KES Classics

Tacitus

Germanicus et Piso

Pliny the Younger

Regulus

GCSE Latin Prose Literature (For examination 2020-21)

Germanicus and Piso – Introduction

About the author

Publius Cornelius Tacitus was a Roman author of the late first and early second century AD (56AD - 120AD). Born in Gallia Narbonensis, he had relocated to Rome by 75AD and taken up a political career. As a politician, he held a number of government posts, working throughout the reigns of Vespasian, Titus and Domitian and holding a praetorship in 88. In 97, under the Emperor Nerva, Tacitus became suffect consul. His political career from that point is shadowy until he re-emerges in 112AD as proconsul of Asia.

Although he was evidently an influential politician, it is his writings for which he is now famous. Tacitus produced five literary works which survive at least in part. *The Agricola* (98AD) is a biographical work of his father-in-law, Gnaeus Iulius Agricola, who

A modern representation of Tacitus outside the Austrian parliament

was governor of Britain in the late 70s and early 80s AD. The work is stylistically varied, containing biographical details of Agricola, political and social commentary, historical narrative (particularly the battle at mons Graupius) and elements of geography and ethnography. Tacitus' second work, *The Germania*, is unusual in that it is the only work by a Roman dedicated entirely to ethnographic research which survives. In it, Tacitus examines the lifestyle and customs of the German tribes, both collectively and individually, while making comparisons with Roman lifestyle (not all of which reflect positively on Rome). The third of Tacitus' so called 'minor works', *The Dialogus*, is a philosophical text. In it, the central characters discuss their views on oratory and its decline. Finally, Tacitus wrote two major works, *The Histories* and *The Annals*. *The Histories* (109/110AD) is unfortunately incomplete, but was a history of the Flavian Emperors. The surviving four books are for the most part an account of the 'Year of the Four Emperors' (69AD). *The Annals* was Tacitus' last work and is a history of the Empire (as its name would suggest) on a year by year basis covering the periods of Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero. It is suggested that each Emperor was to be detailed in six books (Caligula and Claudius were to share a set of six) however, we cannot be certain of this or if the work was ever finished as sections are missing and the work finishes part way through book XVI.

Part of what makes Tacitus' works great is the period in which he lived. Born in the reign of Nero, the Fire of Rome, Nero's suicide, the Year of the Four Emperors, repression under the Flavians and the expansion of Trajan all happened while Tacitus was alive (albeit some of these events while he was quite young). The political and social situation throughout his life was, therefore, one of constant flux which developed strong moral and political ideals in Tacitus' mind. Whether writing contemporary history or looking back to the earlier period of the Empire, therefore, Tacitus paints a vivid, exciting and often cutting picture for us to examine.

About the text

This selection is based on a number of extracts of Tacitus' *Annals* Books II and III. The story is one of intrigue murder and revenge within the imperial household, the sort of thing which Tacitus specialises in!
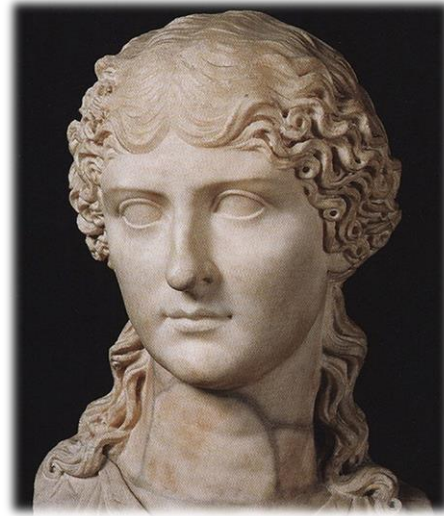
Profiles

| Germanicus	Agrippina
Germanicus was a prominent member of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, the grandson of the Emperor Augustus' sister, Octavia, and married to Augustus' granddaughter Agrippina. He was an able and popular man whom Augustus considered nominating as his heir (having no male children of his own). Despite being persuaded to choose his step-son, Tiberius, instead, Augustus clearly recognised the young man's potential as Tiberius' adoption by Augustus was conditional on Tiberius adopting Germanicus (securing the dynasty for three generations). This may be at the root of Germanicus' death only five years after that of Augustus.	Commonly referred to as Agrippina the Elder (to distinguish her from her daughter, Agrippina, the mother of Nero), as Augustus' granddaughter and daughter of Augustus' close ally Agrippa, Agrippina was a distinguished member of Roman society in her own right. Her devotion to her husband is clear, travelling with him whenever he went on campaign and becoming a symbol of Roman female virtue because of her conduct after his death. Unfortunately this brought her into conflict with elements of Tiberius' regime and, despite her high-born status, she suffered terribly being sent into exile in 29AD and eventually dying of starvation in 33AD.

Piso	Plancina
Although not an especially famous man now, Piso was a key political player during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. Not only was he consul in 7BC (the highest rank of Roman politician), he also held provincial governorships throughout the empire – Spain, Africa and Syria. He was also put in charge of the Imperial Mint and was a member of the College of Pontiffs. It is impossible to say the role that Piso played in Germanicus' death, if any, however, Tacitus makes a pretty good case for his involvement. As a long-time supporter of Tiberius, it is likely that he would have been willing to undertake the task.	Probably Piso' second wife and the mother of two children with him, Plancina too came from an elite Roman family. She was a close friend of Livia, the Emperor Augustus' wife, and was undoubtedly rich in her own right. Tacitus alleges that her conduct towards Germanicus and Agrippina was carried out at Livia's instigation although it is not possible to prove this definitively. However, it is clear that Plancina's relationship with Livia offered her a certain level of protection, being acquitted of the charges brought against her after Germanicus' death, only to face trial for them again after Livia's death.

Tiberius
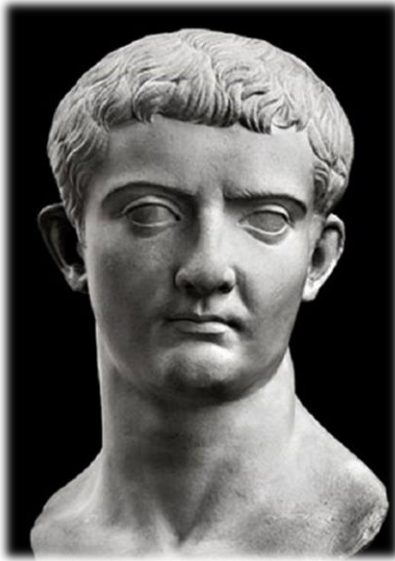
Tiberius was the second Roman emperor, having inherited the position from his step-father, the Emperor Augustus. Although an outstanding Roman general, Tiberius was not especially suited to the life of an emperor (and was not Augustus' first choice to succeed him). His reign receives a mixed reception, demonstrating a strong hand when it came to financial management, but is overshadowed by his seeming reluctance to be a hands-on ruler which irritated the senate, and his eventual departure in 26BC from Rome to live in relative isolation on Capri, an island off the bay of Naples. There were altogether more sinister aspects to his reign including a series of treason trials initiated in the early days and Germanicus' untimely death in 19AD. It is very possible that, jealous of Germanicus' popularity, Tiberius requested his removal. Tacitus is uncompromising in his approach to Tiberius starting his account of his reign with the words "The opening crime of the new principate was..."

Syria
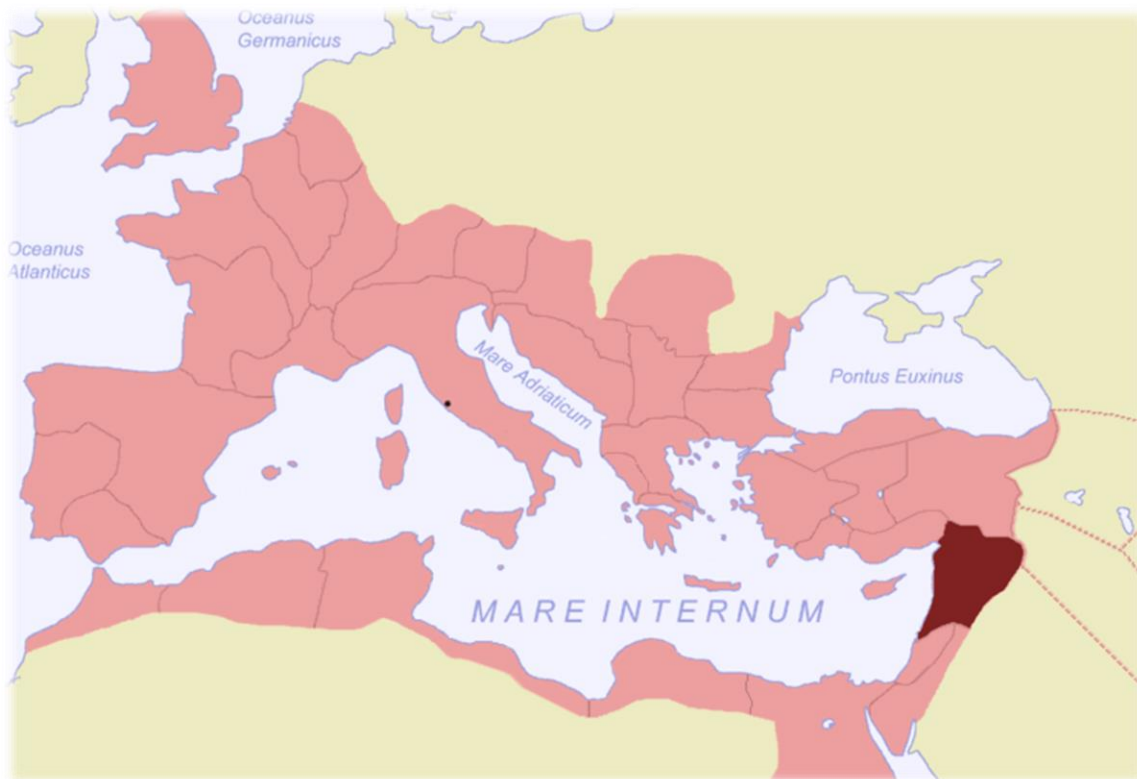
Syria was a relatively early addition to the Roman Empire, being captured by Pompey the Great during the Mithridatic War in 64BC. Not only was it a wealthy area of the empire, but it was also strategically important, as Rome's eastern border against the Parthian Empire. As such, to govern Syria came with significant political responsibility, status and military resources as Roman power in the region was regularly under threat from further east.

GERMANICUS AND PISO

PISO IN SYRIA

NERO CLAUDIUS GERMANICUS CAESAR, BORN IN 15BC, WAS A FAVOURITE OF THE EMPEROR AUGUSTUS, WHO SAW HIM AS A POSSIBLE HEIR IF ANYTHING HAPPED TO HIS OWN ADOPTED SON AND FAVOURED HEIR, TIBERIUS. AUGUSTUS THEREFORE FORCED TIBERIUS TO ADOPT GERMANICUS. GERMANICUS COMMANDED THE ROMAN FORCES ON THE NORTHERN FRONTIER AND WAS POPULAR WITH THE LEGIONS AND THE PEOPLE. ACCORDING TO TACITUS, TIBERIUS, ON BECOMING EMPEROR, QUICKLY CAME TO HATE GERMANICUS 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 ARMY THERE, TO SETTLE VARIOUS PROBLEMS ON THE BORDERS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE. HE ALSO SECRETLY ORDERED GNAEUS CALPURNIUS PISO, THE GOVERNOR OF SYRIA, TO BLOCK ALL GERMANICUS' ORDERS AND, AS MANY CONTEMPORARIES BELIEVED, TO ARRANGE HIS DEATH.

