resources for teachers available on the BM website, we have suggested some enquiries into topics such as women, slaves, wall-paintings and mosaics. We have also provided sample activity sheets where students can gather their findings and which can be used straight, adapted or differentiated, by age for example. With a broad audience to cater for, we have had to make these enquiries and sheets general, but the CLC teacher can use the characters of Book I to make the enquiries much more directly related to what the students have encountered already: Which rooms in the house would Felix be allowed to enter? Which of the pocula on display do you think he would most have enjoyed looking at? In the cubiculum, find objects Melissa might have used when attending to Metella. If Metella and Melissa were not the only female slaves in Caecilius’s household, what evidence can you find of who the others might have been and what they did?

It is true that exhibitions are harder to use than permanent galleries and that their quality as ‘special’ events often makes it tempting to let them speak for themselves, especially when the subject matter is relatively familiar. Succumbing to this temptation is in my view a missed opportunity. Teachers are in the very special position of being able to direct young people’s attention, to encourage them to consider things they might otherwise miss, to develop their thinking and their understanding through challenges and new experiences. This exhibition offers a great chance to exercise that privilege.

The following article discusses approaches which teachers might use before, during and after their visit to the exhibition. The approaches were stimulated by a discussion held at the British Museum between Richard Woff, Anna Karsten, Gill Mead, David Moyes and James Watson, whom the author would like to thank for their contributions. The author has grouped these ideas into four approaches:

- **Kinaesthetic and empathetic learning:** being ‘inside’ the Roman house
- **Dealing with sensitive issues – pupil responses to the casts of the victims of Vesuvius.**
- An enquiry-driven approach to exploring the role of women in the Roman world – women’s representation in the CLC and in the exhibition.
- Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE): managing pupils’ responses to sexual imagery in the exhibition.

### Kinaesthetic and empathetic learning: being ‘inside’ the Roman House

The exhibition is going to be about the best way anyone is going to be able to get the idea of the use of space in a Roman house today. When one goes to Pompeii itself, most of the buildings are in a ruined state and the few which are accessible are pretty much denuded of their original wall paintings and the objects which were found within them. Instead visitors have to try to gather together in their minds what it was like to enter a Roman house by visiting several sites: The House of the Dancing Faun plus the House of the Vettii (sadly under restoration for the foreseeable future) plus the House of

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2 See Beard (2008), p.150

3 Friedman, A.J. (1996) Differentiating science-technology centers from other leisure-time enterprises, in *Association of Science-Technology Centers Newsletter*, January/February
The Venus in a Snail shell plus the House of Lestiacus Tiburtinus / Octavius Quartio added together go some way towards getting a feeling of the succession of rooms, the decorative features and the garden spaces and planting schemes. And then a visit to the National Archaeological Museum in Naples restocks the rooms in the visitor’s mind with wall paintings, statuary and household items both decorative and utilitarian. That’s a lot to hold in the head!

Several Classical Civilisation examinations feature the domestic buildings of Pompeii and Herculaneum (AQA, GCSE CIV2D, CIV3D; AS CIV2; OCR, AS CCG6). At the lower GCSE level the examination specifications include details of the layout of the rooms of particular named houses, and the particular decorative features which are known to have been placed there. At AS level they also expect students to be aware of other aspects, such as the social function of the house, the use of space, and the way in which the Romans showed their status through decoration and display.

The exhibition will go some way to helping to fulfil many of the obligations set by these specifications. Although it will not have walls and ceilings, the ‘house’ will be laid out in such a way that it will reflect the appearance of the interior of the ‘typical’ Pompeian domus, and because the decorations, fixtures and fittings will all be placed in them in appropriate places, it will be able to give a semblance of the house even if it does not replicate one precisely.

