



CSCP Support Materials for Eduqas GCSE Latin Component 3A Latin Literature (Narratives)



Tacitus: Boudica For examination in 2022 and 2023 Teacher's Notes

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Front cover image of statue of Boudica near Westminster Pier, London, UK.

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Introduction

Tacitus: his life and works

The Roman author Cornelius Tacitus lived from around AD56- around AD120. He was a politician and orator, who turned his attention to historical writing. His most famous works are the *Agricola* (a biography of his father-in-law Agricola, the famous general and governor of Britain), the *Germania* (a study of the German lands and peoples), the *Histories* (a history of the post-Nero world up to the death of Domitian), and the *Annals* (covering the period of the Julio-Claudian emperors after the death of Augustus). He made use of official documents, read and researched widely and, at the beginning of the *Annals*, declares his intent to write without bias. As well as presenting events, he was concerned with the psychology of the individuals he was describing, and the lessons which could be learned from history.

The text

Our Latin text is from Tacitus *Annals* XIV 29-39 (first half). The Latin (14.30, 14.31, 14.34, 14.35, 14.37 (slightly edited for length), 14.38 (first half)) is unadapted. The English sections tell the remaining parts of the narrative. It is possible that Tacitus was able to draw on an eyewitness for much of his material: his father-in-law Agricola had been present in Suetonius' army.

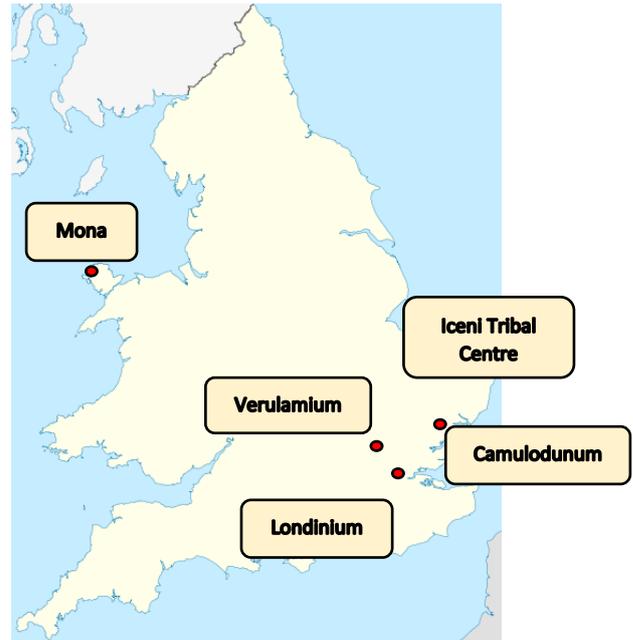
The narrative

In AD43, the Roman armies invaded Britain with the intent to stay. Those who resisted were oppressed and treaties, often punitive, made with those who chose to collaborate. Under the first governors, Celtic ways of life and belief systems which came into conflict with Roman practices were stamped out. The powerful Celtic priestly class, the Druids, wielded a great deal of power in their communities and the Romans were keen to rid their new province of their influence.

In AD 60 or 61, Gaius Suetonius Paulinus had trapped the last of the Druids upon the island of Mona (modern Anglesey). A huge battle took place at the Menai Strait (the water which separates Anglesey from the mainland), and a terrible slaughter of the Celtic people ultimately took place.

Whilst Suetonius was waging this war, far on the other side of the new province more unrest was brewing as a result of the brutal policies of the Romans. Prasutagus, the chieftain of the Iceni tribe (in modern Norfolk), had died. In line with Celtic customs, he left his kingdom to his daughters. As a ruler he had collaborated with the Romans, and he had made the emperor Nero joint heir. The Romans ignored this will, and promptly annexed the Iceni lands. According to our text, the Romans also flogged Prasutagus' widow, Boudica, and raped his daughters.

This was the final indignity for the Iceni who had also been suffering under heavy taxes and had been forced to give up their ancestral weapons. They rose up under the leadership of Boudica, with the neighbouring Trinobantes tribe swiftly joining their ranks. The Trinobantes had also originally collaborated with the Romans but their ancestral land had been confiscated to create the new Roman colony (settlement for veteran soldiers) at Camulodunum (modern Colchester) with its hated Temple to the Divine Claudius. Camulodunum became their first target, being unwalled and lacking defence due to the Roman legions being absent. The inhabitants were butchered, and the colony torched. Part of the Ninth Legion hurried from where they were stationed at Lindum (Lincoln) to aid the veterans, but they were too late and were themselves destroyed by the Celtic forces.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:England_and_Wales.svg

Boudica then led her troops towards other towns which had been established as Roman centres. Hearing of this, Suetonius marched his forces back from Mona to Londinium (London) but he realised he would be unable to defend the settlement. He abandoned the town, and then also Verulamium (St Albans) to their fates. The sources suggest that 70,000 people died in the destruction of the three towns.

Eventually Suetonius managed to engage the Celtic forces in a pitched battle. This played to the Roman strategic strengths, and, according to Tacitus, their superior tactical deployment led to their victory. The exact location of this battle is unknown, but the Celtic army was overwhelmed, with the Romans even slaughtering the civilians who accompanied them. Boudica herself died following the defeat, perhaps, as Tacitus says, by taking poison to avoid capture and humiliation.

The initial reprisals against the Britons were brutal and swift as Suetonius wished to crush any further thoughts of rebellion. Other Romans were quick to recognise that this approach would bring further unrest, rather than stability, and Roman policy in Britain became less aggressive over the subsequent years.

Themes

Tacitus is interested in the **characterisation of Suetonius and Boudica** as well as the depiction of the **Celts** and the **Romans** as a whole. He shows us the **violence** done by both sides, as well as showing **sympathy** for the downtrodden. There is also a contrast drawn between the **disorder** of the Celts and the **discipline** of the Roman legions.

Further reading

Grant, M. *The Annals of Imperial Rome (translation of Tacitus)* (Penguin 2003)

Scullard, H.H. *Roman Britain: outpost of the empire* (Thames and Hudson 1999)

Woodcock, E.C. *Tacitus, Annals XIV* (Bloomsbury 1998)

Reading the Text

The key aims are:

- understanding the meaning of the Latin
- developing literary appreciation

It is often useful to adopt the following approach when introducing students to original literature:

- Read the Latin aloud to emphasise phrasing and stress word groups
- Break up more complex sentences into constituent parts for comprehension
- Focus on comprehension of the text and understanding the content through questioning and using the vocabulary
- Look closely at how the Latin is expressed and the ways in which the literary devices enhance the meaning.
- Although a sample translation is provided in the course resources, teachers might want to encourage their students to make their own version after various options have been discussed and evaluated. The first step is a literal translation, then something more polished in natural English that is as close to the structure and vocabulary of the original Latin as possible. Students will soon see that a degree of paraphrase may be required when the Latin does not readily translate into correct and idiomatic English.

About the Notes

The prescribed text is broken up into short sections and the notes on each passage are followed by a *Discussion* and *Questions*. The notes focus both on language and content, but also include some comment on style and literary effects. The *Discussion* and *Questions* focus mostly on literary appreciation and interpretation.