THE EXTRACT BEGINS WITH THE ARRIVAL OF GERMANICUS AND PISO IN THE EAST IN AD18...

Piso in Syria

at **Cn. Pīsō**, **quō** celerius cōnsilia **inciperet**, postquam **Syriam** ac legiōnēs attigit, largītiōne et ambitū īnfimōs mīlitum iuvābat. **cum** veterēs centuriōnēs, sevērōs tribūnōs **dēmōvisset**, locaque eōrum clientibus suīs **attribuisset**, **dēsidiam** in castrīs, **licentiam** in urbibus, **lascīvientēs** per agrōs **mīlitēs** **sinēbat**. nec **Plancīna**, uxor Pīsōnis, sē gerēbat **ut** fēminam decēbat, sed **exercitiō equitum intererat**, et in Agrippīnam, in Germānicum contumēliās **iaciēbat**. nōta haec **Germānicō**, sed **praevertī** ad **Armeniōs** īnstantior cūra fuit.

Names

Agrippina, Agrippinae (f)	Agrippina (wife of Germanicus, granddaughter of Augustus)
Armenius, Armenii (m)	an Armenian
Germanicus, Germanici (m)	Germanicus (Grandnephew of Augustus and heir of Tiberius)
Gnaeus Piso, Gnaei Pisonis (m)	Gnaeus Piso
Plancina, Plancinae (f)	Plancina (wife of Piso)
Syria, Syriae (f)	Syria

Vocabulary

ambitus-us (m)	*(in negative sense) bribery*	intersum, -esse, -fui	*be present, attend*
attingo-ere, -tigi, -tactus	*reach, set foot in*	iuvo-are, iuvi, iutus	*help, aid, support*
attribuo-ere, -ui, -utus	*assign, give*	largitio, -onis	*generosity*
centurio, -onis (m)	*a centurion*	lascivio-ire	*run riot, rampage*
cliens, -ntis (m)	*client, personal dependant*	legio, -onis (f)	*legion*
contumelia-ae (f)	*insult, abuse*	licentia-ae (f)	*hooliganism*
decet, -uit (*impersonal*)	*be fitting, be proper*	loca, -orum (n pl)	*places*
demoveo-ere, -movi, -motus	*remove, drive out*	me gero-ere, gessi, gestus	*act, behave oneself*
desidia-ae (f)	*idleness, inactivity, sloth*	notus-a-um	*known*
eques, -itis (m)	*knight, cavalry rider*	praevertor-i (*deponent*)	*turn to first, attend to first*
exercitium-i (n)	*training, exercise*	severus-a-um	*strict, stern*
in	*(+ person) at, against*	sino-ere, sivi, situs	*allow, permit*
incipio-ere, -cepi, -ceptus	*begin, take in hand*	tribunus-i (m)	*(military) tribune*
infimus-a-um	*lowest, meanest, basest*	vetus, -eris	*(of soldiers) long-serving*
instans, -ntis	*pressing*		

Notes

Cn. Pīsō	The abbreviation *Cn.* stands for Gnaeus.
quō... inciperet	Here *quo* is used to show purpose. Literally *by which he might begin* but more naturally *to begin*.
cum... demovisset... attribuisset	Both *demovisset* and *attribuisset* are reliant on *cum*.
dēsidiam... licentiam... lascīvientēs... mīlitēs sinēbat	There are three objects following *sinebat* – *desidiam*, *licentiam* and *lascivientes milites* which go together.
Plancīna	Plancina was a wealthy Roman in her own right, descended from a noble Roman family. She was close friends with Livia, Augustus' wife and Tiberius' mother. She was probably Piso's second wife and had two children with him.
ut	Without a subjunctive, *ut* here is best rendered *as*.
exercitiō equitum intererat	The idea of a woman being present at cavalry training was an outrageous overstepping of Roman norms and Plancina's place in the camp. As the wife of the governor (and a woman), Plancina has no role within the army.
iaciēbat	An interesting use of the imperfect tense, *iaciebat* implies that she did this on a regular basis. Consider how best to translate.
Germānicō	This is a fairly common use of the dative giving the sense *known **to** Germanicus*, i.e. Germanicus knew about these things.

praevertī	The infinitive here is the subject of the clause in which it sits. *Turning... was a more pressing care.*
Armeniōs	Armenia which sat on the eastern border of the Roman Empire formed a buffer zone against the Parthian Empire in Asia Minor. Roman influence over Armenia had been maintained since Augustus' reign (and before). In his campaign of 17-18AD, Germanicus would install the pro-Roman king Artaxias III.

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Piso in Syria

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GERMANICUS AND PISO

THE DEATH OF GERMANICUS

GERMANICUS AVERTED A CRISIS IN ARMENIA BY SUPPORTING THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE OF KING. THEN, IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR, HE VISITED EGYPT TO SEE THE ANCIENT SITES. ON HIS RETURN TO SYRIA, HE 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. SOON GERMANICUS FELL ILL, AND PISO WAITED TO SEE HOW THE ILLNESS PROGRESSED...

Nicholas Poussin, *The Death of Germanicus*, 1628

The death of Germanicus

saevam vim morbī augēbat **persuāsiō venēnī** ā Pīsōne **acceptī**; et reperiēbantur **solō ac parietibus**
ērutae hūmānōrum corporum reliquiae, **carmina et dēvōtiōnēs** et nōmen Germānicī **plumbeīs tabulīs**
īnsculptum, cinerēs sēmustī ac tābō oblitī aliaque malefica quibus crēditur animās **nūminibus īnfernīs**
sacrārī. simul **missī** ā Pīsōne incūsābantur quod valētūdinis adversae **signa exspectārent**. haec
Germānicō **haud minus** īrā **quam** per metum accepta sunt. compōnit epistulam quā **amīcitiam eī
renūntiābat**.

Vocabulary

adversus-a-um	*(of health), poor, ill*	numen-inis (n)	*divine power, god*
amicitia-ae (f)	*friendship*	oblino-ere, -levi, -litus	*smear, befoul*
anima-ae (f)	*soul*	paries-etis (m)	*wall*
augeo-ere, auxi, auctus	*increase, augment*	persuasio-onis (f)	*conviction, belief*
carmen-inis (n)	*(negative) spell, incantation*	plumbeus-a-um	*lead, made of lead*
cinis-eris (m)	*ash, cremated remains*	reliquiae-arum (f)	*(of the dead) remains, ashes*
compono-ere, -posui, -positus	*compose, put together*	renuntio-are, -avi, -atus	*renounce, break off*
devotio-onis (f)	*curse*	reperio-ire, repperi, repertus	*find, discover*
eruo-ere, -ui, -utus	*root up, dig out*	sacro-are, -avi, -atus	*dedicate, consecrate*
humanus-a-um	*of a human*	semustus-a-um	*half-burned*
incuso-are, -avi, -atus	*accuse, blame*	solum-i (n)	*ground, floor*
inferus-a-um	*below, of the Underworld*	tabula-ae (f)	*(writing) tablet*
insculpo-ere, -psi, -ptus	*carve on, cut in*	tabum-i (n)	*gore, rotten flesh*
maleficum-i (n)	*evil object, evil charm*	valetudo-inis (f)	*health, condition*
metus-us (m)	*fear, dread*	venenum-i (n)	*poison*
minus (*adverb*)	*less*	vis, vim (*acc*) (f)	*strength, force*
morbus-i (m)	*sickness, illness*		

Notes

persuāsiō	Tacitus has deliberately postponed *persuasio* as the subject of the sentence, instead leading with the object. Why might he have done this?
venēnī... acceptī	Literally *poison received from Piso* – although quite concise in the Latin, the English is less fluid. Think about how you might choose to render the participle.
solō ac parietibus	Magic and suspicion were relatively common in the Ancient World. The burying of objects of ill-omen in the vicinity of a victim was an easy way of bringing harm to them. In this case the perpetrator has chosen the very walls and floor of Germanicus' home.
carmina et dēvōtiōnēs	Similarly, magical incantations were a relatively straight-forward way of doing harm to an enemy. These are evidence that someone actively wishes to do Germanicus harm.
plumbeīs tabulīs	Lead tablets were often the medium of choice for these kinds of messages to the gods. They could be easily rolled up and placed somewhere out of sight. A large number of these have been retrieved from the spring in the Roman baths at Bath.
nūminibus īnfernīs	In different circumstances prayers or curses would be addressed to different gods. In the event of bringing about an enemy's death, the gods of the Underworld are a natural choice.
missī	The participle *missi* sits alone in this sentence functioning as the subject. Thus it needs a noun to be implied with it – consider *those sent* or *men sent*.
signa exspectārent	The implication of this is that Piso's men are waiting for deterioration so that they can report the (good) news back to him. In this way they draw attention to Piso's apparent plot.
haud minus... quam	*No less... than...* i.e. he is experiencing both feelings in equal measure. What is the effect of this construction?
amīcitiam eī renūntiābat	The formal renunciation of a friendship was a powerful act in the Ancient World. To do so meant that you considered the person in question no more than an enemy not simply that you did not wish to see them anymore.

saevam vim morbī augēbat persuāsiō venēnī ā Pīsōne acceptī;

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et reperiēbantur solō ac parietibus ērutae hūmānōrum corporum reliquiae, carmina et dēvōtiōnēs et nōmen Germānicī plumbeīs tabulīs īnsculptum, cinerēs sēmustī ac tābō oblitī aliaque malefica quibus crēditur animās nūminibus īnfernīs sacrārī.

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simul missī ā Pīsōne incūsābantur quod valētūdinis adversae signa exspectārent.

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haec Germānicō haud minus īrā quam per metum accepta sunt. compōnit epistulam quā amīcitiam eī renūntiābat.

The death of Germanicus (cont'd)

Germānicus paulīsper sē crēdidit convalēscere; deinde fessum fīēbat corpus. ubi fīnis aderat, adstantēs amīcōs ita adloquitur: '**erit vōbīs** occāsiō **querendī apud senātum** atque **invocandī** lēgēs. **decet** amīcōs nōn prōsequī **dēfūnctum** ignāvō questū, sed quae **voluerit meminisse**, quae **mandāverit** exsequī. **vindicābitis vōs**, **sī** mē potius quam fortūnam meam dīligēbātis.' amīcī, dextram **morientis** amplectentēs, iūrāvērunt sē vītam **ante quam** ultiōnem āmissūrōs esse.