Students will be able to look down through the atrium towards the garden along the axis of the ‘house’. The cubiculum will be to the side; an impluvium in the middle, flanked by herms and a marble table. The lararium will be represented. Doors will open into the ‘garden’ through an aperture which represents the tablinum. A real garden triclinium will probably be one of the most evocative parts of the exhibition, consisting of a whole painted room and ceiling of foliage and flowers. The two dogs ‘n’ stags statues from Herculaneum will flank the garden room. A small room to the side will display erotic art. Another room will represent the kitchen. What will make all of this even better – and it sounds pretty good as it is – will be the abundance of artefacts and their placement: the glitter of candelabra and silverware to show off status; the statuary and wall paintings of the ancestors in the semi-public space of the atrium; the intimate art in the bedroom and the secret chamber; personal items in the bedroom; kitchen equipment in the larder – including items of carbonised food. This will be an occasion to see not just the layout of the rooms, but an approximation, a reflection of being in a house which the owners have just left – a real ‘through the keyhole’ moment. And the curious (to us) arrangement of public and private space can easily be appreciated: the threshold into the ultimately private space of the garden where only the most special would be invited to recline on a summer’s evening in the garden triclinium, the bedrooms leading off the atrium – as if when the door are closed at the end of the day, the whole house is closed up and the atrium is reconfigured from a semi-public to an entirely private space. We hope that the experience of being inside a ‘real’ Pompeian house will serve to stimulate the students’ understanding of the social and cultural functions of the house as well as its form and decorative features.

Dealing with sensitive issues - pupil responses to the casts of the victims of Vesuvius

The exhibition will present several plaster and resin casts of bodies from Pompeii. How might teachers deal with the reactions when the pupils see the human and animals casts? The cast of a dead dog from Pompeii, one of the most famous exhibits to be in the exhibition, is striking. The plaster cast has captured the animal in its final death throes as it struggles to survive, chained up in the yard of some Pompeian house. It often seems to be the casts of dead animals rather than humans which are more traumatising for younger pupils. The dead dog of Pompeii is placed centre stage in the exhibition.

How have pupils responded in the past to these casts? In The School Casts Project, a competition organised by the University of Bristol in 2007 as part of a major conference on Pompeii, school pupils sent in personal responses to the posting of images of five human casts. Hales (2007) asked if teachers should encourage sentimental connection with the casts of the Pompeian dead, or look on them ‘as objective, scientific observers.’ She went on:

‘Their work not only showcased a widespread fascination with the minutiae of Pompeian life and with the eruption, demonstrating students’ abilities to articulate both their relationship with the victims, but also their strong feelings about the ethics of the display of the plaster casts and of the future of Pompeii.’ (Hales, 2007, p. 10).

The teacher’s function, then, might be seen as twofold: to teach about the process of creating the casts as archaeological artefacts, and also to encourage pupils to consider the wider ethical dimensions of creating, keeping and displaying them. But the scientific approaches alone may suppress the emotional responses which the pupils might rightly have. For example, a casual glance at the dog reveals the studded collar around its neck to be especially prominent: it was human agency which prevented this dog from being able to escape. Thus the story of its last moments struggling for survival is horribly easy to imagine. Should we try to brush this aside in favour of a simple tale of how to make a plaster cast?

One problem may be that pupils see the dog as a pet, first and foremost. And this impression is hardly adjusted in the CLC. Cerberus, the loveable dog, is encountered right at the start of the book (pp. 3-6), tail a-wagging, given a place in the heart of the familia, and awarded a whole, mildly humorous story to himself (‘Cerberus’ p. 6) in those few formative days of learning Latin. The pleasant, playful image sticks firmly in the mind, despite one or two of the Model Sentences showing him more like a guard dog outside Caecilius’ villa. In Stage 12 he remains steadfast and loyal right through to the bitter end: Cerberus, the servus fidelis par excellence, stands guard over the dying Caecilius (p. 168) and goes with him to the Underworld to meet, no doubt, his namesake on the banks of the River Styx. He is even present on the last page of the narrative in line-drawing form, looking ever-alert and certainly not like the
photograph of the cast of the writhing, real dog illustrated on the opposite page (p. 169), the one presented in the exhibition. Cerberus seems to be a noble and faithful dog, coming in a line of noble and faithful dogs like Argos, Gelert or Greyfriars Bobby. The exhibited Pompeian dog, however, did not have the same final choice as the fictional Cerberus. The Pompeian dog was chained up and left to die. Thus the poignancy of his fate leaves the visitor to the exhibition in no doubt that the survival of the artefacts within is all owed to calamity on a massive scale: the smallness of the death of a dog can come to encapsulate the horror of the destruction of a whole city and its people.

