



# CSCP Support Materials for Eduqas GCSE Latin

Component 2: Latin Literature and Sources (Themes)

Theme A: Romans in the Countryside

*Cicero: Traditional values*

For examination in 2024-2026

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.

The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.

The Teacher's Notes contain the follow:

- An **Introduction** to the author and the text, although students will only be asked questions on the content of the source itself.
- **Notes** on the text to assist the teacher.
- **Suggested Questions for Comprehension, Content and Style** to be used with students.
- **Discussion** suggestions and questions for students, and overarching **Themes** which appear across more than one source.
- **Further Information and Reading** for teachers who wish to explore the topic and texts further.
- **Acknowledgements** of works used in preparing these notes.

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

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

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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.

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### 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 Romani nomen auxerunt. 10

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.

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## Notes

- 1 – 2 accusator ... arcessebantur:** if the second part of this sentence is considered first: *si ... fierent*, 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.
- praeesse 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 *praeesse 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*).

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### 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 exsistat 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?

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### 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?

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### 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 other 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?

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### 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.

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### 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>



### **Acknowledgement of Resources used:**

Berry, D.H (2008) *Cicero Defence Speeches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Donkin, E. H (Ed). (1879) *M. Tullii Ciceronis pro Sexto Roscio Amerino oratio*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Accessed [here](#) on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Vasaly, A. (1993). *Representations: images of the world in Ciceronian oratory*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wood, N. (1988). *Cicero's social and political thought*. Berkeley: University of California Press.