Vocabulary

adloquor-i, -locutus (*deponent*)	*speak to, address*	ignavus-a-um	*pointless, futile*
adsto-are, -stiti	*stand near*	invoco-are, -avi, -atus	*call upon, invoke*
amitto-ere, -misi, -missus	*lose, give up*	iuro-are, -avi, -atus	*swear*
amplector-i, -plexus (*deponent)*	*grasp, cling to, embrace*	mando-are, -avi, -atus	*order, command*
convalesco-ere, -valui	*recover, regain health*	memini-isse (*perfect form*)	*remember, recollect*
decet, -uit (*impersonal*)	*be fitting, be proper*	occasio-onis (f)	*opportunity, occasion*
defunctus-a-um	*dead*	paulisper (adv)	*for a short time*
dextra-ae (f)	*right hand*	potius (*adverb*)	*rather*
diligo-ere, -lexi, -lectus	*value, esteem, love*	prosequor-i, -secutus (*deponent*)	*follow, accompany, escort*
exsequor-i, -secutus (*deponent*)	*perform, carry out*	queror-i, questus (*deponent*)	*lament, complain*
fessus-a-um	*tired*	questus-us (m)	*lamentation, complaint*
finis-is (m)	*end*	ultio-onis (f)	*vengeance, revenge*
fortuna-ae (f)	*fortune, prosperity, status*	vindico-are, -avi, -atus	*avenge*

Notes

erit vōbīs	*vobis* is possessive dative – *there will be to you* i.e. *you will have...*
querendī... invocandī	*querendi* is the genitive form of the gerund (a verb functioning as a noun) and should be translated *lamenting* or *complaining*. It follows *occasio* – *an opportunity of lamenting*. More natural in English is to say *an opportunity to lament*. *invocandi* which follows works in the same way.
apud senātum	While often meaning *in the house of* or *among*, *apud* + accusative can also mean *in the presence of* or *before.*
decet	A number of infinitives are reliant on *decet*, not only *prosequi* but also *meminisse* and *exsequi.*
dēfūnctum	Like *missi* in the previous section, *defunctum* (which is actually a participle from the verb *defungor* – to finish) is acting as a noun on its own. Translate as *the dead man* or *the departed.*
voluerit... mandāverit	Both these verbs are perfect subjunctives as part of indirect questions following *quae – what he wanted... what he ordered*.
meminisse	An unusual verb, *memini* is perfect in form but present in meaning. As such, *meminisse* is the present infinitive – *to remember*.
vindicābitis vōs	This requires a little filling out in English – the easiest thing to do is to imply *me* as the object of the verb.
sī	This conditional clause actually sits with *vindicabitis vos* (despite the word order). *If you... then you will avenge me.*
morientis	Again, another participle acting as a noun – *of the dying man*.
ante quam	This is a common idiom in Latin – *before than* – and is sometimes seen as a single word *antequam*. It is easiest translated as either *before* or *rather than*.

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vindicābitis vōs, sī mē potius quam fortūnam meam dīligēbātis.'

amīcī, dextram morientis amplectentēs, iūrāvērunt sē vītam ante quam ultiōnem āmissūrōs esse.

The death of Germanicus (cont'd)

neque multō post mortuus est, **ingentī lūctū** prōvinciae et circumiacentium populōrum. indoluērunt exterae nātiōnēs rēgēsque: tanta fuerat illīus cōmitās **in sociōs**, mānsuētūdō **in hostēs**; propter vultum ēloquentiamque venerātiōnem omnium adeptus erat. et **erant quī illum** magnō Alexandrō ob **fōrmam aetātem genus locumque mortis** adaequārent; nam affirmāvērunt utrumque corpore decōrō praeditum, genere īnsignī ortum, vix **trīgintā annōs nātum** periisse.

Names

Magnus Alexander, Magni Alexandri (m)	Alexander the Great, son of Philip of Macedon and himself king of Macedon from 336-323BC. Alexander was the model of a handsome, capable and young ruler who died too soon. Having conquered huge swathes of the Middle East, Alexander died in Babylon in Asia at the age of 32. Many Roman generals and statesmen looked to create comparisons between themselves and Alexander, notably Pompey the Great (Pompeius Magnus) who went so far as to model his hairstyle on that of Alexander.

Vocabulary

adaequo-are, -avi, -atus	*equal, compare*	luctus-us (m)	*sorrow, grief*
adipiscor-i, adeptus (*deponent*)	*receive, attain*	mansuetudo-inis (f)	*clemency, mercy*
aetas-atis (f)	*age*	natio-onis (f)	*nation, race*
affirmo-are, -avi	*assert, declare*	natus-a-um	*(with ages) old, of age*
circumiaceo-ere, -ui	*surround, border*	ob (+ acc)	*because of*
comitas-atis (f)	*friendliness, kindness*	orior-iri, ortus (*deponent*)	*spring from, be born of*
decorus-a-um	*beautiful, handsome*	pereo-ire, -ii	*perish, die*
eloquentia-ae (f)	*eloquence*	praeditus-a-um	*gifted, provided*
exterus-a-um	*foreign*	propter (+ acc)	*on account of*
forma-ae (f)	*appearance, looks*	provincia-ae (f)	*province*
genus-eris (n)	*family, birth, manner*	uterque (*pronoun*)	*each, both (of two)*
indolesco-ere, -dolui	*grieve, be distressed*	veneratio-onis (f)	*reverence, respect*
insignis-e	*distinguished, eminent*	vultus-us (m)	*face, appearance*

Notes

ingentī lūctū	Although strictly ablative (*with the great grief*), this phrase is probably best translated as *to the great grief...*
in sociōs... in hostēs	As previously noted (p.11), *in* with the accusative can mean against. Here, as Tacitus is describing positive qualities, it is probably best translated as *towards*.
erant quī	When placed at the beginning of a phrase, forms of *est* or *sunt* are best translated as *there is* or *there are*. The same applies with past tenses thus here – *there were those who...*
illum	Referring to Germanicus.
fōrmam... locumque mortis	A direct comparison between the two men. Both Germanicus and Alexander the Great were said to be good looking and refined. Both also died in Asia Minor. To receive this kind of comparison is high praise for Germanicus and shows the feeling of affection towards him.
trīgintā annōs nātum	Technically the participle from the verb *nascor, natus* with an age literally means *born for X years.* This is very unnatural in English and is better rendered as *aged X years.*

neque multō post mortuus est, ingentī lūctū prōvinciae et circumiacentium populōrum.

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indoluērunt exterae nātiōnēs rēgēsque: tanta fuerat illīus cōmitās in sociōs, mānsuētūdō in hostēs; propter vultum ēloquentiamque venerātiōnem omnium adeptus erat.

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et erant quī illum magnō Alexandrō ob fōrmam aetātem genus locumque mortis adaequārent;

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nam affirmāvērunt utrumque corpore decōrō praeditum, genere īnsignī ortum, vix trīgintā annōs nātum periisse.

The death of Germanicus

saevam vim morbī augēbat persuāsiō venēnī ā Pīsōne acceptī; et reperiēbantur solō ac parietibus ērutae hūmānōrum corporum reliquiae, carmina et dēvōtiōnēs et nōmen Germānicī plumbeīs tabulīs īnsculptum, cinerēs sēmustī ac tābō oblitī aliaque malefica quibus crēditur animās nūminibus īnfernīs sacrārī. simul missī ā Pīsōne incūsābantur quod valētūdinis adversae signa exspectārent. haec Germānicō haud minus īrā quam per metum accepta sunt. compōnit epistulam quā amīcitiam eī renūntiābat.

Germānicus paulīsper sē crēdidit convalēscere; deinde fessum fīēbat corpus. ubi fīnis aderat, adstantēs amīcōs ita adloquitur: 'erit vōbīs occāsiō querendī apud senātum atque invocandī lēgēs. decet amīcōs nōn prōsequī dēfūnctum ignāvō questū, sed quae voluerit meminisse, quae mandāverit exsequī. vindicābitis vōs, sī mē potius quam fortūnam meam dīligēbātis.' amīcī, dextram morientis amplectentēs, iūrāvērunt sē vītam ante quam ultiōnem āmissūrōs esse.

neque multō post mortuus est, ingentī lūctū prōvinciae et circumiacentium populōrum. indoluērunt exterae nātiōnēs rēgēsque: tanta fuerat illīus cōmitās in sociōs, mānsuētūdō in hostēs; propter vultum ēloquentiamque venerātiōnem omnium adeptus erat. et erant quī illum magnō Alexandrō ob fōrmam aetātem genus locumque mortis adaequārent; nam affirmāvērunt utrumque corpore decōrō praeditum, genere īnsignī ortum, vix trīgintā annōs nātum periisse.

GERMANICUS AND PISO

MOURNING

Despite her exile and death under Tiberius, Agrippina remained a symbol of Roman matronly virtue for many. This coin, minted under the Emperor Caligula (Agrippina's son), commemorates her memory. The legends read:

Agrippina, daughter of Marcus, mother of Gaius Caesar Augustus
The Senate and the People of Rome – to the memory of Agrippina

(British museum catalogue numeber: R.6464)

Mourning

at Agrippīna, quamquam dēfessa lūctū et **corpore aegrō**, impatiēns tamen erat omnium quae ultiōnem morārentur. **ascendit** nāvem cum cineribus Germānicī et līberīs, miserantibus omnibus quod fēmina **summā nōbilitāte pulcherrimōque mātrimōniō**, quae venerātiōnem omnium merēret, tunc fērālēs reliquiās sinū **ferret**, incerta ultiōnis. **Pīsōnem** interim apud Coum īnsulam **nūntius** adsequitur **periisse Germānicum**. **quō** gāvīsus caedit victimās, adit templa. **nōn modo** Pīsō ipse gaudiō immoderātō sē gerit, **sed etiam** magis īnsolēscit **Plancīna**, quae **lūctum** mortuā sorōre tum prīmum in laetum cultum mūtāvit.

Names

Cous-i (f)   The island of Cos, just off the west coast of Turkey.