Rhetorical and technical terms are used throughout the notes. Some of these may be unfamiliar to teachers new to teaching Latin literature; usually a definition is supplied when the term is first used.

The notes are designed to provide for the needs of a wide spectrum of teachers, from those with limited knowledge of Latin and who are perhaps entirely new to reading Latin literature, to teachers experienced in both language and literature. It is hoped that all will find something of use and interest. Some of the information contained in the notes is for general interest and to satisfy the curiosity of students and teachers, and there is no expectation that all these notes need to be learned by students. The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.

Section A

The Romans make their attack on the last Druid stronghold

Notes and Discussion

Gaius **Suetonius** Paulinus had been appointed the Roman governor of Britain in AD58. He was keen to subdue the rebellious tribes in the southern part of the province, and in particular the tribes in what is now Wales. Part of this plan was to conquer the Druids once and for all. The Druids were the priest-class of the Celts and wielded a great deal of influence. They were not only religious leaders but, according to Caesar at least, also had control of the laws and education. Most of what we know about the Druids, however, has been filtered through Greek and Roman authors who were hostile towards them.

This passage describes the events of AD60 or 61, when **Suetonius** led an attack on **Mona** (Anglesey) where the last of the Druids were preparing to make their final stand. This island was particularly sacred to the British people. The armies are facing each other across the **short but dangerous** Menai Strait which separates Mona from the mainland. It is a tidal stretch of water, swirling with treacherous currents. At its narrowest point, it is only 400m wide.

Questions

1. Why might Mona be a good choice as a location for the Druids to make a stand against the Romans?

Section B

The Druids gather for battle

In this passage, Tacitus describes the Druids and their supporters lined up against the Roman army and the effect they have on the Roman troops.

Notes

Teachers should not feel that they need to pass on to their students all the information from these notes; they should choose whatever they think is appropriate. The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.

- 1** **stabat**: the verb ('was standing') has been placed dramatically at the start of the sentence. This helps the reader to imagine the scene on the shore slowly coming into the Romans' view.
diversa acies, densa armis: these words are arranged in the order adjective-noun-adjective-noun, with the repetition of 'd' and 'a', to make them stand out, emphasising how closely packed the lines are.
- 2-3** **in modum Furiarum**: the Furies were terrifying goddesses of vengeance who lived in the Underworld, often shown in funeral garb and brandishing torches (just like the women here). By comparing the Celtic women to these creatures, Tacitus is emphasising their barbaric nature and the level of fear they inspired in the Romans.
- 3-7** The translation is **circum Druidae** (around [them] the Druids), **fundentes** (pouring out) **preces diras** (fearful prayers) **manibus** (with their hands) **sublatis** (raised) **ad caelum** (to the sky), **perculere** (frightened) **militem** (the soldiers) **novitate aspectus** (by the weirdness of the sight) **ut** (so that) **praeberent** (they offered) **immobile corpus** (their motionless bodies) **vulneribus** (to wounds) **quasi** (as though) **haerentibus membris** (their limbs [were] stuck together)
preces diras...fundentes: another sinister description, with the vivid use of **fundentes** suggesting a flood of malevolence. The word **diras** suggests that these may be curses.
ut quasi haerentibus membris: a vivid simile to show exactly how fearful the Romans were.
- 9** **pavescerent, inferunt**: these two verbs are placed next to each other (*juxtaposition*) to show how swiftly the Romans, under the exhortation of their commanders, laid aside their fear and headed into battle.
- 9-10** **inferunt...sternunt...involvunt**: the speed and discipline of the Romans' action is reflected in this short list of three (*tricolon*), linked with conjunctions (*polysyndeton*).
praesidium posthac: the harsh (*plosive*) alliteration suggests the determination of the Roman response.

- 11 excisique luci saevis superstitionibus sacri:** the Druids did not conduct their religious practices in the same manner as the Romans, instead worshipping in natural settings. This was yet another sign of their barbarity to the Romans. The word order here mimics the meaning: **luci...sacri** enclose the **saevis superstitionibus**. The repeated hissing 's' (*sibilance*) sounds malevolent and disapproving.
- 11-13** The translation is **nam** (for)**habebant** (they considered it) **fas** (right) **adolere aras** (to sprinkle their altars) **cruore captivo** (with the blood of a captive) **et** (and) **consulere deos** (to consult the gods) **hominum fibris** (by [means of] the entrails of men)
cruore captivo adolere aras: the image is of human blood being sprinkled onto flames, causing the altars to smoke. The alliteration draws attention to the phrase.
consulere deos hominum fibris: a type of divination similar to the reading of animal livers and other organs which was part of Roman religion and carried out by a special priest called a haruspex.
- 13 repentina defectio:** emphasising the suddenness of Boudica's uprising, at least from the Roman point of view.

Discussion

In AD 60 or 61, the Roman governor Gaius Suetonius Paulinus had pinned down the last of the Druids upon the island of Mona (modern Anglesey). This passage briefly describes the battle at the Menai Strait (the water which separates Anglesey from the mainland). What followed was a brutal massacre of the Britons. Suetonius and his forces were not able to subdue the whole of the island at this time, however, as he was called away by the Iceni rebellion. Recent archaeological finds, including the outline of a marching camp, support Roman military presence in the area in the 1st century.

Surviving written accounts of the Druids come from Romans and Greeks who were not sympathetic and made little attempt to understand their practices. Caesar's description in the *Gallic Wars* (VI. 13-16) is the most detailed and explains their role in society.

Mona was one of the places most sacred to the Druids, who worshipped within a sacred landscape which included the groves, as mentioned by Tacitus. Lucan (*Pharsalia* III. 399-452) describes a sacred grove in lurid detail. Human sacrifice is associated with the Druids by other Roman authors, such as Caesar (*Gallic Wars* VI.16) and Strabo (*Geography* IV. 4-5), but the archaeological evidence also seems to support this (although there is some debate amongst experts). [This article](#) summarises some of the evidence in the UK. The preserved remains of [Lindow Man in the British Museum](#) have been suggested as proof of ritualised murder. It is noteworthy that the remains date from around the time when Suetonius would have been marching his army past the area to confront the Druids.

In Tacitus' description, the 'barbarous', uncanny appearance of the Britons is emphasised. With swift leadership, the Roman soldiers show their superior discipline

and are urged on to victory. It is important to discuss this stereotyping of the two sides as this will help students to read the rest of the narrative.

For more information (aimed at teachers) on the Druids, the [In Our Time podcast on The Druids](#) is excellent.

