

# Eduqas Latin GCSE

## Prescribed text for Component 3A: Latin Literature (Narratives)

Tacitus, *Germanicus and Piso*

N. B. The passages in italics are summaries of events to support understanding of the narrative. They are not part of the prescription.

This is the official examination text  
for the Eduqas Latin GCSE (2018-2019)

## Germanicus and Piso (from Tacitus, *Annals* 2 and 3)

*Nero Claudius Germanicus Caesar, born in 15 BC, was the great-nephew of the Emperor Augustus, who saw him as a possible heir, if anything happened to his adopted son and likely heir, Tiberius. Augustus had therefore arranged for Tiberius to adopt Germanicus.*

*Germanicus successfully commanded the Roman forces on the northern frontier and was popular with the legions and the people. Tiberius, however (according to Tacitus), came to hate him as a rival and recalled him to Rome. Being unable to dispose of him openly, Tiberius sent him to the East as commander-in-chief of the Roman forces there, to settle several longstanding problems on the fringes of the empire. He also (allegedly) secretly ordered Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, the governor of Syria, to block all Germanicus' orders and – as many contemporaries believed – to arrange his death.*

*Our extract begins with the arrival of Germanicus and Piso in the East in AD 18.*

### A

at Cn. Piso, quo celerius consilia inciperet, postquam Syriam ac legiones attigit, largitione et ambitu infimos militum iuvabat. cum veteres centuriones, severos tribunos demovisset, locaque eorum clientibus suis attribuisset, desidiam in castris, licentiam in urbibus, lascivientes per agros milites sinebat. nec Plancina, uxor Pisonis, se gerebat ut feminam decebat, sed exercitio equitum intererat, et in Agrippinam, in Germanicum contumelias iaciebat. nota haec Germanico, sed praeverti ad Armenios instantior cura fuit.

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*Germanicus averted a crisis in Armenia by supporting the people's choice of king, and made a peaceful settlement with the Parthians on the Syrian frontier; then, in the following year, he visited Egypt to travel up the Nile to see the ancient sites.*

## B

On his return to Syria, Germanicus learnt that all his orders to the legions and cities had been cancelled or reversed. As a result, he severely reprimanded Piso, who reproached him with equal bitterness and even decided to leave Syria. Soon, however, Germanicus fell ill, so Piso stayed on, waiting to see how the illness progressed. 5

saevam vim morbi augebat persuasio veneni a Pisone accepti; et reperiabantur solo ac parietibus erutae humanorum corporum reliquiae, carmina et devotiones et nomen Germanici plumbeis tabulis insculptum, cineres semusti ac tabo obliti aliaque malefica quibus creditur animas numinibus infernis sacrari. simul missi a Pisone incusabantur quod valetudinis adversae signa exspectarent. haec Germanico haud minus ira quam per metum accepta sunt. componit epistulam qua amicitiam ei renuntiabat. 10

It is widely believed that he also ordered Piso to leave the province. Piso, without waiting any longer, set sail, but he travelled slowly so that he would not have so far to come back if the death of Germanicus left Syria open to him. 15

## C

Germanicus paulisper se credidit convalescere; deinde fessum fiebat corpus. ubi finis aderat, adstantes amicos ita adloquitur: 'erit vobis occasio querendi apud senatum atque invocandi leges. decet amicos non prosequi defunctum ignavo questu, sed quae voluerit meminisse, quae mandaverit exsequi. vindicabitis vos, si me potius quam fortunam meam diligebatis.' amici, dextram morientis amplectentes, iuraverunt se vitam ante quam ultionem amissuros esse. 5

## D

neque multo post mortuus est, ingenti luctu provinciae et circumiacentium populorum. indoluerunt exterae nationes regesque: tanta fuerat illius comitas in socios, mansuetudo in hostes; propter vultum eloquentiamque venerationem omnium adeptus erat. et erant qui illum magno Alexandro ob formam aetatem genus locumque mortis adaequarent; nam affirmaverunt utrumque corpore decoro praeditum, genere insigni ortum, vix triginta annos natum periisse.

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## E

Before being cremated, Germanicus' body was exhibited in the forum at Antioch, where the funeral was going to take place. Whether it showed signs of poisoning was never quite established. People came to different conclusions, depending on whether they had preconceived suspicions and felt sympathy for Germanicus or were more prepared to support Piso.

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As a result of discussions among senior officials in the province, Gnaeus Sentius was chosen to act as governor of Syria. He dispatched to Rome a woman called Martina, who was a notorious poisoner and a close associate of Plancina. This was done at the request of those who had begun drawing up charges as though a trial was already arranged.

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## F

at Agrippina, quamquam defessa luctu et corpore aegro, impatiens tamen erat omnium quae ultionem morarentur. ascendit navem cum cineribus Germanici et liberis, miserantibus omnibus quod femina summa nobilitate pulcherrimoque matrimonio, quae venerationem omnium mereret, tunc ferales reliquias sinu ferret, incerta ultionis.

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Pisonem interim apud Coum insulam nuntius adsequitur periisse Germanicum. quo gavisus caedit victimas, adit templa. non modo Piso ipse gaudio immoderato se gerit, sed etiam magis insolescit Plancina, quae luctum mortua sorore tum primum in laetum cultum mutavit.

