The man is not given a name, in marked contrast to the great effort put into locating the place. It appears the location is important but *any* man could be the gardener. It is debated who the man is. One theory is it is a Cilician pirate resettled by Pompey after he cleared them from the Mediterranean in 67 BC. Another theory is simply that Cilicians were known to be good gardeners.

senem: the one detail we are given of the Cilician is his old age.

3-4 cui ... erant: *cui* is a possessive dative followed by *erant*, literally translates as 'to whom there were' but has the meaning 'to whom belonged'.

4-5 nec ... Baccho: supply *erat* and pair *illa* with *seges* '*nec illa seges [erat]*' = 'nor was that crop.' *Seges* usually means crop but here refers to the land, such as a cornfield. *Nec* is repeated three times in a *tricolon* (list of three) to emphasise how difficult this land was for any kind of farming.

4 iuencis: oxen are used to plough the land so that it is ready for seed.

6-14 hic ... morantes: if Virgil's poetic language is stripped back, this section can be split into the following practical activities the farmer undertook.

- a) First the gardener clears some of the brambles.
- b) He plants annual plants - vegetables, flowers and herbs.
- c) He has his first harvest (his 'unpurchased feast')
- d) He prunes dead foliage to encourage greater growth in the coming summer
- e) He collects honey which the bees have produced using the flowers in his garden.

This is at least one year of work as evidenced by the passing of the seasons.

- 6 **hic**: 'he' (this man)
- 6-7 **hic ... papaver**: a list with many conjunctions: -que is repeated three times (*polysyndeton*) to demonstrate the growing variety of plants he was able to farm.
- 7 **lilia**: used to make ointment and oil (Pliny *Natural History* 2.1.23). Bees adore them (Virgil *Aeneid* 6.709).
- verbenas**: it is worth looking at an image of these as they will be recognisable. These were herbs used for medicine and magic as well as in truce ceremonies. They are also frequented by bees.
- papaver**: poppies produce lots of pollen and so are useful to bees.
- 8 **regum ... animis**: this comparison of the riches of the farmer with the riches of the king demonstrates the value the farmer puts on his crops. Virgil's sincerity could be doubted here. If Virgil is taken seriously, it pitches the life of the farmer in contrast to the life of *regiae*.
- sera**: the farmer works long hours to be self-sufficient.
- 9 **nocte**: ablative of time when 'at night'
- domum**: accusative of motion – towards 'to his house'
- dapibus mensas onerabat imemptis**: the translation is: he used to load his table (**onerabat mensa**) with an unbought feast (**dapibus imemptis**). The first three words are emphasising how much he has, with the final word 'unbought' demonstrating to us the benefits of farming. This final word also begins to show the solitude of the farmer who does not appear to engage with family or friends and here does not turn to commerce either. This echoes the personal touch at the beginning of the passage brought to mind by '*memini me*'.
- 10 **primus**: his dedication to farming is evident from the fact he is the first to undertake tasks (echoing the *sera* in line 8).
- primus ... poma**: supply *erat* followed by *carpere* 'he was the first to gather', both *rosam* and *poma* are objects after *carpere*.
- 10-14 **vere ... aestatem**: Virgil skilfully weaves every season into 4 lines. The farmer works all year round.
- 11-12 **cum ... aquarum**: While both spring and autumn are dealt with in one line, the winter has two lines. This exaggeration of winter is even more surprising given the climate of Tarentum. The winters are not as cold as in England, with the lowest temperatures of around 7 degrees (the highest we should expect in January in the UK!). Winter is also described as *tristis* 'gloomy'. The harsh description of winter as sad, rock-breaking and icy reminds the reader of the dedication and graft of the farmer who works all through this.

- 13 ille ... hyacinthi:** Presumably this means trimming back dead foliage in order to allow better growth in summer. The *iam* adds to *sera* (line 8 and 14) and *primus* (line 10) to show the diligence and hard work of the farmer. In particular, the farmer seems to be going faster than nature which is late (line 14) to bring in the summer.
- 15 ergo:** As a result of the work completed in lines 1-14.
- 15-17 apibus ... favis:** supply *erat*. *Idem* 'again' reminds us that *primus* (line 16) is repeated from line 10. This farmer is always first!
- 17 illi ... pinus:** supply *erat*, literally *illi erat* 'there was to him...', means 'he had'.
tiliae: the bees are shown to graze on lime-trees at *Georgics* 4.183.
uberrima pinus: *uberrima* is superlative 'the very abundant'. Pines were noted for producing propolis and pollen (useful to the bee).
- 18-19 quotque ... tenebat:** The translation is: And with however many fruits (**quotque pomis**) the fertile tree (**fertilis arboris**) had decked itself (**induerat se**) in early blossom (**in novo flore**), that many (**totidem**) ripe [fruits] (**matura**) it held (**tenebat**) in autumn (**autumno**).
- Fruit trees rarely have all their flowers bloom to full fruit so here Virgil is almost certainly exaggerating how productive they are.
- 15-19:** There are many words in this section which emphasise growth and abundance – *fetis*, *multo*, *abundare*, *uberrima*, *fertilis*, *quotque* and *totidem* together. So the hard work of the farmer has paid off and produced a wealth of products. It is notable that Virgil has left out certain elements of the reality of Roman agriculture, such as the use of money and the labour of slaves.