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each section, asking leading questions so that the class comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

lines 1-3:

- How is the battle-line described? What were they doing and where?
- What were they close-packed with?
- What were the women doing?
- What were the women dressed in? Who was this in the style of?
- How is their hair described? What were they carrying in front of them?

lines 3-7:

- Where were the Druids? What were they pouring out? How are the prayers described? What were they doing with their hands?
- What effect did this have on the soldiers? What exactly was it that made them feel this way?
- What was it like their limbs were? What did they offer their bodies to? How are their bodies described?

lines 7-10:

- Who urged on the cohorts (two groups)? What did they urge them not to fear? How is this battle-line described?
- What did they carry forward? What did they do to those in their way? What did they envelope them in?

lines 10-13:

- What was imposed on the conquered? What happened to the groves? What were the groves sacred to?
- What did they sprinkle on the altars? What were they consulting? How were they consulting them? What did they consider this?

lines 13-14:

- Who was dealing with this? While he was dealing with this, what was reported to him? How is the uprising described?
-

Questions on Content and Style

1. (lines 1-2):
 - a. Where were the enemy?
 - b. Describe them in detail.
2. (lines 2-3):
 - a. Describe the appearance of women.
 - b. Explain the phrase 'in modum Furiarum'.
3. (lines 3-7):

- a. What exactly were the Druids doing?
 - b. Quote and translate the two Latin words which tell us what exactly frightened the soldiers.
 - c. How does Tacitus, through the style of his writing, make the effect of the Druids upon the Romans dramatic?
4. (lines 7-10):
- a. What prompted the Roman soldiers to lay aside their fear?
 - b. What exactly did the Roman soldiers do?
 - c. How does Tacitus, through the style of his writing, emphasise the discipline of the Roman soldiers?
5. (lines 10-13):
- a. What did the Romans do once they had conquered the Druids?
 - b. What does Tacitus tell us about the religion of the Druids?
 - c. How does Tacitus make his description here vivid and exciting?
6. (lines 13-14) What caused Suetonius to leave the conquest of Mona?
7. (whole passage): How does Tacitus contrast the Druids and the Romans in this passage?

Section C

The Iceni gather their forces

In this passage, Tacitus describes the treatment of the Iceni and Trinobantes tribes (in what is now East Anglia) at the hands of the Romans.

Notes

Teachers should not feel that they need to pass on to their students all the information from these notes; they should choose whatever they think is appropriate. The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.

- 1 **rex Icenorum Prasutagus:** the Iceni were a British tribe in East Anglia. Prasutagus (like Cogidubnus on the south coast of Britain) had submitted to Roman rule and been given the status of friend and king. This meant in practice that he was a client king, administering his area in a way amenable to the Romans. The Romans' view of this relationship, and the extent to which Prasutagus was really independent, is clear in their attitude towards his will.
- 2 **Caesarem heredem duasque filias scripserat:** the **Caesar** mentioned here is the current emperor, Nero. Women could inherit property under both Roman and Celtic systems of inheritance: in Roman law, however, the female members of the family were only able to inherit if there was no male heir at all. The fact that this will was the source of conflict is shown by the word order, as well as the content: the word **heredem** is enclosed between **Caesarem** on one side, and the **duas filias** on the other.
- 3-4 **procul iniuria...contra...adeo:** the language here stresses how different the outcome was from what Prasutagus had planned.
- 4-5 **regnum a centurionibus, domus a servis:** the centurions were acting under the command of the governor, who had received his instructions from the emperor. The slaves mentioned here were public slaves, acting under the orders of the procurator Catus who will be mentioned later. The procurator was particularly hated already by the Iceni. The balanced structure (*parallelism*) -accusative-preposition-ablative/ accusative-preposition-ablative- shows how methodical and complete the ransacking was.
- 5 **velut capta:** the short simile makes the point clearly: the Iceni had been collaborating with the Romans, yet in the end were treated in the same manner as those who did not.
- 5-7 **vastarentur...verberibus adfecta...violatae sunt:** the vivid vocabulary and alliteration emphasises the humiliation of the Britons and brutality of the Romans.

- 7-9 The translation is **quique** (every one) **praecipui** (of the chieftains) **Icenorum** (of the Iceni) **exuuntur** (was deprived) **avitis bonis** (of their ancestral goods) **quasi** (as if) **Romani** (the Romans) **accepissent** (had received) **cunctam regionem** (the whole region) **muneri** (as a gift)
the word order in these lines mirrors the content. The **praecipui** are far away from their **avitis bonis**.
- 8 **quasi Romani cunctam regionem muneri accepissent:** this emphasises how the Romans ignored Prasutagus' will completely. The 'client kingdom' (independent, at least nominally) is being treated as part of the Roman province.
- 9-10 **exuuntur...habebantur:** the use of passive verbs in this section shows the powerlessness of the Britons in the face of the Romans.
- 11 **cesserant rapiunt:** the placing together (*juxtaposition*) of these verbs ('they had been reduced', 'they took up [arms]'), coupled with the switch from passive verbs to the active **rapiunt** show how swiftly the Britons, once they had reached the limit of all that they were willing to endure, retaliated.
- 13 the word **servitio** ('slavery') contrasts with (*antithesis*) **libertatem** ('freedom'). These are, of course, the two possible outcomes for the rebelling Britons.
- 14 **acerrimo in veteranos odio:** the superlative adjective **acerrimo** emphasises the strength of feeling the Britons have for the veterans, and the danger they pose to them.
- 15 **in coloniam Camulodunum:** when the Romans began to establish the province of Britannia in southern Britain, they confiscated land from the Trinobantes to make into their capital. Camulodunum (modern Colchester) was originally a tribal centre but was chosen to be developed into a Roman fortress. Once the initial invasion and subjugation of the southern population was assumed to be complete, the Romans changed the fortress into a settlement for veteran soldiers, a *colonia*, in AD49.
- 16-17 **pellebant domibus, exturbabant agris, captivos, servos appellando:** a list of three (*tricolon*) ways in which the Roman veterans had roused the anger of the local Britons. The imperfect tense verbs, the repetitive format, and the lack of conjunctions (*asyndeton*) imply these events happening over and over.
- 18 **similitudine vitae et spe eiusdem licentiae:** typical Tacitean interest in the motivations of the people about whom he is writing. The soldiers do not stop the veterans' behaviour because they are hoping to exploit the local area in turn when they retire from the military.
- 19 **templum divo Claudio constitutum:** the temple was probably begun after the emperor Claudius' death in AD54, although some scholars argue that it was in use whilst he was still alive. The imperial cult – the practice of worshipping the emperors as divine- was established by this time, although

the exact nature of imperial divinity was still being worked out. This temple was huge, the largest of its kind in Britain, and one of the first stone buildings in the new province.

- 19-20 arx aeternae:** the alliterated phrase emphasises the symbolism of this hated monument.
- 21 delectique sacerdotes specie religionis omnis fortunas effundebant:** the language used by Tacitus here stresses disapproval. He uses the repetition of a hissing 's' (*sibilance*) in **sacerdotes specie**. He emphasises the wastage of wealth by using the verb **effundebant** ('they were pouring out'), and the adjective **omnis** ('entire'). The corruption is insinuated by saying this was done only in a **specie religionis** ('show of religious observance'). There is some debate amongst scholars over what this 'wealth' was being spent on. It seems probable that the money has come from the local people, and that it is being spent on the completion of the elaborate temple itself.
- 22-23 coloniam nullis munimentis saeptam:** archaeological excavations support the fact that when the Romans developed the fortress into a *colonia* they dismantled much of the fortification. Tacitus ascribes this to arrogance and foolishness.
- 23-25** The translation is **quod** (because) **parum** (too little) **provisum erat** (had been provided) **ducibus nostris** (by our leaders) **dum** (while) **amoenitati** (appearance) **consulitur** (was being considered) **prius quam** (before) **usui** (use).
It is typical of Tacitus to offer a general opinion (*sententia*) which his audience can learn from after he has described a specific situation.
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Discussion

The reasons for the uprising are given here, with an even-handedness characteristic of Tacitus. The brutal language of the Roman oppression, the swaggering, arrogant behaviour of the veterans, and the shocking treatment of the women do not paint the Romans in a good light. On the other hand, the Britons are depicted as full of hatred and rage, governed by their emotions rather than by discipline. This fits in well with the image of them painted in Sections A and B.