Vocabulary

adsequor-i, -secutus (*deponent*)	*reach, arrive at*	magis (*adverb*)	*more*
aeger, -gra, -grum	*unwell, sick*	matrimonium-i (n)	*marriage*
at (*conjunction*)	*but*	me gero-ere, gessi, gestus	*act, behave oneself*
caedo-ere, cecidi, caesus	*slaughter, slay*	mereo-ere, -ui, -itus	*deserve, merit*
cinis-eris (m)	*ash, cremated remains*	miseror-ari, -atus (*deponent*)	*pity, feel compassion*
cultus-us (m)	*dress, attire*	moror-ari, -atus (*deponent*)	*delay*
defessus-a-um	*worn out*	muto-are, -avi, -atus	*change, shift*
feralis-e	*of the dead, funereal*	nobilitas-atis (f)	*nobility, high birth*
gaudium-i (n)	*joy, delight*	pereo-ire, -ii	*perish, die*
immoderatus-a-um	*unrestrained, excessive*	reliquiae-arum (f)	*(of the dead) remains, ashes*
impatiens-entis	*(+ gen) impatient*	sinus-us (m)	*(of a person) bosom, arms*
incertus-a-um	*uncertain, unsure*	ultio-onis (f)	*revenge, vengeance*
insolesco-ere	*become arrogant, haughty*	veneratio-onis (f)	*reverence, respect*
luctus-us (m)	*grief, mourning*	victima-ae (f)	*(sacrificial) victim*

Notes

corpore aegrō	A descriptive ablative – *with sick body.* It is possibly easier to transfer the force of *aegro* to agree with Agrippina – *weak in respect of her body...*
ascendit	This is the usual verb used of people boarding ships. It should not be translated *go up* or *climb* here.
summā nōbilitāte pulcherrimōque mātrimōniō	More descriptive ablatives – *with the greatest nobility and the most beautiful marriage.* Here it may be simplest to insert *have* in English – *Because a woman who had...*
ferret	The remainder of the *quod* clause relies on *ferret* as the main verb (although it is subjunctive as it is expressing conjecture). The main thrust of the sentence can be found in *femina... reliquias... ferret.*
Pīsōnem... nūntius	The subject, *nuntius* (probably *news* or *a message* here) has been delayed. Pisonem, although accusative, has been promoted to the beginning of the sentence. Why might this be?
periisse Germānicum	This is an accusative and infinitive construction following *nuntius* – *news that...* Again, the usual word order (accusative first) has been reversed. Consider the impact of this.
quō	A connecting relative – *at which.* It refers to the news of Germanicus' death. Usually *at this* is a more straightforward rendering in English.
nōn modo... sed etiam	As a pair these two phrases mean *not only... but also...*
Plancīna	For the third time in this paragraph Tacitus has inverted the usual word order. Plancina (Piso's wife) is the subject but sits behind the verb which applies to her, *insolescit.*

lūctum	Although usually meaning grief, here *luctus* probably refers to Plancina's mourning clothes and should be translated as such. The process of mourning in Roman culture was proscribed and ritualized, involving the donning of mourning attire for specified periods. What do you think Tacitus is trying to illustrate by Plancina's removal of her mourning dress just at the moment of Germanicus' death?

at Agrippīna, quamquam dēfessa lūctū et corpore aegrō, impatiēns tamen erat omnium quae ultiōnem morārentur.

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ascendit nāvem cum cineribus Germānicī et līberīs, miserantibus omnibus quod fēmina summā nōbilitāte pulcherrimōque mātrimōniō, quae venerātiōnem omnium merēret, tunc fērālēs reliquiās sinū ferret, incerta ultiōnis.

Pīsōnem interim apud Coum īnsulam nūntius adsequitur periisse Germānicum.

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quō gāvīsus caedit victimās, adit templa.

---

nōn modo Pīsō ipse gaudiō immoderātō sē gerit, sed etiam magis īnsolēscit Plancīna, quae lūctum mortuā sorōre tum prīmum in laetum cultum mūtāvit.

Mourning (cont'd)

at Rōmae, postquam fāma Germānicī valētūdinis percrēbuit cūnctaque, **ut ex longinquō**, aucta **in dēterius** adferēbantur, **dolor, īra, questūs** ērumpēbant: **ideō nīmīrum Germānicum** in extrēmās terrās **relēgātum esse**, ideō Pīsōnī permissam prōvinciam. **hōs vulgī sermōnēs** mors Germānicī, ubi nūntiāta est, adeō incendit ut, **ante ēdictum magistrātuum, ante senātūs cōnsultum**, sūmptō **iūstitiō dēsererentur fora, clauderentur domūs**. **ubīque silentium et gemitus**. et quamquam **īnsignibus** lūgentium nōn abstinēbant, altius **animīs** maerēbant.

Vocabulary

abstineo-ere, -tinui	*refrain from, abstain from*	longinquus-a-um	*far off, distant*
adfero, -ferre, attuli, allatum	*report*	lugeo-ere, luxi, luctus	*mourn, lament*
augeo-ere, auxi, auctus	*increase, exaggerate*	maereo-ere	*mourn, grieve*
claudo-ere, clausi, clausus	*close, shut up*	magistratus-us (m)	*magistrate*
consultum-i (n)	*decree*	nimirum (*adverb*)	*no doubt, certainly*
cuncta-orum (n pl)	*all things, everything*	percrebesco-ere, -crebui	*spread*
desero-ere, deserui, desertus	*leave, desert, abandon*	permitto-ere, -misi, -missus	*(+ dat) give, entrust*
deterior-ius (*comparative*)	*worse*	provincia-ae (f)	*province*
dolor-oris (m)	*pain, grief*	questus-us (m)	*lamentation, complaint*
edictum-i (n)	*edict, proclamation*	relego-are, -avi, -atus	*send away, consign*
erumpo-ere, -rupi, -ruptus	*break out, burst forth*	senatus-us (m)	*senate*
extremus-a-um	*extreme, furthest*	sermo-onis (m)	*speach, talk*
fama-ae (f)	*rumour, report*	silentium-i (n)	*silence, quiet*
gemitus-us (m)	*groaning, lamentation*	sumo-ere, -sumpsi, -sumptus	*take, enter upon*
ideo (*adverb*)	*for that reason*	ubique (*adverb*)	*everywhere*
insignis-e	*(as noun) outward signs*	valetudo-inis (f)	*health, condition*
iustitium-i (n)	*public mourning, cessation of business*	vulgus-i (m)	*(ordinary) people*

Notes

ut ex longinquō	An authorial intervention – *as (they do) from afar*. Tacitus is expressing his belief that a rumour which has to travel a greater distance will naturally tend to become more negative.
in dēterius	*in* is being used with the neuter comparative adjective (-*ius* ending). As seen previously, the meaning of *in* can vary depending on the circumstances (we have already seen *against* and *towards*). Here it means something like *for (the worse)*.
dolor, īra, questūs	No doubt you have come across the concept of repetition in groups of three in your English lessons. Here Tacitus is engaging in exactly the same idea, a quick tricolon of words all with a similar force. He also neglects to include any conjunctions (*and*). Why do you think he has phrased it this way?
ideō nīmīrum	*No doubt (it was) for that reason...* This is an interesting piece of presentation on Tacitus' part. Although not directly quoting the people, he expresses their thoughts as two indirect statements. He is not (necessarily) expressing his own views here, instead these words are representative of the grief and complaints previously mentioned.
Germānicum... relēgātum esse	An indirect statement following on from the implied speech of the ordinary people. *promissam provinciam*, which follows, works in the same way.
hōs vulgī sermōnēs	Again, the object of the sentence has been moved forward while *mors* is delayed. *vulgi* has a number of different meanings, often translatable as *the mob, the rabble*. Here it is probably slightly more neutral and means the ordinary people rather than the political class or imperial household.
ante ēdictum magistrātuum, ante senātūs cōnsultum	A useful piece of repetition in the form of *ante* emphasising the speed with which the ordinary people worked. Usually a period of public mourning would be officially decreed. Tacitus has also stylishly inverted the word order for the two clauses – *edictum magistratuum (acc, gen) senatus consultum (gen, acc)*. Why do you think he might have done this?
iūstitiō	*iustitium* (linked with *ius – justice*) has its roots in the law courts. During periods of public mourning no business could be conducted in the law courts.
dēsererentur fora, clauderentur domūs	These two parallel phrases have a lovely ring to them, both creating an image of a city closed for business. How do you think Tacitus has achieved this?

ubīque silentium et gemitus	To keep things quick and concise, Tacitus has skipped out the verb *to be*. You will need to add it in English to complete the phrase.
īnsignibus... animīs	The contrast here between the physical trappings of mourning and what is actually going on in people's minds is interesting. People are obviously mourning, as can be seen through their appearance. Why draw our attention to their thoughts too?

at Rōmae, postquam fāma Germānicī valētūdinis percrēbuit cūnctaque, ut ex longinquō, aucta in dēterius adferēbantur, dolor, īra, questūs ērumpēbant:

ideō nīmīrum Germānicum in extrēmās terrās relēgātum esse, ideō Pīsōnī permissam prōvinciam.

hōs vulgī sermōnēs mors Germānicī, ubi nūntiāta est, adeō incendit ut, ante ēdictum magistrātuum, ante senātūs cōnsultum, sūmptō iūstitiō dēsererentur fora, clauderentur domūs.

ubīque silentium et gemitus. et quamquam īnsignibus lūgentium nōn abstinēbant, altius animīs maerēbant.

Mourning (cont'd)

nāvigātiōne hībernī maris nēquāquam intermissā **Agrippīna** Brundisiō appropinquat. interim adventū eius audītō **multī amīcī et plūrimī mīlitēs** quī sub Germānicō **stīpendia fēcerant** ruērunt ad portum. simulac vīsa est nāvis, **complentur nōn sōlum** portus **sed etiam** moenia ac tēcta **turbā maerentium** et rogantium inter sē, **silentiōne an vōce aliquā** ēgredientem exciperent. nāvis lentē appropinquat, **nōn celeriter**, **ut solet**, sed cūnctīs **ad trīstitiam** compositīs. postquam **duōbus cum līberīs**, fērālem urnam tenēns, **ēgressa ē nāve dēfīxit oculōs**, īdem fuit **omnium** gemitus.

Names

Brundisium-i (n)   Brundisium (modern Brindisi), a port town towards the south eastern end of Italy (i.e. in the heel of the boot). Because of its position, the town served as the major port for journeys to and from the eastern Mediterranean and still provides ferry services to the Greek town of Patras today.

