

GCSE Latin

Component 2: Literature
Monday 12th September

Component 2: Literature

- Theme: Romans in the countryside
- 30% of overall GCSE mark
- All seen material ahead of exam
- Latin from real Romans!
- Comprehension questions in the exam based upon the texts



Country villas

Many wealthy Romans, owned both a town house in Rome and at least one villa in the country. There they could escape from the noise and heat of the city, especially during the unhealthy months of late summer, and relax from the pressures of private business and public duties.

Country villas

Some of these country houses were fairly close to Rome; their owners could get a day's work done in the city and then travel out to their villa before nightfall. The villas were generally either on the coast, like Pliny's villa at Laurentum, or on the hills around Rome, for example at Tibur, where the Emperor Hadrian owned the most spectacular mansion of all, surrounded by specially constructed imitations of buildings that had impressed him on his travels.

An emperor's villa

Hadrian's villa near Tibur, 19 miles from Rome: a vast, sprawling complex covering 300 acres (120 hectares). The photograph of the model shows only part of it.



There were two theatres and three bath buildings; huge state rooms contrasted with more homely quarters for the emperor's private use. He loved to enjoy the landscape. A terrace (top, foreground) has views over a valley he called the Vale of Tempe after a famous Greek beauty spot. An outdoor dining-room (below) looks over a canal which may have recalled the Canopus at Alexandria.



Other country villas were further afield. A popular area was Campania; the coastline of the bay of Naples was dotted with the villas of wealthy men, while holiday resorts such as Baiae had a reputation for fast living and immorality.

Country villas naturally varied in design, but they usually contained some or all of the following features: a series of dining and reception rooms for entertaining guests, often with extensive views of the surrounding countryside; a set of baths, heated by hypocausts, containing the full range of apodyterium, tepidarium, caldarium and frigidarium; long colonnades where the owner and his friends might walk, or even ride, sheltered from the rain or from the direct heat of the sun; and extensive parkland, farmland or gardens, preferably with plenty of shade and running water. In a corner of the estate there might be a small shrine, dedicated to the protecting gods.

Pliny the Younger

Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus, best known as Pliny the Younger, was a successful Roman lawyer prosecuting corruption, government official (including in the treasury), and author of famous letters that paint an important picture of the Roman world around his lifetime.



Pliny's letters include descriptions of two of his villas. Although detailed, the descriptions are not always clear, and many scholars have tried to reconstruct the plans of the villas, without reaching agreement.

Pliny the Younger's villa



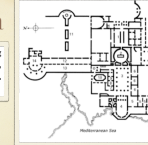
Pliny's villa at Laurentum

Pliny the Younger's villa

Among the villa's special features were the heated swimming pool (10), the big semi-circular recess at the end of the chief dining-room (4), designed to provide the dinner guests with an impressive panorama of the sea, and the covered colonnade (12) leading to Pliny's private suite (14).



Pliny's villa at Laurentum



Pliny's villa at Laurentum

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1 atrium | 8 apodyterium |
| 2 courtyard | 9 caldarium |
| 3 inner courtyard | 10 heated swimming pool |
| 4 dining room | 11 ornamental garden with vine pergola |
| 5 bedroom | 12 covered colonnade |
| 6 slaves' rooms | 13 terrace |
| 7 tepidarium | 14 Pliny's private suite |



A grand country villa, with symmetrical wings and a formal garden in front. A painting in Pompeii.



Country pursuits

What country activities can you find in this picture?

Country pursuits

One of the most popular recreations for a wealthy Roman on his country estate was hunting. Hares, deer or wild boar were tracked down and chased into nets where they could be speared to death. Long ropes, to which brightly coloured feathers were attached, were slung from trees to cut off the animal's retreat and frighten it back towards the nets.