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each section, asking leading questions so that the class comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

lines 1-5:

- Who was Prasutagus? What was he famous for? Who had he made his heirs? What did he think would be far from harm by him doing this?

- How did it turn out? Who was his kingdom plundered by? Who was his household plundered by? What was this just like?

lines 6-10:

- Who was Boudica? What happened to her? What happened to the daughters?
- What was it just like the Romans had done? What were the chieftains of the Iceni deprived of? How were the king's relatives treated?

lines 10-14:

- What did the Iceni seize? What are the first two reasons given here for this? What had they been reduced to? Which other tribe did they incite to rebellion? What were the others not yet broken by? What were they going to take back? How did they pledge to do this?
- What did they feel about the veteran Roman soldiers?

lines 15-18:

- Where had those veterans recently been brought? What were they driving the Britons out of? What were they expelling the Britons from? What did they call the Britons?
- Who was supporting the violence of the veterans? What was similar about them? What were they hoping for?

lines 18-21:

- Who was the temple founded for? What was it regarded as? What kind of priests did it have? What were they pouring away? What was this in a show of?

lines 22-25:

- What did it not seem hard to do? What was the colony protected by?
- Who had provided too little? What was being considered before use?

Questions on Content and Style

1. (lines 1-5):

- (line 1) What do we learn about Prasutagus in this line?
- (lines 2-4) Explain what Prasutagus had done and why.
- (lines 1-5) How does Tacitus, through his style of writing, emphasise the greediness of the Romans?

2. (lines 6-10):

- (line 6) Who was Boudica?
- (lines 6-10) What happened to the following Britons?
 - Boudica and the daughters
 - the chieftains
 - the king's relatives
- (lines 6-10) How is the brutal treatment of the Britons reflected in the style of writing here?

3. (lines 10-14):

- (lines 10-11) Explain why the Britons took up arms.
- (lines 12-13) Who else joined the rebellion?
- (line 14) What do we learn about the veterans here?
- (lines 10-14) How does Tacitus' writing here suggest the threat posed by the Britons?

4. (lines 15-18):

- (line 15) Who were the people described as **recens deducti**?

- b. (line 16-17) What three things had these people been doing to the local inhabitants?
 - c. (lines 17-18) Why were the Roman soldiers supporting this behaviour?
 - d. (lines 15-18) How does Tacitus, through his choice of vocabulary, show that he disapproves of the Romans' actions here?
5. (lines 18-21):
- a. (lines 18-19): Explain why this temple had been built in Camulodunum.
 - b. (lines 19-21):
 - i. Write down and translate the three Latin words which describe how the temple was regarded by the local inhabitants.
 - ii. What does Tacitus say that the priests were doing?
 - iii. How does Tacitus use alliteration in this sentence to emphasise disapproval for the actions of the Romans?
6. (lines 22-25):
- a. (lines 22-23) Why did Camulodunum seem an easy target for the Britons?
 - b. (lines 23-25) What explanation does Tacitus give for this?
7. (whole passage) Does Tacitus think that the Romans are partly to blame for the rebellion, or does he think that the Britons were mainly rebelling in a rage without reason?

Section D

The fall of Camulodunum

Notes and Discussion

In this passage, the colony of Camulodunum falls to Boudica's forces who then proceed to rout the Ninth Legion.

There was a great deal of building work to turn the Trinobantes' town into a Roman colonia. Mentioned here are a **statue of Victory**, a **senate house** and a **theatre**. These Roman buildings are the locations for strange and gruesome portents which foreshadow the destruction of the town.

As Suetonius was so far away, the inhabitants called upon **Catus Decianus** for assistance. He was **the procurator** of the province: a magistrate in charge of financial matters including collecting taxes. He was also deeply hated by the Britons and his harsh financial policies, as well as his involvement in seizing the Iceni territory, were catalysts for the rebellion. Catus only sent **no more than two hundred poorly armed soldiers** to help the inhabitants of Camulodunum.

The people of Camulodunum sought refuge in the **temple** (the Temple of Claudius mentioned earlier). This huge building had a cella (an inner chamber) with strong walls, no windows, and sturdy bronze doors and would have seemed a good place to hold out. **Everything else was attacked, ransacked and burnt**, and then the temple itself was destroyed. The population was slaughtered.

The archaeological record supports this burning then levelling of Camulodunum by Boudica's forces. The bodies of the slaughtered have not been discovered so far, leading archaeologists to suggest that the Romans may have recovered their own to bury with due rites, with non-Romans dumped into mass graves which are yet to be excavated.

The Britons then headed out of Camulodunum and intercepted the **Ninth Legion** who were coming to assist the Romans. This legion had probably been in Britain since the Claudian invasion of AD43. Although Boudica's forces destroyed this force, the commander escaped and the legion was reinforced following this defeat. It went on to participate in many further campaigns in Britain.

Questions

1. What details does Tacitus include here which make the rebellion sound terrifying?
2. What errors are made by the Romans in this section?

Section E

Boudica's forces take London and Verulamium

Notes and Discussion

Suetonius rushed back from Mona to **Londinium** (London) along Watling Street, a distance of around 250 miles. He brought the XIV legion, detachments from the XX legion, and auxiliary infantry and cavalry, leaving the garrison forces to guard Mona. This is the earliest mention in a text of London, as at this time it was only around 10 years old as a town and just beginning to establish itself as a centre for trade. Its inhabitants were a mixture of Romans and Britons, although no distinction was drawn by Boudica. Londinium, however, did not have any defensive walls at this time. Rather than engage Boudica's forces, Suetonius began to withdraw back along Watling Street.

The city suffered a similar fate to Camulodunum. It was razed to the ground and the inhabitants butchered.

The Britons then headed to **Verulamium** (modern St Albans) which had the status of a Roman *municipium*: a civilian settlement which had once been a tribal centre (for the Catuvellauni). A similar fate befell its inhabitants.

Excavations support the destruction of both of these settlements, with substantial evidence of burning especially evident in a layer of scorched material and burned finds. Both settlements, however, were swiftly rebuilt and seem to have been flourishing again within only a few years.

Questions

1. Why does Tacitus think that the Britons targeted these settlements? Do you agree?
2. To what extent do you think that Suetonius' actions can be justified?

Section F

The two armies are drawn up for battle

In this passage, Suetonius gathers together what forces he can before selecting a place to meet the Britons in battle.

Notes

Teachers should not feel that they need to pass on to their students all the information from these notes; they should choose whatever they think is appropriate. The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.