Vocabulary

adventus-us (m)	*arrival*	maereo-ere	*mourn, grieve*
an (*conjunction*)	*or*	moenia-ium (n pl)	*walls, city walls*
compleo-ere, -evi, -etus	*fill, cram*	navigatio-onis (f)	*sailing, voyage*
compono-ere, -posui, -positus	*compose, contrive*	nequaquam (*adverb*)	*in no way*
cuncta-orum (n pl)	*all things, everything*	portus-us (m)	*port, harbour*
defigo-ere, -fixi, -fixus	*fix, cast down*	silentium-i (n)	*silence, quiet*
excipio-ere, -cepi, -ceptus	*receive, welcome*	stipendia-orum (n pl)	*(of soldiers) service, duty*
feralis-e	*of the dead, funereal*	tectum-i (n)	*roof, house*
gemitus-us (m)	*groaning, lamentation*	tristitia-ae (f)	*grief, sorrow*
hibernus-a-um	*of winter, wintery*	turba-ae (f)	*crowd, throng*
intermitto-ere, -missi, -missus	*suspend, interrupt*	urna-ae (f)	*urn*

Notes

nāvigātiōne	The use of the ablative here expresses the means by which Agrippina returned to Italy – *by* or *through a voyage*.
hībernī maris	Literally *of a wintery sea*, however, *over* is perhaps a more reasonable rendering in English.
Agrippīna	Agrippina, as the subject of the sentence, has been delayed shifting the emphasis slightly. What effect has this had?
multī amīcī et plūrimī mīlitēs	Although different forms, *multi* and *plurimi* are rooted in the same word (*many* vs *very many*). This is a particular form of repetition (known as polyptoton). What purpose do you think it serves here?
stīpendia fēcerant	The word *stipendium* has the basic meaning of *income* or *salary* (giving us the English stipend). When used of soldiers along with *facio*, though, it means to serve as a soldier or to undertake military service.
complentur... turbā maerentium	The passive verb *complentur* (relating to *portus, moenia* and *tecta*) is separated from the ablative *turba* by some distance – *filled with a crowd*. *maerentium* (and later *rogantium*) are both genitive describing the crowd.
nōn sōlum... sed etiam	Another phrase expressing *not only... but also*. Why does Tacitus choose to depict the scene in this way?
silentiōne an vōce aliquā	A slightly unusual construction, *ne* here is the suffix *–ne* introducing a question (but as part of an indirect question). When combined with *an* the two mean *whether... or...*
nōn celeriter	Hasn't Tacitus already said this using *lente*? Why say it again?
ut solet	Again, *ut* (with an indicative) implies an authorial comment – Tacitus is suggesting that this is not the normal manner of arrival for a ship at Brundisium.
ad trīstitiam	Like we have seen with *in*, the meaning of prepositions is not as rigid as one might think. *towards* makes little sense here as this is a more figurative meaning – consider *for*.

duōbus cum līberīs	When a noun with a preposition is modified by another word (usually an adjective, in this case a number), the noun is not normally separated from the preposition. Instead the modifying word is pushed out of the phrase. Instead of the expected *cum duobus liberis* this is rendered *duobus cum liberis*. This is seen in the phrase commonly used at graduation ceremonies in the US *summa cum laude* (*with the greatest distinction*) when describing those who achieve high honours.
ēgressa ē nāve dēfīxit oculōs	Although not mentioned by name, this phrase refers to Agrippina. Grammatically this is clear from the feminine participle describing her but also should be clear from the context.
omnium	Describing the groan, you may wish to consider how to translate *omnium* as *of all* might feel a little unnatural in English.

nāvigātiōne hībernī maris nēquāquam intermissā Agrippīna Brundisiō appropinquat.

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interim adventū eius audītō multī amīcī et plūrimī mīlitēs quī sub Germānicō stīpendia fēcerant ruērunt ad portum.

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simulac vīsa est nāvis, complentur nōn sōlum portus sed etiam moenia ac tēcta turbā maerentium et rogantium inter sē, silentiōne an vōce aliquā ēgredientem exciperent.

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nāvis lentē appropinquat, nōn celeriter, ut solet, sed cūnctīs ad trīstitiam compositīs.

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postquam duōbus cum līberīs, fērālem urnam tenēns, ēgressa ē nāve dēfīxit oculōs, īdem fuit omnium gemitus.

Mourning

at Agrippīna, quamquam dēfessa lūctū et corpore aegrō, impatiēns tamen erat omnium quae ultiōnem morārentur. ascendit nāvem cum cineribus Germānicī et līberīs, miserantibus omnibus quod fēmina summā nōbilitāte pulcherrimōque mātrimōniō, quae venerātiōnem omnium merēret, tunc fērālēs reliquiās sinū ferret, incerta ultiōnis. Pīsōnem interim apud Coum īnsulam nūntius adsequitur periisse Germānicum. quō gāvīsus caedit victimās, adit templa. nōn modo Pīsō ipse gaudiō immoderātō sē gerit, sed etiam magis īnsolēscit Plancīna, quae lūctum mortuā sorōre tum prīmum in laetum cultum mūtāvit.

at Rōmae, postquam fāma Germānicī valētūdinis percrēbuit cūnctaque, ut ex longinquō, aucta in dēterius adferēbantur, dolor, īra, questūs ērumpēbant: ideō nīmīrum Germānicum in extrēmās terrās relēgātum esse, ideō Pīsōnī permissam prōvinciam. hōs vulgī sermōnēs mors Germānicī, ubi nūntiāta est, adeō incendit ut, ante ēdictum magistrātuum, ante senātūs cōnsultum, sūmptō iūstitiō dēsererentur fora, clauderentur domūs. ubīque silentium et gemitus. et quamquam īnsignibus lūgentium nōn abstinēbant, altius animīs maerēbant.

nāvigātiōne hībernī maris nēquāquam intermissā Agrippīna Brundisiō appropinquat. interim adventū eius audītō multī amīcī et plūrimī mīlitēs quī sub Germānicō stīpendia fēcerant ruērunt ad portum. simulac vīsa est nāvis, complentur nōn sōlum portus sed etiam moenia ac tēcta turbā maerentium et rogantium inter sē, silentiōne an vōce aliquā ēgredientem exciperent. nāvis lentē appropinquat, nōn celeriter, ut solet, sed cūnctīs ad trīstitiam compositīs. postquam duōbus cum līberīs, fērālem urnam tenēns, ēgressa ē nāve dēfīxit oculōs, īdem fuit omnium gemitus.

Benjamin West, *Agrippina landing at Brundisium with the ashes of Germanicus*, 1766

GERMANICUS AND PISO

REVENGE

THEN EVERYONE RETURNED TO WORK, EAGER FOR VENGEANCE ON PISO. MEANWHILE PISO AND PLANCINA SAILED ACROSS TO ITALY AND MADE THEIR WAY CHEERFULLY TO ROME, WHERE THEIR HOUSE, WHICH OVERLOOKED THE FORUM, WAS FESTIVELY DECORATED. THE BANQUETTING AND FEASTING WHICH FOLLOWED THEIR RETURN INCREASED THE PUBLIC INDIGNATION. THE NEXT DAY LUCIUS 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...

Revenge

diē senātūs Tiberius ōrātiōnem moderātam **habuit**. 'Pīsō' inquit 'patris meī lēgātus et amīcus erat. eum Germānicō **adiūtōrem mīsī ego** cum **auctōritāte senātūs ad rēs apud Orientem administrandās**. integrīs animīs **est dīiūdicandum utrum** Pīsō contumāciā et certāminibus vexāverit iuvenem exitūque eius laetātus sit, **an** scelere eum exstīnxerit. simul reputāte utrum legiōnēs ad sēditiōnem incitāverit.'

Names

Tiberius-i (m)	Tiberius (emperor 14-37AD)
Oriens-entis (m)	The East – i.e. Syria / Asia Minor (from *orior* – *rise*, compare *Oriental* in English)

Vocabulary

adiutor-oris (m)	*helper, assistant*	laetor-ari, -atus (*deponent*)	*(+ abl) rejoice, feel glad at*
administro-are, -avi, -atus	*administer, oversee*	legatus-i (m)	*envoy, representative*
auctoritas-atis (f)	*power, authority*	legio-onis (f)	*legion*
certamen-inis (n)	*rivalry, ambition*	moderatus-a-um	*restrained, moderate*
contumacia-ae (f)	*obstinacy, stubbornness*	oratio-onis (f)	*speech, oration*
diiudico-are, -avi, -atus	*judge, determine*	reputo-are, -avi, -atus	*consider, ponder*
exitus-us (m)	*(here) death*	seditio-onis (f)	*mutiny, rebellion*
exstinguo-ere, -nxi, -nctus	*kill*	senatus-us (m)	*senate*
incito-are, -avi, -atus	*incite, urge*	vexo-are, -avi, -atus	*annoy, trouble*
integer, -tegra, -tegrum	*unbiased, impartial*		

Notes

habuit	Although usually *to have*, *habere* has a number of unusual meanings (*hold*, *keep*, even *think*). When used referring to speeches (as here), it means *to make* one.
adiūtōrem	*adiutorem* agrees with *eum* at the beginning of the sentence and should be translated *as an assistant*.
mīsī ego	This is extremely unusual – not only has Tacitus had Tiberius refer to himself using *ego* but he has also inverted the word order so that the verb comes first. Do you think this has any effect on the tone of his speech?
auctōritāte senātūs	Provincial governorships were usually (although not in all cases) signed off with the approval of the senate. Tiberius is making clear that his choice was supported and that Piso went with the full authority of the senate behind him.
ad rēs administrandās	A gerundive following *ad* – remember that these should be treated as expressing purpose – *to administer...*
apud Orientem	Again, an unusual use of *apud* – consider *in*.
est dīiūdicandum	Another gerundive, this time with *est* rather than *ad*. This particular gerundive is neuter with the subject *it*. Gerundives are also passive and show obligation so this one means something like *it should be judged*. More natural in English is to associate a person with it – *you must judge*.
utrum... an...	*utrum* and *an* often appear as a pair, although they are separated a little here. Together they mean *whether... or...*

diē senātūs Tiberius ōrātiōnem moderātam habuit.

'Pīsō' inquit 'patris meī lēgātus et amīcus erat. eum Germānicō adiūtōrem mīsī ego cum auctōritāte senātūs ad rēs apud Orientem administrandās.

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integrīs animīs est dīiūdicandum utrum Pīsō contumāciā et certāminibus vexāverit iuvenem exitūque eius laetātus sit, an scelere eum exstīnxerit.

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simul reputāte utrum legiōnēs ad sēditiōnem incitāverit.'

Revenge (cont'd)

deinde biduum **crīminibus obiciendīs** statuitur **ut**que post intervallum sex diērum reus per trīduum **dēfenderētur**. trēs amīcī Germānicī cōnsimilī studiō **obiēcērunt** Pīsōnem, odiō Germānicī et **rērum novārum** studiō, mīlitēs per licentiam et **sociōrum iniūriās** corrūpisse; postrēmō **ipsum Germānicum** dēvōtiōnibus et venēnō occīdisse. tum **et Pīsōnem et Plancīnam**, postquam sacra et immolātiōnēs nefandās fēcissent, petīvisse armīs **rem pūblicam**.

Vocabulary

biduum-i (n)	*(a period of) two days*	obicio-ere, -ieci, -iectus	*bring, present, accuse*
consimilis-e	*entirely similar, very alike*	odium-i (n)	*hatred, animosity*
corrumpo-ere, -rupi, -ruptus	*corrupt, ruin*	postremo (adverb)	*finally*
crimen-inis (n)	*charge*	reus-i (m)	*defendant, the accused*
devotio-onis (f)	*curse*	sacra-orum (n pl)	*(religious) rites*
immolatio-onis (f)	*sacrifice*	socius-i (m)	*ally*
iniuria-ae (f)	*wrong, injury*	statuo-ere, -ui, -utus	*allocate, determine*
intervallum-i (n)	*interval, pause*	studium-i (n)	*enthusiasm, zeal*
licentia-ae (f)	*hooliganism, disorder*	triduum-i (n)	*(a period of) three days*
nefandus-a-um	*unspeakable, wicked*	venenum-i (n)	*poison*

Notes

crīminibus obiciendīs	The gerundive *obiciendis* works with *statuitur – allocated for presenting the charges*.
ut... defenderetur	Tacitus has engaged in a little *variatio* here. Whereas he used a gerundive for the acts of the prosecution (*criminibus obiciendis*) the acts of the defence are described using an *ut* clause (effectively: *triduum statuitur ut defenderetur*). Does this make any difference to the flow of the sentence?
obiēcērunt	The meaning of *obicio* is slightly different at its second appearance in the passage. It is a much more direct verb here meaning *accuse* or *say in accusation*. This allows it to introduce the accusative and infinitive constructions which make up the rest of this section.
rērum novārum	Literally *of new things*, the term *res novae* has a much more specific sense in political terms – *revolution* is the usual rendering.
sociōrum iniūriās	The use of the genitive here does not translate well into English – *wrongs (done) to our allies* may be better.
ipsum Germānicum	Although Tacitus is still relaying the information through an accusative and infinitive construction, Germanicus is not the subject of this clause, but rather the object of *occidisse*. Piso, mentioned previously, needs to be understood instead. Again, context should make this clear.
et Pīsōnem et Plancīnam	To contrast with the previous accusations, Tacitus continues the accusations by including Plancina. Both Piso and Plancina are the subject of *petivisse* which completes the accusative and infinitive construction.
rem pūblicam	Like *res novae* earlier, *rem publicam* (*public business*) has a specific meaning in political contexts and is the way in which the Romans referred to *the state*.

deinde biduum crīminibus obiciendīs statuitur utque post intervallum sex diērum reus per trīduum dēfenderētur.