Perhaps it might be good to get pupils to examine the rather less cosy image of the dog as represented in the exhibition. There are other dogs on display too: the well-known mosaic of the guard dog – yes, you see, chained, like the one in the cast – is a much more alive one, to be sure; and there are the two statues of stags being savaged by three hunting dogs, from the House of the Stags in Herculaneum. These statues, placed prominently in the garden, are again rather disturbing – there is no hiding from the violence of the attack, which echoes the savaging of Actaeon by his own dogs at the command of Diana (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3, 228-241). All of these images – mosaic, cast, and statue - can stimulate in the mind of the pupil a more rounded image of the dog in the Roman world. Essentially, they seem to be guard dogs and hunting dogs. They are not bred for cuddles or laps; they are not destined to go for early-evening ‘walkies’ or to curl up at the bottom of the bed. They are not pets in the modern sense of the word. These are working dogs, snarling things, like the one in the cast – is a useful one to deal with before the visit: it is human rather than animal, and therefore seems to steer away from the sense of pity felt by children towards small animals; it is a single person (which somehow feels less traumatising than if he were in a group); and because it actually looks like he might get up and walk off, none the worse for the event, when all the smoke has cleared, as it were. In the same way, we might remember, in CLC Stage 12, the character Julius falls to the ground, unconscious, is carried to the safety of the temple of Isis by the slave Clemens, until he recovers and (it is assumed) is able to escape. Other casts in the exhibition are clearly of the dead, lying on the ground or contorted in their last agonies, or with the skeletons and teeth clearly visible. But the muleteer does not seem like them. Thus he is a good one to ‘practise with’ beforehand and deal with the sorts of questions that will inevitably arise. Then, when pupils come face to face with the other casts, they will have had an opportunity of discussing how they might respond to them and choose the contemplative and / or scientific approach which suits them – and allow their friends to do the same.

Taking the muleteer, then, as the example to work with, what might the teacher do? One is to take a rather dispassionate, scientific approach and explore the ways in which the casts were made. By emphasising the mechanics of Fiorelli’s plaster-casting technique, the teacher deflects worries about the fact that the cavities into which the plaster, and later, resin was poured contained human bits and pieces: it becomes a discussion about how to recreate the moulds of bodies not about the bodies themselves. Indeed, it is quite likely that there are no human remains at all in the cavities in which the plaster was originally poured, as the bodies perished so long ago; in addition, the casts here may well be casts of the original casts themselves – we are simply looking at a plaster cast and not anything to do with an actual human being at all (see Mary Beard elsewhere in this Journal). This is probably the easiest way to deal with the issue for younger pupils. For younger pupils, especially those studying the CLC Book 1, they will have no doubt already looked at the end of Stage 12, where, in the background material, there are plenty of images of the dead: they know how the people of Pompeii lost their lives, and they want to explore more. They have already studied the Egyptians in Key Stage 2 History and are well aware of what’s inside the mummy case. So, for many younger pupils, seeing a plaster cast of long-dead Pompeian is just another photo-opportunity and one has to ask the question if the teacher need to be anxious at all.

With older pupils, the situation deserves greater thought. It is clear that with teenage pupils a proper discussion surrounding the ethics of making the plaster casts in the first place and even of putting them on display is worth having. It would perhaps be very worthwhile discussing with the Religious Education teacher how one...
might approach this topic. The key concepts are, perhaps, those of values and dignity and it is worthwhile thinking carefully about teaching pupils the vocabulary which they might need to use to express what can be for them difficult or unfamiliar concepts. That is why it is important to carry out such a reflective activity in the classroom rather than leave it to the moment in the exhibition itself when the pupils first see the casts. In the classroom there is a much greater opportunity to discuss one of the casts rationally, to model appropriate vocabulary and terminology, and allow the pupils to learn how to value their own and each other’s personal responses, or to prime them with ethical considerations if none are apparent.