- 1 **iam** in his retreat along Watling Street, Suetonius has gathered whatever auxiliary forces he could. There were no additional legions to be had as Boudica had already defeated the IX legion near Camulodunum and the II legion (based in Gloucester) had ignored his summons.
vexillariis: these detachments were veteran soldiers who had re-enlisted and were separate from the normal cohorts of the legion.
- 3-4 **cum omittere cunctationem et congregari acie parat**: the location for the battle between the armies of Suetonius and Boudica is unknown but was probably in the Midlands. That the Britons were pursuing the Romans down Watling Street can be worked out from the fact that they appeared soon after the Romans stopped their retreat. Meeting in an organised pitched battle was the Romans' best chance against the vast guerrilla army. The discipline of the Roman troops is reflected in Tacitus' short and simple phrasing here, the finality of the decision through the firm alliteration of 'c'.
- 4 **deligit**: the superiority of Roman tactics is again emphasised: this place was carefully considered by Suetonius. This is supported by **cognito** ('got to know') in line 5.
- 4-5 **artis faucibus et a tergo silva clausum**: see lines 5-6 and the diagram below to see how the landscape was used by Suetonius.
- 5-6 The translation is **cognito** ([he had] got to know) **satis** (sufficiently well) **esse** (there was) **nihil hostium** (nothing of his enemies) **nisi in fronte** (except in front [of him]) **et** (and) **apertam planitiem** (open plain) **sine metu insidiarum** (without fear of ambush)
The Romans were outnumbered by the Britons and there was a real danger of them being outflanked and surrounded. Suetonius used the wooded slopes to provide protection on the wings and prevent this.
- 7-8 The translation is **igitur** (therefore) **legionarius** (the legionary force) **adstitit** (stood) **frequens ordinibus** (close together in rows) **levis armatura** (with the lightly-armed troops) **circum** (around) **conglobatus** (the massed) **eques** (cavalry) **pro cornibus** (on the wings)

See the diagram below for how the troops were drawn up. Their organisation is reflected in Tacitus' carefully organised list of three (*tricolon*) describing the **legionarius...levis armatura...eques**.

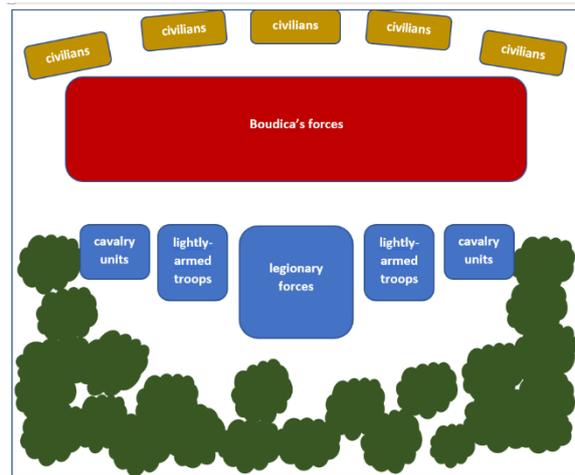
- 8 **at** ('but') suggests a contrast between the two forces. This is emphasised by Tacitus' choice of vocabulary to describe each side. The Romans 'stood' (line 9 **adstitit**) but the Britons 'were rushing about wildly' (line 11 **exultabant**). The Romans were 'close together in rows' (line 7 **frequens ordinibus**) but the Britons were 'all over the place' (line 9 **passim**). The Romans are organised, with the legionary force in the centre 'with the light-armed troops around and the massed cavalry on the wings' (lines 8-9). The Britons, on the other hand, are a chaotic mass with the forces 'amongst their infantry and cavalry groups' (line 9). The sentence structure reflects the contrast as well. Whilst the Romans were described in a neat *tricolon* in lines 7-8, the Britons are described in a longer, sprawling sentence over lines 8-13.
- 10 the alliteration of **animo adeo** emphasises their ferocity of mind.
- 11-13 Tacitus draws attention to the position of the civilian baggage train. This ultimately will hinder any retreat which the Britons could have attempted, and ends up falling victim to the victorious Romans.

Discussion

This map shows where the legions in Britain were stationed. The XX and XIV legions were stationed at Viroconium (Wroxeter). The IX legion was at Lindum (Lincoln) and the II legion was at Glevum (Gloucester). All the active legions had been stationed on what was the edges of the province, demonstrating the extent to which the Romans thought of the south as subjugated. This was causing Suetonius serious problems in opposing Boudica. The XIV legion was with him already. He had taken as many of the XX legion as he could, leaving garrisons to protect the north. The IX legion had been seriously weakened by Boudica's forces and were unable to muster. The II legion refused to come, surrounded by hostile tribes and under frequent attack (this refusal would have serious repercussions for those in charge). As he retreated north along what is now known as Watling Street, presumably still in hope of reinforcements which would never actually appear, he gathered any auxiliary forces he could but was still severely under strength.



The tactical decisions Suetonius took in deploying his troops in these circumstances gave him the best chance of success. This diagram shows how the two armies faced each other. Throughout this section Tacitus draws contrasts between the two forces, and by inference a contrast between the two societies. He has a great deal of admiration for Suetonius in general, calling him 'hardworking and judicious' (*Agricola* 1.5).



Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each section, asking leading questions so that the class comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

lines 1-4:

- Which legion does Suetonius have? Who else does he have with them? How many armed men does this make?
- What did he prepare to stop? What else did he prepare to do?

lines 4-8:

- What did he choose? What kind of entrance did this place have? What was it closed in by?
- What had he got to know sufficiently well?
- What was the land like in front of them? What was this land without fear of? What does this mean?
- How did the legionary force stand? Who was around them? Who was on the wings?

lines 8-13:

- What were the British troops doing? Where were they rushing about?
- What about this crowd was 'unlike any other'?
- Who had they brought with them? Why had they brought them? Where had they stationed them? Where had they positioned these wagons?

Questions on Content and Style

1. (lines 1-4):

- Which forces did Suetonius have with him?
- How did this compare with Boudica's army?
- Why did Suetonius find it difficult to get reinforcements?
- How does Tacitus, through his style of writing, show Suetonius' decisiveness?

2. (lines 4-6):

- Describe the place Suetonius chose to draw up his battle lines.
- In what ways was this a good place to choose?

3. (lines 7-8): Explain how the Roman forces were arranged.
4. (lines 8-13):
 - a. How does Tacitus, through the content and style of his writing, emphasise the following:
 - i. the chaos of the Britons
 - ii. the ferocity of the Britons
 - b. Why did the Britons bring their families, according to Tacitus?
5. (Whole section):
 - a. What do we learn about the character of Suetonius in this section?
 - b. How does Tacitus, through the content and style of his writing, create a contrast between the Romans and the Britons in this section?

Section G

Boudica rallies her troops with an inspiring speech

In this passage, Boudica delivers a speech to the assembled Britons, reminding them of her reasons for going to war and how the Romans had demonstrated their true nature towards them. She also reminds the Britons of their previous successes, and the 'all-or-nothing' situation they are in.

Notes

Teachers should not feel that they need to pass on to their students all the information from these notes; they should choose whatever they think is appropriate. The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.