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trēs amīcī Germānicī cōnsimilī studiō obiēcērunt Pīsōnem, odiō Germānicī et rērum novārum studiō, mīlitēs per licentiam et sociōrum iniūriās corrūpisse;

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postrēmō ipsum Germānicum dēvōtiōnibus et venēnō occīdisse.

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tum et Pīsōnem et Plancīnam, postquam sacra et immolātiōnēs nefandās fēcissent, petīvisse armīs rem pūblicam.

Revenge (cont'd)

dēfēnsiō **in cēterīs** crīminibus trepidāvit; nam **neque** ambitiō mīlitum **neque** iniūria in prōvinciam, **nē** contumēliae **quidem** adversum **imperātōrem**, negārī poterant: sōlum venēnī crīmen **potuit Pīsō dīluere**. at simul populī ante cūriam **vōcēs audiēbantur**: **nōn temperātūrōs** manibus sī Pīsō sententiās **patrum** ēvāsisset.

Vocabulary

adversum (*preposition*)	*(+ acc) against*	evado-ere, -vasi, -vasus	*escape*
ambitio-onis (f)	*bribery*	iniuria-ae (f)	*wrong, injury*
at (*conjunction*)	*but*	ne... quidem (*conjuction*)	*not even*
ceterus-a-um	*other, rest*	nego-are, -avi, -atus	*deny*
contumelia-ae (f)	*insult, abuse*	provincia-ae (f)	*province*
crimen-inis (n)	*charge*	sententia-ae (f)	*judgement, verdict*
curia-ae (f)	*curia, senate-house*	tempero-are, -avi, -atus	*(+ dat) restrain*
defensio-onis (f)	*(legal) defence*	trepido-are, -avi, -atus	*falter, be at a loss*
diluo-ere, -ui, -utus	*wash away, refute*	venenum-i (n)	*poison*

Notes

in cēterīs	Tacitus has not yet made the distinction between the one the defence did manage to refute and the remainder. This will be elucidated more fully in what follows.
neque... neque... ne... quidem	A smart tricolon of accusations which gives the list a nice, satisfying ring. The final use of *ne... quidem* ups the force a little and is known as a *rising tricolon* or a tricolon crescendo. How effective do you find this?
imperātōrem	Potentially confusing as *imperator* can mean either a general or an emperor (and we have both in the form of Germanicus and Tiberius referred to in this passage). Based on context it seems pretty clear that *imperator* here refers to Germanicus.
potuit Pīsō dīluere	This is an extremely unusual use of word order – how do you think it impacts on the sentence? Does it amplify or weaken particular aspects?
vōcēs audiēbantur	Again this is an unusual use of position within the sentence (particularly that *voces* is separated from *populi*). Does it make a difference?
nōn temperātūrōs	This is a very compressed accusative and infinitive statement running on from the idea of the voices outside (*which were saying that...*). There is no verb of saying and no accusative noun and the infinitive is missing its *esse*. In full it might read *dicebant se non temptaturos esse...* Although you may wish to imply a strong very (perhaps *clamabant* or similar?)
patrum	*patres* here refers to the senators (rooted in the idea of them being wise elders who would advise the state). They are sometimes known as *patres conscripti – fathers enrolled (in the senate)*.

dēfēnsiō in cēterīs crīminibus trepidāvit;

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nam neque ambitiō mīlitum neque iniūria in prōvinciam, nē contumēliae quidem adversum imperātōrem, negārī poterant: sōlum venēnī crīmen potuit Pīsō dīluere.

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at simul populī ante cūriam vōcēs audiēbantur: nōn temperātūrōs manibus sī Pīsō sententiās patrum ēvāsisset.

Revenge (cont'd)

eadem erat **Plancīnae** invidia. atque ipsa, dum **Pīsōnī** spēs erat absolūtiōnis, sociam **sē** cuiuscumque fortūnae **futūram esse** et, sī necesse esset, **comitem** exitiī prōmittēbat: sed paulātim **sēgregārī** ā marītō coepit. **quod** postquam Pīsō sibi **exitiābile esse** intellēxit, dubitāvit an **causam dīceret** amplius. itaque, tamquam dēfēnsiōnem in posterum diem meditārētur, **pauca** scrībit obsignatque et lībertō trādit; tum **solita cūrandō corporī exsequitur**. deinde **multam post noctem**, ēgressā cubiculō uxōre, claudī iānuam iussit; et prīmā lūce perfossō iugulō, iacente **humī** gladiō, repertus est.

Vocabulary

absolutio-onis (f)	*(in law) acquittal*	humus-i (f)	*ground, floor*
amplius (*comp adverb*)	*any more, further*	invidia-ae (f)	*hatred, ill-will*
an (*conjunction*)	*or*	iugulum-i (n)	*throat*
causa-ae (f)	*(in law) case*	meditor-ari, -atus (*deponent*)	*reflect, consider*
claudo-ere, clausi, clausus	*close, shut up*	obsigno-are, -avi, -atus	*seal*
cubiculum-i (n)	*room, bedchamber*	perfodio-ere, -fodi, -fossus	*stab, cut*
defensio-onis (f)	*(legal) defence*	posterus-a-um	*next, following*
dubito-are, -avi, -atus	*hesitate, doubt*	quicumque (*pronoun*)	*whoever, whatever*
exitiabilis-e	*fatal, deadly*	reperio-ire, repperi, -pertus	*find, discover*
exitium-i (n)	*destruction, ruin, death*	segrego-are, -avi, -atus	*remove, separate*
exsequor-i, -secutus (*deponent*)	*perform, carry out*	socia-ae (f)	*partner, ally*
fortuna-ae (f)	*fortune, fate*	tamquam (*adverb*)	*as if*

Notes

Plancīnae	A possessive dative – *there was... for Plancina.* i.e. *Plancina experienced* or *Plancina was the subject of...*
Pīsōnī	The same principle as for Plancina in the note above – *there was hope for Piso* – i.e. *Piso had hope that...* or (perhaps more likely) *there was hope that Piso might...* In both cases the way that you phrase your translation needs some consideration.
sē... futūram esse	An indirect statement relying on *promittebat* which follows. *se* refers to Plancina.
comitem	A continuation of the indirect statement (above) – *futurum esse* needs to be implied again. The phrase works in a parallel fashion to *sociam se futurum esse*.
sēgregārī	The use of the passive here is difficult to render sensibly in English. Perhaps it is easiest to take an active verb in English – *she began to distance herself*
quod... exitiābile esse	A tricky phrase – *quod* is a connecting relative which refers to the general situation and the act of Plancina distancing herself when it becomes clear Piso will be condemned. However, it also forms part of an accusative and infinitive relying on *intellexit* (lit. *after he understood which thing to be...*)
causam dīceret	As a phrase in a legal sense, *causam dico* means to plead one's case or defend oneself.
pauca	An adjective in the neuter plural as the object. Lit. *a few things* – consider *a little*.
solita cūrandō corporī exsequitur	Again, the neuter plural *solita* is the object in this sentence. From *soleo* meaning be accustomed, *solita* translates as *the usual things*. Thus *he carried out the usual things for the care of his body*. Perhaps more natural in English – *he saw to his personal needs*. Consider how you wish to translate this phrase.
multam post noctem	As we have seen previously, prepositions push adjectives away from the noun. *multam* agrees with *noctem*.
humī	This is the locative form of the noun (there are very few nouns which do this which are not place names). *Romae* (*in Rome, at* Rome) is the only form you need to know at GCSE, thus *humi* means *on the ground*.

eadem erat Plancīnae invidia. atque ipsa, dum Pīsōnī spēs erat absolūtiōnis, sociam sē cuiuscumque fortūnae futūram esse et, sī necesse esset, comitem exitiī prōmittēbat:

sed paulātim sēgregārī ā marītō coepit.

quod postquam Pīsō sibi exitiābile esse intellēxit, dubitāvit an causam dīceret amplius.

itaque, tamquam dēfēnsiōnem in posterum diem meditārētur, pauca scrībit obsignatque et lībertō trādit; tum solita cūrandō corporī exsequitur.

deinde multam post noctem, ēgressā cubiculō uxōre, claudī iānuam iussit; et prīmā lūce perfossō iugulō, iacente humī gladiō, repertus est.

diē senātūs Tiberius ōrātiōnem moderātam habuit. 'Pīsō' inquit 'patris meī lēgātus et amīcus erat. eum Germānicō adiūtōrem mīsī ego cum auctōritāte senātūs ad rēs apud Orientem administrandās. integrīs animīs est dīiūdicandum utrum Pīsō contumāciā et certāminibus vexāverit iuvenem exitūque eius laetātus sit, an scelere eum exstīnxerit. simul reputāte utrum legiōnēs ad sēditiōnem incitāverit.'

deinde biduum crīminibus obiciendīs statuitur utque post intervallum sex diērum reus per trīduum dēfenderētur. trēs amīcī Germānicī cōnsimilī studiō obiēcērunt Pīsōnem, odiō Germānicī et rērum novārum studiō, mīlitēs per licentiam et sociōrum iniūriās corrūpisse; postrēmō ipsum Germānicum dēvōtiōnibus et venēnō occīdisse. tum et Pīsōnem et Plancīnam, postquam sacra et immolātiōnēs nefandās fēcissent, petīvisse armīs rem pūblicam.

dēfēnsiō in cēterīs crīminibus trepidāvit; nam neque ambitiō mīlitum neque iniūria in prōvinciam, nē contumēliae quidem adversum imperātōrem, negārī poterant: sōlum venēnī crīmen potuit Pīsō dīluere. at simul populī ante cūriam vōcēs audiēbantur: nōn temperātūrōs manibus sī Pīsō sententiās patrum ēvāsisset.