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each line or couplet, asking questions so that the class is led to comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

namque sub Oebaliae memini me turribus arcis, qua niger umectat flaventia culta Galaesus, Corycium vidisse senem (lines 1-3)

- How does Virgil describe the man he remembers seeing?
- What two features does Virgil use to describe the place?

cui pauca relictis iugera ruris erant, nec fertilis illa iuvenis nec pecori opportuna seges nec commoda Baccho. (lines 3-5)

- What did the farmer have?
- How is the land described (*relictis*)?
- What three agricultural practices could not be done on this land?

**hic rarum tamen in dumis olus albaque circum lilia verbenasque premens
vescumque papaver (lines 6-7)**

- What four things did he plant first?

regum aequabat opes animis (line 8)

- How rich does his produce make him feel?

seraque revertens nocte domum (lines 8-9)

- At what time does he return home?

dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis (line 9)

- What does he load onto his table?

primus vere rosam atque autumnu carpere poma (line 10)

- What was he the first to do in autumn and spring?

**et cum tristis hiems etiamnum frigore saxa rumperet et glacie cursus frenaret
aquarum (lines 11-12)**

- How does Virgil describe winter? Give three points

ille comam mollis iam tondebat hyacinthi (line 13)

- What does the farmer do to the crocus'?

aestatem increpitans seram Zephyrosque morantes (line 14)

- What is the farmer scolding?
- What has been delayed?

**ergo apibus fetis idem atque examine multo primus abundare et spumantia
cogere pressis mella favis (lines 15-17)**

- What animal does the farmer have lots of?
- What does the farmer extract from the pressed combs?

illi tiliae atque uberrima pinus (line 17)

- What two trees does the farmer have on his land?
- What quantity of *pinus* does he have?

**quotque in flore novo pomis se fertilis arbor induerat, totidem autumnu
matura tenebat (lines 18-19)**

- How many fruits grow on the fertile trees?

Questions on Content and Style

- (lines 1-3) How does Virgil set the scene, bringing the reader into his imagination?
 - (lines 3-5) How does Virgil suggest the uselessness of the land the farmer has?
 - (lines 5-19) How effective is Virgil at portraying the abundance produced by the farmer? Use examples from the text to explain your point of view.
 - (lines 5-19) How hardworking is the farmer in Virgil's vision? Discuss Virgil's content and style to explain your point of view.
 - (lines 8-19) Is the farmer happy? Use examples from the text to explain your point of view.
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Discussion

Themes: farming / gardening / self-sufficiency / abundance / private vs public

This commentary has referred to the main character of this text as both a gardener and a farmer. Scholarship often refers to him as a gardener and points to Virgil saying he will now discuss gardening (as opposed to farming). Is there a difference? Does the main character appear to be one more than the other?

The main character of the passage is not named, merely situated in Tarentum and described as a Cilician old man. Did Virgil deliberately withhold his name? What effect would it have to make someone anonymous? What effect does it have to situate this poem far away from Rome (about 315 miles away)? Is it important that he is described as an old man? Was gardening/farming an occupation for old men?

The old man appears to be completely cut off from Roman society without the need for trading to obtain food. Does this fit in with the view of Roman farming you have from the other passages and pictures you are studying in this theme? Is farming/gardening a private pursuit for Romans?

Most of the poem concerns the old man working hard to reclaim this abandoned land and make it able to produce a multitude of crops. Is this a positive aspect to Roman farming? Does the farmer appear happy with (a) the abundance of things he is able to grow and harvest (b) the hard work he puts in?

The old man is compared to *regum* 'kings'. Is this a reasonable comparison? Is Virgil suggesting an opinion he has of kings and of the value of farming?

Is Virgil's portrayal of farming realistic? Has he missed anything out? Do parts of it appear to be a fantasy? If it does appear to be a fantasy, is Virgil doing this to praise the life of the farmer or reveal it as a lifestyle that is too good to be true?

Questions on the whole passage

1. How does Virgil show hard work will lead to a rich reward for the farmer?
2. Is Virgil's portrayal of farm life a positive one?
3. Is Virgil describing a fantasy or reality of country living?
4. Does Virgil show a genuine admiration of country life?
5. From reading the other 'Romans in the countryside' texts, do you think Virgil's readers would want to live and promote this kind of lifestyle?

Further Information and Reading

The Cambridge Latin Course Book V Stage 35 on Roman Country Villas contains a detailed discussion in English. A digital version of this section can be found [here](#).

The Cambridge Latin Course Book V Stage 39 provides a short introduction to Roman poets, including the patronage of Maecenas. A digital version of this section can be found [here](#).

Acknowledgement of Resources used:

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