- 1-6** The translation is **ut** (as) **Boudica** (Boudica) **vehens** (driving) **filias prae se** (her daughters before her) **curru** (by chariot) **accesserat** (approached) **quamque nationem** (each tribe) **testabatur** (she bore witness) **quidem** (indeed) **solitum** ([it was] usual) **Britannis** (for the Britons) **bellare** (to wage war) **feminarum ductu** (under the leadership of women) **sed tunc** (but at that time) **ut** (as [would be natural for]) **ortam** (one sprung) **tantis maioribus** (from such great ancestors) **non** ([she was] not) **ulcisci** (seeking revenge) **regnum et opes** (for her kingdom and wealth) **verum** (but truly) **ut unam e vulgo** (as one of the people) **libertatem amissam** (for her lost liberty) **corpus** (for her body) **confectum verberibus** (battered by blows) **contrectatam pudicitiam** (the stolen chastity) **filiarum** (of her daughters)
- 1** **filias prae se vehens**: just as before, Tacitus is careful to point out the women in the battle. This would have been shocking to the Roman audience, and a sign of how different the Britons were from them. This is emphasised in line 3 when Tacitus says that it was usual for the Britons to wage war **feminarum ductu** ('under the leadership of women').
- 3-6** Boudica delivers a speech which is rhetorically persuasive and emotive. She uses a balanced structure (lines 3-4 **non ut...verum ut** 'not as...but as'), contrasting **tantis maioribus** ('such great ancestors') with **vulgo** ('the people'), and seeking revenge for lost **regnum et opes** ('kingdom and wealth') with the lost honour she values more highly. These affronts to honour she lists in a swift but vivid *tricolon* (list of three), using emotional vocabulary (such as **contrectatam** which not only means 'stolen' but has undertones of 'violated') to draw out a passionate response from her audience.
- 6-9** The translation is **cupidines** (the desires) **Romanorum** (of the Romans) **provectas** (had been driven) **eo** (to such a point) **ut** (that) **non relinquunt** (they did not leave) **corpora** (bodies) **ne quidem** (not even) **senectam** (old age) **aut virginitatem** (or virginity) **impollutam** (undefiled)
The actions of the veterans and the procurator are presented here through Boudica's eyes as typical Roman behaviour. They are characterised as driven by their **cupidines** ('desires'), something which Tacitus implies throughout his

work should be kept in check. Boudica stresses that no one is safe from them, pointing out **senectam** ('old age') and **virginitatem** ('virginity') alike were defiled, using the separation of **ne...quidem** ('not even') to emphasise the word **senectam**.

- 10** **cecidisse legionem**: a reference back to the IX legion under Cerialis.
- 10-11** **ceteros occultari**: the II legion was still at Glevum (*Gloucester*), the rest of the XX legion had been left to guard the north-west of the province, and the remnants of the IX legion were in Lindum (*Lincoln*).
- 11-13** the British battle-cry was intended to instill fear into their enemies. Boudica's point is again balanced, with **strepitum...et clamorem** ('noise and shouting') balanced with **impetus et manus** ('attack and might'), and **ne...quidem** ('not even') again used for emphasis.
- 13-15** The translation is **si** (if) **secum expenderent** (they were to weigh up with themselves) **copias armatorum** (the forces of armed men), **si** (if [they were to weigh up with themselves]) **causas belli** (the causes of the war) **vincendum esse** (they must conquer) **illa acie** (in that battle-line) **vel** (or) **cadendum** (they must fall)
Another balanced sentence, with **si + accusative + genitive** repeated in the first half, and the **gerundive + vel + gerundive** in the second. The consistent balancing of phrases continues to suggest the speaker is thinking and speaking logically. The gerundives **vincendum...cadendum** ('must conquer...must fall') give additional force to her words.
- 16** Boudica's speech ends with two short and punchy remarks showing her resolve and spurring the others to action. The placing of **servirent** at the end of the speech returns to the main theme from the beginning: the lost liberty of the Britons.

Discussion

This section takes the form of reported speech. The longer sentences and unfamiliar structure will be challenging for students. It will be useful to concentrate on making a list of the main points made by Boudica in order to ensure comprehension.

Tacitus is creating this dramatic speech without a source to provide him with what was actually said and therefore much of this owes a lot to his own views on the decline of Roman morality and his concern that the Roman people were increasingly motivated by desire rather than duty.

Time permitting, students could compare this speech with that given by Calgacus in Tacitus' *Agricola* 30-32, where the author expands upon this theme in more detail. A fairly accessible translation can be found [here](#). For a modern interpretation of Tacitus, the BBC TV show *Dr Who* tackled some of these themes in a Tacitus-inspired episode named 'The Eaters of Light' which contains several speeches with very familiar lines. The episode can be found [here](#) (UK only).

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each section, asking leading questions so that the class comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

lines 1-6:

- What was Boudica driving in? Who was in front of her?
- Who did she approach? What was she bearing witness that it was usual for the Britons to do?
- What did she say she was not seeking revenge for? What kind of person does she say might seek revenge for the loss of kingdom and wealth?
- What does she say she is one of? What three things is she seeking revenge for?

lines 6-9:

- What has been driven to such a point that the Romans are behaving as they are? What are they not leaving undefiled? What two types of bodies does she particularly mention to make her point?

lines 9-11:

- Who does she say would be present? What type of revenge are they present for?
- Who had fallen? What had they dared to do?
- Where were the rest skulking? If they weren't skulking, what were they doing?

lines 11-13:

- What would they not even endure? Whose noise and shouting would they not even endure? What would they endure still less than the noise and shouting?

lines 13-15:

- What two things does she suggest they weigh up? If they weigh up these things, what must they do? If they fail to conquer, what must they do?

line 15:

- What does she say this is? What two things does she suggest the men can do?
-

Questions on Content and Style

1. (lines 1-6):

- a. (lines 1-3) What parts of this description of Boudica would seem particularly strange to a Roman audience?
- b. (lines 3-6):
 - i. Explain in your own words the point Boudica is making here about her motivations for fighting the Romans.
 - ii. How does Tacitus emphasise this point through the style of her speech?

2. (lines 6-9):

- a. Explain what Boudica thinks drives the Romans to behave the way they do towards the Britons.
- b. How does Tacitus show her disgust through the vocabulary she uses and the style of her speech here?

3. (lines 9-11):

- a. What does Boudica say about their gods?
- b. Explain the reference to the '**cecidisse legionem**'.
- c. What does she say that the rest of the Romans are doing?

- d. To what extent are Boudica's statements in these lines true?
4. (lines 11-13): what does she think the Romans will not be able to bear?
5. (lines 13-15):
 - a. What does she think that the Britons should weigh up?
 - b. What conclusion does she think they will reach if they weigh up these things?
6. (line 15): explain how Boudica uses references to her gender in this line to encourage her troops.
7. (whole section): how does Tacitus create a compelling and persuasive speech for Boudica here through the content and style of his writing?

Section H

Suetonius rallies his troops

Notes and Discussion

Suetonius delivers a speech to parallel that delivered by Boudica. It picks up some of the themes from the main narrative, including the Roman perception of women in war: **‘there were more women to be seen among them than young fighting men’**. He also mentions their cowardice and makes unfavourable comparison with the professional Roman army (**‘unwarlike and unarmed and that they would surrender immediately’**).

