

## **Classics Department trip to Italy, April 2014**

For the 69 students and accompanying staff on the Italy Trip there was no shortage of sites to study, beginning with a short section of a Claudian aqueduct close to our hotel. Warm sunny weather enabled us all to make the most of the experience.

On our first morning we visited the Vatican Museums and Sistine Chapel, which combined to give a suitably impressive introduction to Rome. After lunch close to St Peter's Square, we followed the river Tiber to the theatre of Marcellus, Roman forum, and finally the Colosseum before returning to the hotel.

On Sunday morning we travelled by coach to Ostia, by the ancient harbour of Rome, which gave pupils their first taste of a preserved Roman town in tranquil surroundings. Later the same day we walked through the bustle of Rome to Trajan's column, the Trevi fountain and the Pantheon.

After completing our taste of Rome we travelled to Sorrento, our base by the Bay of Naples. On the way we visited the remains of Herculaneum, one of the towns buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE which gives a real sense of the people who lived there.

When we visited Mount Vesuvius the following morning the skies were sufficiently clear to see the bay below and the many places devastated by the volcano. Fittingly, we then went to the famous town of Pompeii where students of the Cambridge Latin Course paid homage at the house of Caecilius along with the many other attractions of the town from the amphitheatre to the House of the Mysteries.

To complete our picture of Roman life in 79 CE, on our final full day we visited two luxurious Roman villas at Stabiae and Oplontis. The villa at Stabiae was set on the ancient shoreline and included an infinity pool amongst its attractions. More luxurious still, the Villa Poppaea at Oplontis flaunted the riches one would expect from the family of Nero's wife; the paintings in particular were astonishingly accomplished and vibrant.

Before our return flight from Naples we paid a leisurely visit to the Naples Museum which houses many of the finds from Pompeii and brought our studies to a suitable close.

The pupils were very positive about everything they saw. Thanks go to the staff (Mr Harrop, Mr Paterson, Mr McLean, Ms Gonzalez-Rodriguez, Ms Pottinger, Dr Fearon and Mr Allen) for their hard work and organisation.

*The images below are of Rome (upper two) and Ostia (middle two), followed by Herculaneum and Pompeii (lower two) and finally Stabiae where the elder Pliny died whilst trying to save victims of the volcano*



