



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



Tacitus: Boudica For examination in 2022 and 2023 Section C

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 Icenii) **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) **consultitur** (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.

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?