In terms of joining battle, unlike Boudica he concentrates on tactics. What he outlines is standard Roman procedure: maintain the lines (**‘stand together’**), take the power out of any initial charge by your enemy (**‘cast their javelins’**), and then move in together for close quarter fighting (**‘continue the slaughter with their shield-bosses and swords’**).

Questions

1. Pick out and explain **three** things which Suetonius says which you think would have been particularly effective in inspiring his men.
2. Which speech do you prefer, Boudica’s or Suetonius’? Explain your opinion.

Section I

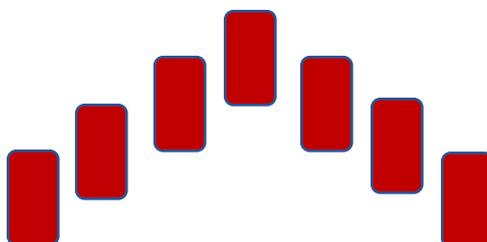
The Battle

In this passage, the two armies finally clash. With superior tactics the Romans easily overwhelm the Britons and go on to butcher even the baggage train. Rather than be captured, Boudica takes her own life.

Notes

Teachers should not feel that they need to pass on to their students all the information from these notes; they should choose whatever they think is appropriate. The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.

- 1 **gradu immota**: the calm ranks of the Romans are no longer fazed by the Britons.
- 2-3 The translation is **postquam** (after) **exhauserat** (it had used up) **tela** (its javelins) **certo iactu** (with sure aim) **in** (at) **hostes** (enemies) **suggrossos** ([who had] approached) **propius** (nearer) **erupit** (it burst out) **velut cuneo** (as in a wedge formation)
A good summary of Roman tactics: the British battle-charge is quashed by a volley of spears into the space between the two battle lines, then the Romans employ their wedge formation to advance.



The wedge had the best soldiers at the points, and drove into the opposing army, squashing them together and also funnelling them inside the Roman lines. It was very effective, especially against larger enemy forces.

The first phase of the battle is described very briefly by Tacitus, implying a swift and effective Roman assault. The phrase **certo iactu** ('with sure aim') shows us how well-trained the soldiers are. The swiftness of the Roman charge is enhanced by the dramatic verb **erupit** ('burst out').

- 4 **idem auxiliarum impetus**: another quick phrase ('the attack of the auxiliaries [was] the same') with the main verb omitted to shorten it further. The Roman forces are acting in unison and with no delay. The cavalry seem eager for battle with their **hastis protentis** ('their spears stretched in front').
- 5-6 The word order here in the Latin mirrors the events in the text. The verb **perfringit** ('broke through') has been brought out of the normal word order and is now before the phrase **quod obvium et validum erat** ('what was in

the way and strong'). This is immediately followed by another short phrase - **ceteri terga praebuere** ('the rest retreated')- with a shortened verb (**praebuerant** has been *syncopated* to **praebuere**) which quickens the Latin to show us the speed of the sudden British retreat.

- 6-7** Again here the word order mirrors the events. The **circumiecta vehicula** ('wagons placed around') are in front of the **abitus** ('the exits'), with **abitus** further shoved to the very end of the sentence by the verb **saepserant** ('blocked').
- 7-9** The translation is **miles** (the soldiers) **ne quidem** ([did] not even) **temperabat** (restrain themselves from) **neci** (the slaughter) **mulierum** (of women) **que** (and) **iumenta** (the baggage animals) **etiam** (also) **confixa telis** (pierced by spears) **auxerant** (had increased) **cumulum** (the heap) **corporum** (of bodies)
There is a sign of some disapproval in the way Tacitus presents the Romans here as they slaughter the baggage train. The use of the verb **temperabat** ('restrain') implies that the soldiers are not able to control themselves. The phrasing of **ne mulierum quidem...etiam** ('not even the women...also') implies that they have gone beyond what was necessary. The harsh 'c' alliteration of **confixa...corporum cumulum** ('pierced...heap of bodies') draws attention to the killing of the baggage animals, hardly a glorious victory to end the battle. It would have been more common for the Romans to enslave the defeated who were not killed in the battle. The brutality of this response perhaps reflects the fear of the Roman soldiers in the midst of a British uprising in which the province was nearly lost and many civilians had already been tortured and slaughtered.
- 9-10** **clara et antiquis victoriis par ea die laus parta:** a rhetorical flourish linking this struggle with unnamed 'victories of old' which would probably have called to mind the wars with Hannibal when the Romans were outnumbered by a seemingly unstoppable force which was motivated by the goal of ridding the world of the Romans. This would seem to be an exaggeration – the Celts are hardly threatening Rome itself- but is an appropriately dramatic summary of events.
- 10-11** **quippe sunt qui...tradant:** by using a phrase like this ('indeed there are those who say that...'), Tacitus indicates to us that he has some reservations about the reliability of his source material. He is going to tell us what it says anyway!
- 10-12** **paulo minus quam octoginta milia Britannorum...militum quadringentus ferme:** casualty lists for ancient battles are problematic. The numbers are often inflated to exaggerate victories, or simply inaccurate due to bodies being miscounted, removed from the battlefield by relatives or scavengers, or abandoned in a retreat. The Romans, however, did keep records of those killed and wounded, and the bodies would have been recovered for burial wherever possible. This lends some credibility to the Roman reports here. The British numbers are more likely speculation, and the huge numbers involved would suggest some exaggeration. A decisive victory, however, seems certain.

- 13 Boudica vitam veneno finivit:** a short and final epitaph for Boudica. If captured, Boudica could have expected humiliation and violence. The Gallic leader Vercingetorix had been held by Julius Caesar for almost six years before being paraded in a military triumph and then ritually executed. Boudica's suicide also recalls that of Cleopatra, the last Pharaoh of Egypt, who took her own life rather than be captured by Octavian. Poison was seen by the Romans as a woman's method of death. This account, however, is disputed by the other Roman historian who described Boudica's rebellion. Cassius Dio says that she fell ill and then died (*Roman History* 62.12).
-

Discussion

The Roman army was a professional standing army with a highly organised structure. It is important that students understand the tactics that the Romans were employing in the battle with Boudica and the meaning of terms such as *veteran* and *auxiliary*, but there is a great deal more to explore, time and enthusiasm permitting. A very [simple site](#) from the BBC on the Roman army aimed at KS2.

The life of the legionary soldier is described in detail in the Cambridge Latin Course, [Book III, Stage 25 \(pages 82-87\)](#).

Vindolanda Museum's very clear and informative [video](#) on the structure of the Roman army.

A slightly more student-friendly [video](#) on the Roman army from TedEd.

There are many legends concerning Boudica's burial site, with the most famous being under King's Cross Station in London. What is indisputable is the influence of her image in British history. There have been several novels and dramatisations created of her life, although few are suitable for directing students to without careful content control. Queen Elizabeth I identified strongly with her, as did Queen Victoria in whose honour the statue of Boudica was erected on the banks of the Thames in London. The Suffragette movement also made use of her image and name as they campaigned for votes for women. Despite being Celtic, she has often been held up as an example of a quintessentially English hero. Students could discuss the aspects of her story which have made Boudica such an inspirational figure, despite, or perhaps because of, the lack of concrete evidence we have about her life.

