



CSCP Support Materials for Eduqas GCSE Latin

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



Source Images

For examination in 2024-2026

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Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge,
184 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 8PQ, UK

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Acknowledgement

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

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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](#)

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](#).