One approach which could be used in the classroom is to look at how others have represented the ‘story behind’ the casts. A piece of archaeological journalism by Antonio Maiuri (1961) provides the catalyst for pupils to engage in critical reflection on what might have happened at the time of the eruption, from the evidence presented by the casts. He reported:

When the band [of thirteen fugitives] decided to flee, first [in this family group] came a servant, carrying over his shoulder a bag hastily filled with provisions. We found him where he fell, near the wall of a vegetable garden…. Next, hand in hand, came the farmer’s two little boys of about four and five… Finally came the children’s parents, the farmer supporting his trembling wife… Behind the farmer’s family came a young farm couple with their daughter… In the case of the daughter, the stream of plaster failed us. We have only the vague outline of what seems to be a slender, undernourished child…. Last came the merchant’s family—two young boys in their teens, followed by their mother and a younger sister… The final figure in that pageant of death was the merchant, to me the most tragic of the group. He was not lying down but still sitting upright with his right arm pressed against a mound of earth and his back bent in a supreme effort to rise. (Maiuri, 1961)

This slightly overwrought description is, of course, designed for a different audience from our pupils. His audience is probably adult, has little or no prior knowledge of the Roman world, and is looking at a photograph in The National Geographic magazine rather than standing before the casts either in situ or in an exhibition. A worthwhile activity before seeing the Garden of the Fugitives itself, or looking at a picture of the casts, might be to read this passage and ask the pupils ‘How does Maiuri know?’ Such a question could lead to some very valuable discussion about the extent to which we exercise discretion in the nature and scale of the inferences we make, and why we might make them. What is the purpose of Maiuri’s description: entertainment, information, persuasion? What vocabulary does he use to achieve any or all of these purposes? What effect, for example, does the word ‘pageant’ have on the reader? Is it a suitable one for describing this scene?

So much for getting pupils to use their eyes and making judgements about what is likely to have happened, using the framework of a piece of (pretty much) fiction as a starting point. But a made-up story can still be useful. On a school trip to Pompeii itself when pupils ‘meet’ for the first time a plaster Pompeian there can be an opportunity to move them beyond the macabre fascination to something which is altogether more reflective. There are several casts dotted around the site, of course, especially in the sets of baths and in the horreum, but the greatest and most affecting cluster is in the so-called ‘Garden of the Fugitives’ (now replanted as a vineyard) in the south side of the city, behind the theatre. The case study below / right / left suggests a way in which a teacher encourages a more sensitive approach to the casts there.

The casts in the Garden of the Fugitives — case study

In the case of a school visit to a place like the Garden of the Fugitives, one has to tell a suitable story. I do not want the pupils rushing up to the glass case at the end of the vineyard and gawp at the casts of the bodies (and there are about a dozen of them) jostling along with all the other tourists, snap a photo, and move on. This has always been for me, and I think also for them too, a time for reflection and contemplation. Accordingly, I take them to the location, but without telling them what they are going to see. As they enter the vineyard, they may notice the other tourists at the end of the enclosed space. Resist the temptation to tell the pupils what they are looking at, for now, and take them into the middle, well away from the glass case stuck against the far wall, to the small outdoor dining area in the middle — little more than a heap of stones.

There they sit and I tell them a story: it’s made-up, but plausible. The story could be that a group of Pompeians was making their final escape from the city, aiming for the sea where, perhaps, they hoped to get a boat to take them away. In the dark and in the panic, they took a turn into this vineyard. They follow their senses, keeping the flames from Vesuvius behind them (I point out Vesuvius from the vineyard today), maybe carrying lamps and with cushions on their heads, as Pliny the Younger mentions. The vineyard is a mistake. They run down the slope, expecting there to be a way out to safety, but it leads to a wall — the perimeter wall of the vineyard. They cannot get out — and this is the particularly poignant bit — this wall is the last wall before the outside of the city. Overcome by fumes, smoke and fear, they collapse, huddled together.

Story over, a moment of silence. Then I tell the pupils to go over to have a look in twos or threes and come back silently. It is surprising how seriously pupils of all ages treat the occasion — moving carefully between the camera-clicking hordes in front of the glass case.

This case study narrative is designed to support the way in which our pupils look and respond to the casts themselves and brings in the physical features which pupils can see around themselves: the vineyard, the gateway, the wall and Mount Vesuvius itself. The story told in situ helps to frame and bring out the complexity of learning about what it may have been like to have been present at the eruption. This idea of creating a story to make the space ‘place’ is a common approach in extra-mural education. As Henderson says,

“We are living and learning in profound ways — in primary and primal ways — when we are in experiences that involve life story making and
life story learning. In heritage travel-based expeditions the educator designs curriculum and individual experiences so that we may each become ‘storiers’ who are learning about ourselves in community and with others in time. (Henderson, 2010, p. 83)

This fits well with the approach of the case study, which is a quiet and contemplative one. It affords dignity to the dead or the place of death, and encourages the pupils to see themselves as part of the story-making itself.