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About the author

Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus or Pliny the Younger was a first century writer born in Comum in Northern Italy around AD 61. He was the son of a wealthy landowner and nephew of Pliny the Elder, a man of equestrian rank, who was a prolific writer most famous for his Natural History. Pliny the Younger was brought up by his uncle who also adopted him. He studied at Rome, entered the senate (holding the position of consul in 100 AD) and was a distinguished orator and politician. He also held other administrative positions and was sent to Bithynia (in Asia Minor) as a governor where he died.

Pliny is most famous for his letters which he published in nine books towards the end of his life. The subject matter varies, some passing comment on social, political and domestic matters, some offering friends advice and others requesting support for candidates in elections. Although Pliny's wrote letters, he did so in a literary style with a formal tone and hoped to preserve a record of his own times through his work. In addition, Pliny the Younger also wrote poetry and rhetoric. There is a surviving tenth book of letters which contains correspondence between Pliny and the Emperor Trajan. This was probably published after his death and is a useful source for the study of provincial government.

Pliny the Younger
Cathedral of S. Maria Maggiore, Como

About the text

The text is an extract from a larger letter by Pliny to his friend Calvisius in which he relates the exploits of Regulus, an enemy of Pliny's, whom Pliny refers to as 'the vilest of two legged creatures'. Regulus had made the majority of his money through informing on individuals and accusing them of treason. In doing so, Regulus was awarded a proportion of each individual's property as a reward. Regulus then turned to legacy hunting, a process in which he would try to become close to individuals who were close to death and put pressure on them to leave him a legacy in their will. In the full letter, three examples of such practice are given by Pliny. Here, we examine two of those: his relationship with the wealthy widow Verania and the former consul Velleius Blaesus.

Regulus

C. Plīnius Calvisiō suō S.

assem parā et accipe auream fābulam, fābulās immō; **nam mē priōrum nova admonuit**, nec rēfert ā quā incipiam. **Vērānia** graviter iacēbat: ad hanc Rēgulus vēnit. prīmum **impudentiam** hominis, quī vēnerit ad aegram, cuius marītō inimīcissimus, ipsī invīsissimus fuerat! estō, sī vēnit tantum; at ille etiam **proximus torō sēdit**; **quō diē, quā hōrā nāta esset** interrogāvit.

Names

Gaius Plinius, Gaii Plinii (m)	*Gaius Pliny (Pliny the Younger)*
Calvisius, Calvisii (m)	*Gaius Calvisius Rufus – a friend of Pliny the Younger*
Verania-ae (f)	*Verania – see note below*
Regulus-i (m)	*Regulus – see introduction*

Vocabulary

admoneo-ere, -ui, -itus	*(here) remind*	interrogo-are, -avi, -atus	*enquire, ask*
aeger-gra-grum	*ill, sick*	invisus-a-um	*hated, detested*
as-sis (m)	*as, penny (smallest Roman coin)*	nascor-i, natus	*be born*
aureus-a-um	*golden, made of gold*	prior (comparative)	*earlier, former*
esto (from sum)	*let it be*	proximus-a-um (superlative)	*very near, nearest*
iaceo-ere, -ui, -itum	*(here) lie ill*	refero, -ferre, -ttuli, -latus	*(here) matter*
immo (adverb)	*on the contrary, rather*	tantum (adverb)	*only*
impudentia-ae (f)	*impudence, shamelessness*	torus-i (m)	*bed*
incipio-ere, -cepi, -ceptus	*begin*		

Notes

C. Plinius Calvisio suo S.	As this passage is taken from a letter, it includes the standard opening in a Roman letter. The form is slightly abbreviated (as is usual) and in full would be written as: *Gaius Plinius Calvisio suo salutem dicit.* C. is the standard abbreviation for Gaius and S. is commonly recognised as *salutem dicit*. In full it means *Gaius Pliny extends his greetings to his dear Calvisius*.
assem parā	lit. *prepare an as* - Pliny is having a bit of a joke with Calvisius and asking him to pay for the story he's about to tell as a professional story-teller would have expected. The *as* was the lowest value Roman coin and would probably have got you a loaf of bread. Perhaps *pay a penny* would be a sensible way of translating this.
nam mē priōrum nova admonuit	This is a compressed sentence and the adjectives are standing in for nouns as well. Pliny's brevity could be expanded to read something like *nam me priorum fabularum nova fabula admonuit*. i.e. *for the new story reminded me of older ones*.
Vērānia	Verania was a wealthy and influential Roman woman. She had been the wife of Lucius Calpurnius Piso (not of *Germanicus and Piso*) who, in January 69AD, was to be successor to the Emperor Galba. Unfortunately both Galba and Piso were assassinated shortly afterwards making Verania a widow. Pliny wrote this letter around 100AD which would have made Verania an old woman (possibly of 80 years) by this time.
impudentiam	Accusative showing an exclamation - *the shamelessness of the man!*
proximus torō sēdit	The image is of a man cultivating a bedside manner. Despite his lack of friendship with Verania (or previously her husband), Regulus has taken on the position of an intimate companion.
quō diē, quā horā nāta esset	Regulus is asking for these details so he can work out Verania's horoscope. The Romans set quite considerable store by such things and astrologers were often consulted by wealthy Roman women.

C. Plīnius Calvisiō suō S.

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assem parā et accipe auream fābulam, fābulās immō; nam mē priōrum nova admonuit, nec rēfert ā quā incipiam.

Vērānia graviter iacēbat: ad hanc Rēgulus vēnit.

----

prīmum impudentiam hominis, quī vēnerit ad aegram, cuius marītō inimīcissimus, ipsī invīsissimus fuerat!

----

estō, sī vēnit tantum; at ille etiam proximus torō sēdit; quō diē, quā hōrā nāta esset interrogāvit.

Regulus (cont'd)

ubi audīvit, **compōnit** vultum, **intendit oculōs**, **movet** labra, **agitat** digitōs, **computat**. **nihil**. ubi diū **miseram** exspectātiōne suspendit, 'habēs' inquit 'clīmactēricum tempus sed ēvādēs. **quod** ut tibi magis liqueat, **haruspicem** cōnsulam, quem frequenter expertus sum.' sine morā **sacrificium** facit, affirmat **exta** cum sīderum significātiōne congruere.

Vocabulary

affirmo-are, -avi, -atus	*assert, declare*	exta-orum (n pl)	*entrails, organs*
agito-are, -avi, -atus	*move quickly*	haruspex-icis (m)	*soothsayer, diviner*
climactericus-a-um	*very dangerous, treacherous*	intendo-ere, -di, -tus	*strain, stretch, extend*
compono-ere, -posui, -positus	*compose, arrange*	labrum-i (n)	*lip*
computo-are, -avi, -atus	*count, reckon, calculate*	liqueo-ere, licui	*be clear, certain*
congruo-ere, -ui	*agree, concur*	mora-ae (f)	*delay*
consulo-ere, -ui, -tum	*consult*	sacrificium-i (n)	*sacrifice*
digitus-i (m)	*finger*	sidus-eris (n)	*star*
evado-ere, -si, -sus	*pass out of, escape, avoid*	significatio-onis (f)	*meaning, sign, indication*
experior-iri-pertus (deponent)	*(here) use*	suspendo-ere, -di, -sus	*hang, (here) keep in [suspense]*
exspectatio-onis (f)	*expectation, suspense*	vultus-us (m)	*face, appearance*

Notes

compōnit... intendit... movet... agitat... computat...	The sudden shift to the present tense after *audivit* and the fact that it is repeated five times with no conjunctions between any of the verbs makes this a notable sentence. What impact does Pliny choice of phrasing have?
intendit oculōs	lit. *he strains his eyes* - Regulus is staring intently.
nihil	The implication here is that having done all his thinking and calculating, he says nothing.
miseram	There is no noun agreeing with *miseram*, but the gender is clear – *the wretched woman*.
quod	A connecting relative, *quod* is the object of *liqueat – so that this might be more clear to you...*
haruspicem	Although astrology was not uncommon in the Roman Empire, it was officially deemed illegal. Despite the fact that Regulus is trying to con Verania, in order to legitimise his scheme, he consults a soothsayer (which was perfectly acceptable) to perform a sacrifice and check the entrails for signs of the future.
sacrificium... exta...	Regulus is trying to give his words greater weight by using his findings from the inspection of the organs as a comparison with those things he has discovered from the stars. Presumably he relayed whatever information would suit his purposes best.

ubi audīvit, compōnit vultum, intendit oculōs, movet labra, agitat digitōs, computat.

nihil.

ubi diū miseram exspectātiōne suspendit,

'habēs' inquit 'clīmactēricum tempus sed ēvādēs.

quod ut tibi magis liqueat, haruspicem cōnsulam, quem frequenter expertus sum.'

sine morā sacrificium facit, affirmat exta cum sīderum significātiōne congruere.

Regulus (cont'd)

illa, **ut in perīculō** crēdula, **poscit** testāmentum, lēgātum Rēgulō **scrībit**. mox ingravēscit, **clāmat** moriēns hominem scelestum perfidumque ac **plūs etiam quam periūrum** esse, quī sibi **per salūtem fīliī** pēierāvisset. **facit hoc** Rēgulus **nōn minus scelerātē quam frequenter**, quod īram deōrum, quōs ipse **cotīdiē** fallit, **in caput īnfēlīcis puerī dētestātur**.

Vocabulary

cotidie (*adverb*)	*every day*	perfidus-a-um	*dishonest, treacherous*
credulus-a-um	*quick to believe, credulous*	periurus-a-um	*oath breaking, lying*
detestor-ari, -atus (*deponent*)	*call down*	posco-ere, poposci	*demand, request*
fallo-ere, fefalli, falsus	*deceive, trick*	salus-utis (f)	*health, well being*
infelix-icis	*unlucky*	scelerate (*adverb*)	*wickedly*
ingravesco-ere (*defective*)	*become worse*	scelestus-a-um	*wicked, accursed*
legatum-i (n)	*legacy, bequest*	testamentum-i (n)	*will, testament*
periero-are, -avi, -atus	*swear a false oath*	ut	*(here) as one might expect*

Notes

ut in perīculō	A slight aside – Piny is commenting on the nature of people more generally when they are experiencing dangerous events.
poscit... scrībit... clāmat	Three uses of the present tense in quick succession. The word order is also slightly unusual as *poscit* and *clamat* appear at the head of their respective phrases while *scribit* sits at the end. Do you think this has any impact?
plūs etiam quam periūrum	Verania is clearly very unhappy with Regulus. To call him *scelestus* and *perfidus* is bad enough, but the climax of *even more than a liar* carries real force.
per salūtem filiī	Regulus has clearly promised on the life of his son in order to convince Verania that what he is saying is true. Oaths were taken seriously in the ancient world, but the oath he has taken means little to him.
nōn minus scelerātē quam frequenter	Building on the previous point, Pliny tells us that this act (swearing on his son's health) is one which Regulus undertakes frequently despite the seriousness of what he is doing.
facit hoc	Placing *facit* at the head of the sentence gives real emphasis to it – why would Pliny want to do this?
cotīdiē	An interesting addition to the piece. Regulus is a serial oath-breaker!
in caput īnfēlīcis puerī dētestātur	By repeatedly breaking oaths sworn on his boy's head, Regulus risks the wrath of the gods targeted at his boy. He clearly does not take this seriously.

illa, ut in perīculō crēdula, poscit testāmentum, lēgātum Rēgulō scrībit.

