

The American Otium of Brookgreen Gardens and Its Classical Roots

To the Romans, *otium* was an ideal lived out in country estates, seaside villas, mythological sculpture and recreational hunting. As Pliny the Younger points out in his letters, *negotium*, by contrast, represented excessive obligations and societal pressures. A Roman's ability to procure *otium* also enhanced his standing in society, albeit with the pressures of ownership. (Gibson & Morello, 2012).

During the early 20th century, many northern industrialists sought to establish their own sense of *otium* in the Southern United States. Anna Hyatt Huntington and Archer Milton Huntington are two members of the industrial class who established a country estate, today known as Brookgreen Gardens, in Pawleys Island, South Carolina in 1930 (Salman, 2018). In this paper, the facets of Brookgreen Gardens, which include a seaside villa, many varieties of fauna and native animals, and an extensive mythological sculpture garden, will be explored and compared and contrasted to the villa of Tiberius at Sperlonga, the villa Oplontis, and other Roman seaside estates. (Friedland, et al., 2015; (Salman, 2018; Tuck, 2024) In addition, the Huntingtons' classical influence and legacy will be discussed. (Salman, 2018). The paper will include a slideshow with photographs taken on site in Italy and South Carolina for use in the classroom.

Works Cited

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- Gibson R.K. and Morello R. *Reading the Letters of Pliny the Younger: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press; 2012.
- Salman, RR. *Brookgreen Gardens: Atalaya*. Arcadia Publishing, 2016.

Tuck, SL. *Vergil at Sperlonga: Roman Epic and Decorating the Emperor's Dining Room*. Video
Conference Recording, Bolchazy-Carducci; 2024.