Such an approach is perfectly accomplishable in Pompeii itself. But it is not any more difficult to achieve in the confines of the exhibition either. Pupils can just as easily stand and contemplate the casts, and maybe try to create their own story around them, if they wish. Indeed, the whole story from their attempts to escape, through to their discovery, even through to their very exhibiting, provides a rich source of narrative possibilities, as the Bristol project mentioned above suggests. What could these casts tell us? What have they ‘seen’? It is important that pupils are given thinking time and not just viewing time. There will be some space in the exhibition for pupils to stand and reflect if they wish.

There is another ‘take’ on the theme of the ‘transience of life’ in the exhibition – the famous triclinium mosaic of the skeleton. This mosaic is a wry Roman joke at the expense of the living – spotting Roman jokes all around in the exhibition is a possibly fruitful approach with perhaps older pupils. ‘One day’, says the skeleton, as it were, carefully pouring out the last draughts to the dinner guests, ‘one day you’ll be like me: so, enjoy yourselves while you can!’ There are clear echoes of Trimalchio’s skeleton cup in Petronius’ Satyricon (and in Fellini’s film of the same name and clearly visible in the Dinner at Trimalchio’s section – if you are strong enough to watch it). But then, looking at the skeleton mosaic is not the same as looking at a cast of a long dead Pompeian. Perhaps a taste of the macabre is not problematic at all, and considering one’s own mortality is as easy to accept for the pupils as it was for the Romans. See the skeleton, see the casts – it’s the same idea? There is nothing inherently wrong with just letting the pupils take their photographs, buy their postcards and move on. But that would be to miss out on several ways of looking at the casts, and if the exhibition is to have any learning potential at all, it is for this very purpose: to get pupils thinking about different questions, even if they do not have all the answers.

Some lines of enquiry, worth pursuing in the classroom or in the exhibition, might be:

- How were the casts originally made?
- Should we be concerned about the display of human remains in an exhibition? Even if we cannot see them?
- Does it matter that the casts might not contain any human remains at all, because they are casts of casts?
- Do the casts have any archaeological value? If so, have advances in techniques (eg, the use of resin) made them more useful for archaeologists?
- How much do the casts contribute to the way modern visitors ‘view’ the site of Pompeii?

Another approach might be to develop pupils’ literacy when considering the writing about the ‘stories’ behind the casts:

- When we read Maiuri’s account, what can we tell is (1) factual, (2) inferred or (3) invented about his description of the last moments of the casts of the Pompeians in the Garden of the Fugitives?
- How emotionally charged is Maiuri’s writing about the casts?
- How might an account of the casts of the Pompeians in the Garden of the Fugitives differ if it was written for adults or children? As a report or as a fictionalised story? And so on. A way to achieve this – without it becoming too abstract – would be to get different groups of pupils in a class to write about the casts in different genres or from different viewpoints, and then to get them to compare with each other – either as a read-around the class or as part of a display – what they have produced.

Much of the above sort of discussion takes place before or after the exhibition visit in the classroom. But what about being in the exhibition itself? The curator of the exhibition is more mindful of the potential effects of seeing the physical casts on the minds of younger pupils. He also does not want the casts to be the final objects to be seen in the exhibition, and leave visitors with a potentially unpleasant or at least downbeat impression. Thus, the exhibition ends not with the casts of the dead, but the portrait busts of the ‘living’. Indeed, the whole exhibition is much more about the life rather than the death of the two cities of Vesuvius. The exhibition space is designed to suggest a recreation a living Pompeian house. The other exhibits are all taken from daily life: the food (it is rumoured that the loaf of bread is going to be there), the bowls, platters and plates, the cooking equipment, the beds, furniture, writing tablets, pictures, ornaments, garden and wall paintings are all about life. Even a certain Pompeian banker is going to make an appearance. Is it likely, then, that the more lasting impression on the pupils will be the living rather than the dead?