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mox ingravēscit, clāmat moriēns hominem scelestum perfidumque ac plūs etiam quam periūrum esse, quī sibi per salūtem fīliī pēierāvisset.

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facit hoc Rēgulus nōn minus scelerātē quam frequenter, quod īram deōrum, quōs ipse cotīdiē fallit, in caput īnfēlīcis puerī dētestātur.

Regulus (cont'd)

Vellēius Blaesus, ille dīves **cōnsulāris**, novissimā valētūdine cōnflictābātur: cupiēbat mūtāre testāmentum. Rēgulus, quī spērābat aliquid ex novō testāmentō, quia **nūper captāre eum coeperat**, medicōs **hortārī et rogāre** ut **quōquō modō** vītam **hominis** prōrogārent. postquam signātum est testāmentum, **mūtat persōnam, vertit adlocūtiōnem** eīsdemque medicīs, 'quōusque' inquit '**miserum** cruciātis? cūr invidētis bonā morte, cui **dare vītam nōn potestis**?' **moritur Blaesus** et, tamquam omnia audīvisset, **Rēgulō nē tantulum quidem**.

Names

Velleius Blaesus, Vellei, Blaesi (m)	*Velleius Blaesus – A senator and consul in the second half of the 1st century AD. Very little is known of him.*

Vocabulary

adlocutio-onis (f)	*address, manner of speaking*	persona-ae (f)	*mask, character*
capto-are, -avi, -atus	*court, cultivate*	prorogo-are, -avi, -atus	*prolong, extend*
conflicto-are, -avi, -atus	*(in passive) be afflicted*	quia (*conjunction*)	*because*
consularis-e	*of consular rank*	quousque (*adverb*)	*how far, how long*
crucio-are, -avi, -atus	*torture, torment*	signo-are, -avi, -atus	*sign, seal*
dives-itis	*rich, wealthy*	tamquam (*adverb*)	*as if*
invideo-ere, -vidi, -visus	*(+ abl) envy, begrudge*	tantulum-i (n)	*the smallest amount*
medicus-i (m)	*doctor*	testamentum-i (n)	*will, testament*
muto-are, -avi, -atus	*change*	valetudo-inis (f)	*illness, sickness*
ne... quidem (*conjunction*)	*not even*	verto-ere, verti, versus	*turn, alter*
novissimus-a-um	*(here) extreme, terminal*		

Notes

cōnsulāris	The fact that Piny chooses to note that Blaesus was a man who had previously been consul is interesting. Regulus does not just target the weak and the uneducated for his schemes.
nūper captāre eum coeperat	The process which Regulus was engaged in was a long one, forging relationships over time and cultivating the individuals concerned. Blaesus' illness is poor timing for Regulus as he needs longer to work his magic.
hortārī et rogāre	Both of these verbs are infinitive in form but are not reliant on any other verb, instead functioning as the main verb. This is known as a historic infinitive and was used by authors to add pace to a passage.
quōquō modō	*in whatever way* or *by any means*
hominis	Referring specifically to Blaesus – *of the man*
mūtat persōnam, vertit adlocūtiōnem	There is a sudden shift to the present tense here – how do you think this affects the passage? Additionally, Pliny has omitted any kind of conjunction – it is worth considering how to translate this.
miserum	There is no noun agreeing with *miserum* so one needs to be implied – *the wretched man*.
dare vītam nōn potestis	Regulus' argument is a common one – *if you can't help him, why keep him in pain?* Now that Regulus thinks his plan is complete, he is happy for the doctors to finish Blaesus off (or at least let him die).
moritur Blaesus	Again, the use of the present tense – why do you think this is?
Rēgulō nē tantulum quidem	This is an incomplete sentence and some form of *give* needs to be understood here. Why has Pliny chosen to put it this way? Can you reflect Pliny's phrasing in English?

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Regulus

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Tacitus – Germānicus et Pīsō

Piso in Syria

at Cn. Pīsō, quō celerius cōnsilia inciperet, postquam Syriam ac legiōnēs attigit, largītiōne et ambitū īnfimōs mīlitum iuvābat. cum veterēs centuriōnēs, sevērōs tribūnōs dēmōvisset, locaque eōrum clientibus suīs attribuisset, dēsidiam in castrīs, licentiam in urbibus, lascīvientēs per agrōs mīlitēs sinēbat. nec Plancīna, uxor Pīsōnis, sē gerēbat ut fēminam decēbat, sed exercitiō equitum intererat, et in Agrippīnam, in Germānicum contumēliās iaciēbat. nōta haec Germānicō, sed praevertī ad Armeniōs īnstantior cūra fuit.

The death of Germanicus

saevam vim morbī augēbat persuāsiō venēnī ā Pīsōne acceptī; et reperiēbantur solō ac parietibus ērutae hūmānōrum corporum reliquiae, carmina et dēvōtiōnēs et nōmen Germānicī plumbeīs tabulīs īnsculptum, cinerēs sēmustī ac tābō oblitī aliaque malefica quibus crēditur animās nūminibus īnfernīs sacrārī. simul missī ā Pīsōne incūsābantur quod valētūdinis adversae signa exspectārent. haec Germānicō haud minus īrā quam per metum accepta sunt. compōnit epistulam quā amīcitiam eī renūntiābat.

Germānicus paulīsper sē crēdidit convalēscere; deinde fessum fīēbat corpus. ubi fīnis aderat, adstantēs amīcōs ita adloquitur: 'erit vōbīs occāsiō querendī apud senātum atque invocandī lēgēs. decet amīcōs nōn prōsequī dēfūnctum ignāvō questū, sed quae voluerit meminisse, quae mandāverit exsequī. vindicābitis vōs, sī mē potius quam fortūnam meam dīligēbātis.' amīcī, dextram morientis amplectentēs, iūrāvērunt sē vītam ante quam ultiōnem āmissūrōs esse.

neque multō post mortuus est, ingentī lūctū prōvinciae et circumiacentium populōrum. indoluērunt exterae nātiōnēs rēgēsque: tanta fuerat illīus cōmitās in sociōs, mānsuētūdō in hostēs; propter vultum ēloquentiamque venerātiōnem omnium adeptus erat. et erant quī illum magnō Alexandrō ob fōrmam aetātem genus locumque mortis adaequārent; nam affirmāvērunt utrumque corpore decōrō praeditum, genere īnsignī ortum, vix trīgintā annōs nātum periisse.

Mourning

at Agrippīna, quamquam dēfessa lūctū et corpore aegrō, impatiēns tamen erat omnium quae ultiōnem morārentur. ascendit nāvem cum cineribus Germānicī et līberīs, miserantibus omnibus quod fēmina summā nōbilitāte pulcherrimōque mātrimōniō, quae venerātiōnem omnium merēret, tunc fērālēs reliquiās sinū ferret, incerta ultiōnis. Pīsōnem interim apud Coum īnsulam nūntius adsequitur periisse Germānicum. quō gāvīsus caedit victimās, adit templa. nōn modo Pīsō ipse gaudiō immoderātō sē gerit, sed etiam magis īnsolēscit Plancīna, quae lūctum mortuā sorōre tum prīmum in laetum cultum mūtāvit.

at Rōmae, postquam fāma Germānicī valētūdinis percrēbuit cūnctaque, ut ex longinquō, aucta in dēterius adferēbantur, dolor, īra, questūs ērumpēbant: ideō nīmīrum Germānicum in extrēmās terrās relēgātum esse, ideō Pīsōnī permissam prōvinciam. hōs vulgī sermōnēs mors Germānicī, ubi nūntiāta est, adeō incendit ut, ante ēdictum magistrātuum, ante senātūs cōnsultum, sūmptō iūstitiō

dēsererentur fora, clauderentur domūs. ubīque silentium et gemitus. et quamquam īnsignibus lūgentium nōn abstinēbant, altius animīs maerēbant.

nāvigātiōne hībernī maris nēquāquam intermissā Agrippīna Brundisiō appropinquat. interim adventū eius audītō multī amīcī et plūrimī mīlitēs quī sub Germānicō stīpendia fēcerant ruērunt ad portum. simulac vīsa est nāvis, complentur nōn sōlum portus sed etiam moenia ac tēcta turbā maerentium et rogantium inter sē, silentiōne an vōce aliquā ēgredientem exciperent. nāvis lentē appropinquat, nōn celeriter, ut solet, sed cūnctīs ad trīstitiam compositīs. postquam duōbus cum līberīs, fērālem urnam tenēns, ēgressa ē nāve dēfīxit oculōs, īdem fuit omnium gemitus.

Revenge

diē senātūs Tiberius ōrātiōnem moderātam habuit. 'Pīsō' inquit 'patris meī lēgātus et amīcus erat. eum Germānicō adiūtōrem mīsī ego cum auctōritāte senātūs ad rēs apud Orientem administrandās. integrīs animīs est dīiūdicandum utrum Pīsō contumāciā et certāminibus vexāverit iuvenem exitūque eius laetātus sit, an scelere eum exstīnxerit. simul reputāte utrum legiōnēs ad sēditiōnem incitāverit.'

deinde biduum crīminibus obiciendīs statuitur utque post intervallum sex diērum reus per trīduum dēfenderētur. trēs amīcī Germānicī cōnsimilī studiō obiēcērunt Pīsōnem, odiō Germānicī et rērum novārum studiō, mīlitēs per licentiam et sociōrum iniūriās corrūpisse; postrēmō ipsum Germānicum dēvōtiōnibus et venēnō occīdisse. tum et Pīsōnem et Plancīnam, postquam sacra et immolātiōnēs nefandās fēcissent, petīvisse armīs rem pūblicam.

dēfēnsiō in cēterīs crīminibus trepidāvit; nam neque ambitiō mīlitum neque iniūria in prōvinciam, nē contumēliae quidem adversum imperātōrem, negārī poterant: sōlum venēnī crīmen potuit Pīsō dīluere. at simul populī ante cūriam vōcēs audiēbantur: nōn temperātūrōs manibus sī Pīsō sententiās patrum ēvāsisset.

eadem erat Plancīnae invidia. atque ipsa, dum Pīsōnī spēs erat absolūtiōnis, sociam sē cuiuscumque fortūnae futūram esse et, sī necesse esset, comitem exitiī prōmittēbat: sed paulātim sēgregārī ā marītō coepit. quod postquam Pīsō sibi exitiābile esse intellēxit, dubitāvit an causam dīceret amplius. itaque, tamquam dēfēnsiōnem in posterum diem meditārētur, pauca scrībit obsignatque et lībertō trādit; tum solita cūrandō corporī exsequitur. deinde multam post noctem, ēgressā cubiculō uxōre, claudī iānuam iussit; et prīmā lūce perfossō iugulō, iacente humī gladiō, repertus est.

Pliny – Regulus

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