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*Piso's supporters urged him, as the legitimate governor of Syria, to return to his province rather than continue to Rome. Piso wrote to Tiberius, claiming that he had been unlawfully expelled and accusing Germanicus of extravagance and arrogance. However, his attempts to re-enter the province by force and to incite the troops in Syria to mutiny proved futile. Following his surrender, he was allowed a safe passage by ship to Rome.*

## G

at Romae, postquam fama Germanici valetudinis percrebuit cunctaque, ut ex longinquo, aucta in deterius adferebantur, dolor, ira, questus erumpebant: ideo nimirum Germanicum in extremas terras relegatum esse, ideo Pisoni permissam provinciam. hos vulgi sermones mors Germanici, ubi nuntiata est, adeo incendit ut, ante edictum magistratum, ante senatus consultum, sumpto iustitio desererentur fora, clauderentur domus. ubique silentium et gemitus. et quamquam insignibus lugentium non abstinebant, altius animis maerebant.

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## H

navigatione hiberni maris nequaquam intermissa Agrippina Brundisio appropinquat. interim adventu eius audito multi amici et plurimi milites qui sub Germanico stipendia fecerant ruerunt ad portum. simulac visa est navis, complentur non solum portus sed etiam moenia ac tecta turba maerentium et rogantium inter se, silentione an voce aliqua egredientem exciperent. navis lente appropinquat, non celeriter, ut solet, sed cunctis ad tristitiam compositis. postquam duobus cum liberis, feralem urnam tenens, egressa e nave defixit oculos, idem fuit omnium gemitus.

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## I

Tiberius had sent two cohorts of the Praetorian Guard, and had ordered the officials of Calabria, Apulia and Campania to pay their last respects to his adoptive son. So, his ashes were borne on the shoulders of tribunes and centurions, preceded by unadorned standards and reversed axes; at each successive town, in proportion to its wealth, the people clothed in black and the gentry in their purple robes burnt garments, spices and other funeral offerings. Even people from far-flung villages came to meet the procession, offering sacrifices and erecting altars to the souls of the dead, and showing their grief by tears and lamentations.

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## J

The consuls, the Senate, and a great part of the population thronged the roadside in scattered groups, weeping as their hearts moved them. This was not done simply to gratify the Emperor: everyone knew that Tiberius could scarcely conceal his delight at the death of Germanicus. He and his mother Livia made no public appearance. Either they considered open mourning beneath their dignity, or they feared that the public would detect insincerity on their faces.

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On the day when Germanicus' remains were interred in the Mausoleum of Augustus there was a desolate silence, broken only by wailing. Soldiers, officials, and people all declared repeatedly that Rome was finished, all hope gone, so readily and openly that you would think they had forgotten about their rulers.

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*After the period of mourning was over, people returned to work, but there remained a widespread feeling that Tiberius had shown insufficient respect to Germanicus, and everyone was eager for vengeance on Piso.*

*Meanwhile Piso and Plancina sailed back to Italy and made their way cheerfully to Rome, where their house, which overlooked the forum, was festively decorated. The banqueting and feasting which followed their return increased the public indignation.*

*The next day Licius Fulcinius Trio asked the consuls for permission to prosecute Piso. Tiberius, aware of the strength of public feeling, referred the whole matter to the senate.*

## K

The entire city was agog to see how loyal the friends of Germanicus would prove themselves, what would be the case for the defence, whether Tiberius would manage to suppress and conceal his feelings. Never had there been such intense public interest, so much secret criticism, such unvoiced suspicion of the Emperor.

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## L

When the Senate met, Tiberius made a speech of carefully phrased impartiality. 'Piso', he said, 'was my father's friend and representative. With the approval of the Senate, I appointed him to assist Germanicus with the government of the East. The question to be settled, with open minds, is whether he embittered the young prince by his disobedience and quarrelsomeness and then rejoiced in his death, or whether he murdered him. If Piso as governor exceeded the bounds of his office, if he failed in obedience to his commander, if he rejoiced in his death – and my sorrow – then I shall bear him hatred and ban him from my house to avenge my personal wrongs, without using the power of an Emperor. But if there is proof of murder – a crime which demands revenge whatever the rank of the victim – then you must give to the children of Germanicus, and to us who are his parents, the satisfaction that is our due.

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There is another matter that you must consider. Did Piso rouse his troops to mutiny and rebellion? Did he try to recover his province by force? Or are these exaggerated charges, invented by the prosecution?

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I weep for my son and ever shall, but I intend to allow the defendant every means of establishing his own innocence, or the unfairness of Germanicus, if such there was. My instructions to you are that you are not to regard accusations as proven simply because my personal sorrow is involved in the case. Drusus' tears, my grief, are wholly irrelevant – as are the slanders people are concocting against us.'

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## M

deinde biduum criminibus obiciendis statuitur utque post intervallum sex dierum reus per triduum defenderetur. tres amici Germanici consimili studio obiecerunt Pisonem, odio Germanici et rerum novarum studio, milites per licentiam et sociorum iniurias corrupisse; postremo ipsum Germanicum devotionibus et veneno occidisse. tum et Pisonem et Plancinam, postquam sacra et immolationes nefandas fecissent, petivisse armis rem publicam.

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## N

defensio in ceteris criminibus trepidavit; nam neque ambitio militum neque iniuria in provinciam, ne contumeliae quidem adversum imperatorem, negari poterant: solum veneni crimen potuit Piso diluere. at simul populi ante curiam voces audiebantur: non temperaturos manibus si Piso sententias patrum evasisset.

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## O

eadem erat Plancinae invidia. atque ipsa, dum Pisoni spes erat absolutionis, sociam se cuiuscumque fortunae futuram esse et, si necesse esset, comitem exitii promittebat: sed paulatim segregari a marito coepit. quod postquam Piso sibi exitiabile esse intellexit, dubitavit an causam diceret amplius. itaque, tamquam defensionem in posterum diem meditaretur, pauca scribit obsignatque et liberto tradit; tum solita curando corpori exsequitur. deinde multam post noctem, egressa cubiculo uxore, claudi ianuam iussit; et prima luce perfosso iugulo, iacente humi gladio, repertus est.

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