An enquiry-driven approach to exploring the role of women in the Roman world — women’s representation in the CLC and in the exhibition

The fate of [Caecilius in the CLC] is made visible; that of his wife and his dog, invisible. The underlying message here, that the man is more important, will not be missed by your students. (Garrett, 2000).

Garrett’s comment is an interesting starting point to start considering gender roles in ancient Rome. In the UK 4th Edition of Book 1 of the CLC, Metella is depicted sitting calmly in the atrium, arms folded; in the US 4th Edition, she is altogether more active: her weaving equipment is prominent on the table before her and she is directing a slave in the next room to perform some kind of task (see Figs. 1 and 2).
especially impressive either in quantity or in presentation. To assess how sympathetically-drawn the characters of Melissa, Rufilla or Poppaea are is an interesting activity to carry out for teachers and pupils alike. Nevertheless, it is not all one-sided: Garrett does go on to allow some credit where she feels it is due:

I must admit that the character of Euphrosyne, the Greek philosopher in Unit 3, is one of the most appealing female characters in all of Latin textbook literature... But she doesn’t make up for the grave imbalance in the rest of the course. (Garrett, 2000).

The portrayal of the character of Euphrosyne is much more robust, and she certainly exhibits many more positive characteristics than any of the women in the rest of the CLC certainly up to that point. In very many cases, however, pupils never get to the stages in Book 4 where Euphrosyne makes her first appearance. Therefore, in the early stages of learning Latin, pupils are surrounded by fairly bland or even downright negatively stereotypical representations of Roman women. In Book 1 alone there is the apparently inactive Metella, who does little apart from sitting in various parts of the house, or who praises the male cook for his excellent cooking, or who takes the artist to the dining room, or who calls the friend to her husband’s dinner event. She is upstaged by the arrival of the slave girl Melissa (bought on a whim by Caecilius at the slave market in Stage 3). She is spotted (from behind – at least that’s what our pupils think) in the upper seats at the amphitheatre in Stage 8 having a rare outing from the house with her female companions. She goes shopping for her son’s toga virilis (Stage 9). Finally she goes missing, presumed dead, at the end of Book 1. Before we know her fate for sure, she is scorned by the politician Holconius (ego nihil de Metella sua, nihil arna.), thus revealing everything suspected about politicians in general and this one in particular. Worse it reinforces the pupils’ potential prejudices about her from her relative invisibility throughout Book 1. But at least her husband plunges back into the destruction of his own house to find her in the last moments – a fond and final farewell (frustra) to a phantom, with the Virgilian echoes of Aeneas and Creusa.

It could be said that the character of Metella represents exactly what a woman of her social status would be expected to do in her daily life: she stayed at home and looked after the familia. She gained her high social status from being married to her husband and was not expected to do any physical work – maybe not even spin (US editions, take note). Teachers must be careful, however, that they do not allow their pupils to think that Metella’s experience represents that of all women in Roman society. The situation can be further problematised when pupils take in the character of Melissa, the slave girl. There is something slightly sinister about the narrative in the story ‘venalicius’ (Book 1, p. 31): Caecilius is given a drink and buys Melissa on impulse; she ‘pleases’ the whole family, except for his wife Metella. Melissa’s sexual allure seems to be a key component of her character here – and the fact that the illustration for ‘venalicius’ in the US edition cuts her out suggests that the portrayal of her was discomforting. (see Figs. 3 and 4). Melissa’s further appearances in the stories themselves are not much different: she appears weak, victimised and generally a passive participant in a world dominated by strong and powerful men. In ‘Metella et Melissa’ (Book 1, p. 91) Melissa is distraught at the effect she has had on the other slaves: Grumio’s got his knives out for her and Clemens has given her the brush-off. Metella wipes away her tears and reassures her she has qualities of her own: she is a really good hairdresser. Later they both go shopping for Quintus’s coming of age ceremony (Stage 9, pp. 115 and 120) and Melissa (our pupils think) provides the entertainment at his all-male party, where she sings sweetly. So far Melissa’s role seems to conform to a gender stereotype based around sensitivity, sexuality and shopping and it is easy to overlook Syphax’ earlier complimentary comments (Stage 3) that Melissa is clever and is learning the Latin language, just like the pupils themselves. He is, after all, still trying to sell her as a commodity.