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each section, asking leading questions so that the class comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

lines 1-3:

- What did the legion do at first? What did they keep as their fortification?
- What did they use up? How did they do this? What did they do after they had done this?

lines 4-5:

- What did the auxiliaries do?

- Who else entered the battle? What did they break through? What did they have extended in front of them?

lines 5-7:

- What did the rest of the Britons do?
- What was difficult for them? What was blocking their exits?

lines 7-9:

- What did the soldiers not even restrain themselves from?
- What was the heap made of? What else also increased this heap? What had happened to them?

lines 9-13:

- What was acquired? When was it acquired? What was it equal to? How else is it described?
- What do some people say? How many Roman soldiers were killed? How many were wounded?
- What did Boudica do?

Questions on Content and Style

- (lines 1-3):
 - Explain the tactics which the Romans are using here.
 - How does Tacitus make this sentence exciting through his choice of vocabulary?
- (lines 4-5): describe the actions of
 - the auxiliaries
 - the cavalry
- (lines 5-7):
 - What did the Britons attempt to do?
 - Why was it difficult for them to do this?
- (lines 7-9):
 - What did the Romans do when they reached the baggage train?
 - How does Tacitus, through his style of writing, express his disapproval of the Roman behaviour here?
- (lines 9-13):
 - What does Tacitus say about the Roman victory here?
 - What casualty numbers does Tacitus report?
 - Why does Tacitus say 'quippe sunt qui...tradant'?
 - In your opinion, are these numbers likely to be accurate?
 - What happened to Boudica? Why do you think that she did this?
- (whole section): how does Tacitus, through the content and style of his writing, emphasise the superiority of the Roman forces in this encounter?

Section J

The Roman reinforcements

In this passage, Tacitus tells us in detail how the Romans built up their armies in Britain once more, and how the Britons themselves began to starve.

Notes

Teachers should not feel that they need to pass on to their students all the information from these notes; they should choose whatever they think is appropriate. The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.

- 1 -2 The translation is **deinde** (then) **omnis** (the whole) **contractus exercitus** (assembled army) **habitus est** (was held) **sub pellibus** (under hides) **ad perpetranda** (to finish) **reliqua belli** (the rest of the war).
sub pellibus: literally 'under hides'. The Roman tents were made of leather sections sewn together.
- 2-4 The numbers of men recruited to bolster the forces in Briton demonstrates how seriously Nero (**Caesar**) was taking the attempted rebellion. Tacitus emphasises this by placing the verb **auxit** ('increased') out of usual word order and at the very beginning of the sentence. This is immediately followed by the forceful alliteration of **copias Caesar**.
- 4-5 **nonani**: the IX legion was reconstructed rather than disbanded.
- 6 **hibernaculis**: Roman military campaigning season was usually from March to October (occasionally wars were deliberately fought in the winter when it gave the Romans a tactical advantage e.g. in forested areas, or in desert areas). The legions then returned to winter quarters in camps. This was mainly logistical (it is easier to feed an army on the move when you can rely on the land to be producing food rather than having to carry all your provisions with you).
- 7 **ambiguum aut adversum fuerat igni atque ferro**: Tacitus uses balanced phrases here (**ambiguum aut adversum** and **igni atque ferro**) to show the disciplined and thorough response of the Romans to any further signs of uprising. The **a** alliteration draws attention to the fact that even a reluctance to cooperate is now dealt with decisively.
- 8 **vastatum**: dramatic verb choice which recalls **vastarentur** in Section C.
- 8-10 The translation is **sed** (but) **nihil** (nothing) **aeque quam** (as much as) **fames** (hunger) **adfligebat** (struck down) **incuriosos** (those who had been careless) **serendis frugibus** (in sowing crops) **et** (and) **omni aetate** (with every age group) **versa** (engaged) **ad bellum** (in war) **dum** (while) **destinant** (they intended) **nostros com meatus** (our supplies) **sibi** (for themselves)
-

Discussion

Tacitus describes the decisive behaviour by the Romans in the first half of this section, his specific numbers reflecting the methodical organisation and deployment of the Roman army. He then passes judgement on the lack of planning by the Britons, which contrasts here yet again with the disciplined Romans. The Britons had sent their entire communities to engage in war and therefore agriculture and other necessities of life had been neglected. Tacitus lays the blame for this squarely at the feet of the Britons themselves. Tacitus appears unaware of the irony of disapproving of the British plan to steal **nostros commeatus** ('our supplies'): these Roman provisions would originally have in large part been taken from the British communities.

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each section, asking leading questions so that the class comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

lines 1-2:

- What was assembled? Where was it assembled? What does **sub pellibus** mean?
- Why was it assembled?

lines 2-5:

- What did Caesar increase?
- What did he send? Where from?
- What two other reinforcements did he send?
- What happened to the Ninth Legion at their (the reinforcements) arrival?

lines 5-8:

- Where were the cohorts and cavalry units located?
- What were some of the tribes showing? What happened to those who showed this? How were they laid waste?

lines 8-10:

- What was nothing equal to? What was the famine doing? What had the Britons been careless in doing?
 - What had they been engaged in instead? Who had been engaged in war?
 - What had the Britons been intending?
-

Questions on Content and Style

1. (lines 1-5):

- a. What did the Romans do with the army next and why?
- b. Explain in detail how Caesar increased the forces.
- c. Why did the Ninth legion in particular need to be strengthened?
- d. How does Tacitus, through his style of writing, emphasise the organisation of the Romans?
- e. How accurate do you think that Tacitus' numbers are here?

2. (lines 5-10):

- a. Why were the cohorts and cavalry units put into winter quarters?

- b. Explain what happened to some of the tribes and why.
- c.
 - i. What struck down even more Britons than the battles with the Romans?
 - ii. Explain why this was the case.
 - iii. Why had the Britons behaved like this?
- 3. (whole section): how does Tacitus, through the style and content of his writing, emphasise the contrast between the organised Romans and the disorganised Britons?

Section K

The rebellion is finally brought to an end, not through wars but through diplomacy

Notes and Discussion

Tacitus' evaluation of events here is biased on account of his admiration for men of action like Suetonius. None of the grievances of the Britons had been addressed and this, coupled with the punitive actions taken against them, meant that resentment still simmered. There was little hope of financial gain in the province, as the Britons were starving and resentful.

Iulius Classicianus, the new procurator, realised that a peaceful resolution would reap greater rewards than continued aggression. The emperor, Nero, was amenable to this suggestion and he sent **Polyclitus** to oversee the situation. Polyclitus was an **imperial freedman**: under the reign of the emperor Claudius freedmen had made their way into positions of great power within the court and by the reign of Nero were effectively professional civil servants.

Tacitus, however, is not interested in the political expediency of creating stability through negotiation and moderation. He instead attributes Classicianus' recommendations to personal ill-will towards Suetonius.

Questions

1. Explain in your own words how peace is established after the rebellion is defeated.
2. How do you know that Tacitus disapproves of this way of solving the problems?
3. Thinking about everything you have read, in what ways was Boudica's rebellion a success for the Britons?
4. Thinking about everything you have read, evaluate how Suetonius dealt with the rebellion.