**Figure 1** - Metella sits [CLC UK edition]

**Figure 2** - Metella sits, spins and gives orders [CLC US edition]
Nevertheless the CLC’s seeming over-emphasis on the subordination of the roles of Metella and Melissa can be used in its own right as a learning opportunity. Churchill makes the point:

[In this exhibition the teacher needs well-prepared and alert to the artefacts which exhibit the particular features with which they want the pupils to engage, and draw them to the attention of the pupils explicitly. As the exhibition is going to be set out to represent the layout of a Roman domus, arranged with atrium, cubiculum, hortus, culina and everything, pupils who have studied the Roman house as part of a Latin or Classical Civilisation course might be considerably more familiar with the way in which a Roman house is laid out and what is on show than ordinary members of the public. For the pupils, the presence of the impluvium / compluvium will not be a surprise; nor will the wall paintings, mosaics, styli, wax tablets, portrait busts and so on – they will have seen them before in their text books and will probably be excellent guides to younger brothers and sisters and even their parents. But if the exhibition is to add real value to their learning, then using the experience of the visit to test out an idea presented in the classroom could be a very effective one. The questions below might be useful ones for pupils to ask themselves and report on as they go through the exhibition.]

Empathy approaches:

- In the house, what sort of ‘work’ did she do? How much time would it take to keep the house looking smart, and who did this? What resources / materials did they use for doing this? What do we use today to help?
• Where did Metella spend the different parts of the day? What might she have been doing in each of these places? Who might have accompanied her while she was doing them?

Evidence-based enquiry questions:
• What is evidence for different types of women in Pompeii and Herculaneum?
• What jobs or activities can you see women doing?

Inferential questions:
• What can we infer from the artefacts about what different types of women there were and what they did?
• What might an artefact suggest about how men saw women? Or how women saw themselves?

Particularly useful artefacts to consider for the evidence-based and inference-based questions are an advertisement for a wine bar, the portrait of Terentius Neo and his wife, the statue of Eumachia, and a boundary marker.

• The advertisement shows a serving girl in an inn with the equivalent of ‘speech-bubbles’ coming out of their mouths. It is perhaps an inn-keeper’s sign. The serving girl is carrying wine to two seated male guests. The girl asks ‘Whose is this?’ One man (referring to the wine) replies ‘bou’ – ‘this one’. The other (referring to the girl) says, ‘mea est’ – ‘she’s mine’.

• In the portrait Neo’s wife is foregrounded; she is wearing no jewellery; her clothes are expensive, however. She’s classy – look at her hair. Maybe she’s got a headband or one of those new-fangled wigs. See the CLC DVD (Book 1, Stage 1) on Roman clothing and make your own opinions about her dress-sense. She’s clutching a wax tablet and a stylus – so she’s not just a reader, but a writer, and maybe a businesswoman in her own right. The husband is clutching a scroll. Perhaps he does the accounts. Or is that a marriage or dowry certificate? Why is he shown as subordinate to her?

• The Eumachia statue is a reminder of the significant role some wealthy women were allowed to play in Pompeian life. Who commissioned it? Made it? Set it up? Do you think it was set up with a great fanfare, or with a quiet ceremony? Was Eumachia alive while it was set up? Is it unusual to have a female statue so prominently displayed in the town?

• There is a boundary marker inscribed by a woman (a freedwoman?) on one side. What does this inscription tell us about women’s legal rights and responsibilities? Is the stone there purely for information, or is it more of an assertion of power and status?

There are more powerful and less powerful women to be found in the exhibition and it would be a worthwhile activity to get pupils to keep an eye out for how they are represented – and to consider whether they had any choice in representing themselves or each other in this way.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE): managing pupils’ responses to sexual imagery in the exhibition

This section ponders the question on how teachers might find ways of managing pupils’ responses to the sexual images in the exhibition. In the exhibition there is a small, ‘secret’ room, where some of the more explicitly sexual pieces are going to be kept. What can teachers do? Perhaps the most shocking are the terracotta lamps with enormous spouts, the tipsy Hercules statue and, perhaps most difficult of all to behold, a notorious statue of the god Pan ravishing a goat. It is this last statue that we will deal with. Most pupils will probably just look at it and then turn away quickly in disgust. It does not seem permissible to look at what they perceive as an act of bestiality. And yet it isn’t such an act. The problem is that they really have to look carefully and they will see that it is not bestial. The ‘man’ is the goat-god Pan, with his hairy legs and beard and horns, and his pleasuring of the goat is therefore perfectly natural. To get the pupils actually to see what is there rather than let them surmise and think the worst would be a brave act for a teacher to attempt to do. But the teacher needs to be forearmed in case questions arise. Indeed it is the very ambiguity of the piece which sets up the reaction which makes it a successful piece of art. You need to check it out, to see what it actually is, before you can start to wonder, and then resolve in your mind what is going on. Then you realise the joke is on you: it’s not what you thought, it’s something else after all! But the first time you look at it you are almost repulsed and can barely look. It’s a sort of ‘What the Butler Saw’ for Romans. But what pupil will be strong enough or daring enough to stand and look at it for long before they realise what it is all about?

The erotic art will be on display in a small room, and so it is easily avoidable. But for those who do go in, there is likely to be a crush. The suspicion is that pupils won’t dare to look at what is there all – lest they are found guilty of staring too long at an object that seems to push the boundaries of good taste. But it is the very emotional response which the statue engenders which is a reason for its success as a piece of art. Perhaps this is what is easier to talk about. And let’s not forget that other sensitive topics are routinely and objectively discussed in the classics classroom – through the lens of Greek Tragedy, for example. If the teacher can get the pupil to stand back and examine the emotional response, then the res ipsa becomes subordinate and is a mere vehicle for a broader, more generally-applicable discussion about the power of art.

The Pan statue is but one extreme example. There will also be items of an erotic nature visible throughout the exhibition which will perhaps be slightly easier to deal with. The usual phallic symbols will be scattered throughout the house: apotropaic signs, phallic oil lamps and other tinimbhala of various shapes and sizes will all be there – as they would be in the Pompeian house. They wouldn’t be noticed particularly by the Romans, one assumes – and the pupils might not notice them either, in the same way as they seem to be
accustomed not to comment on the sexualised images around them today. But they might start trying to spot them, and then start 'collecting' them. The teacher needs to be prepared for this, not just to deflect the questions, perhaps, but also to help the pupils make sense of the presence of such objects in a domestic situation. The main features to be concerned about and well worth discussing (although probably in the classroom rather than in the exhibition itself) are:

- The importance of fertility to the household, both in terms of agriculture and also in preserving the family line.

- The different moral values of the Romans towards sexual behaviour and their more open representations of the sexual appetite compared with moderns.

In all, the exhibition will provide an outstanding opportunity to discuss many of the things which are really interesting about the Roman world. It is very much recommended that teachers prepare thoroughly before taking pupils, both with a site visit, if possible, and certainly with preparation in the classroom prior to the visit and some form of activity as a follow-up.

References


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1 An alternative might be the Getty Villa Museum in Malibu, California (what a school trip that would be – for all sorts of reasons!), which recreates the famous Villa of the Papyri from Herculaneum and stocks it with replicas and originals from the Roman world; or perhaps the Villa Kerylos near Menton in the South of France, which recreates a Greek house, again stocked with replicas of statues and even textiles (although the presence of a piano in Greek-style marquetry rather gives the game away!).

2 This passage is also one of those selected for practice in Latin translation at A2 examination level in Ashley Carter (2005) Latin Unseens for A Level, p. 83. London, Duckworth.

3 The BBC DVD is currently unavailable. It is accessible on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bIuz39Y_oZY

4 This image also features as the CLC Stage 8 Initial Stimulus Material (ISM).

5 This appears as one of the specified texts for study in the OCR AS Classical Civilisation examination ‘Roman Thought and Society’

6 In the US editions, the CLC is divided into Units 1-4 which do not quite match the stage / chapter divisions in UK Books 1-5.

7 See Jenny Morris’ article from JCT 1 (2004) for background research into Caecilius and Metella which informed the authors of the CLC; also see Mary Beard’s short documentary article on Metella in the CLC DVD; and the CLC DVD does give a more prominent and positive role to Metella when she ‘appears’ as the narrator in several of the introduction to the story video clips in Book 1.