



Study Questions

Questions 1-13 are offered as suggestions for each of the Chapters studied in Latin.

Question 1: Does Chapter 1 say more about the character of Poppaea, or about that of Nero?

Question 2: Tacitus appears to distance himself in Chapter 2 from making a judgement about Agrippina's incestuous designs, but do we get an indication of his own opinion, and what is his purpose in recording these rumours?

Question 3: Three plans to murder Agrippina are discussed in Chapter 3. What impression of court politics do we get from this chapter?

Question 4: Tacitus gives quite a lot of geographical detail in Chapter 4; what effect is this supposed to have on the audience, ancient and modern?

Question 5: What impression of the conspiracy to murder Agrippina do we actually get from Chapter 5?

Question 6: "id tantum non per simulationem. [That alone was done without pretence.]" Chapter 6: what impression of Agrippina's character have we formed by this stage in Book XIV.

Question 7: What is Tacitus trying to say about the nature of Nero's position of power in Chapter 7?

Question 8: "ventrum feri. [Strike my womb!]" What are we to make of Agrippina's last words in Chapter 8?

Question 9: What do the arrangements for Agrippina's funeral, described in Chapter 9, contribute to the broader narrative of the Book?

Question 10: Do you think Nero was really as susceptible to the flatteries of his courtiers as is suggested in Chapter 10?



Question 11: “quis adeo hebes inveniretur ut crederet? [Who could be found so stupid as to believe it?]” Chapter 11. Tacitus has the benefit of hindsight, but is there any real indication of how Nero’s contemporaries read events?

Question 12: What point is Tacitus making about Thrasea Paetus in Chapter 12? Look him up and consider the broader part he plays in the history of the period.

Question 13: Consider what Nero’s fear of returning to Rome at the start of Chapter 13 says about his own assessment of events.

Questions 14-15 are offered as suggestions for the Latin prescription as a whole.

Question 13: Whom do you like least among the characters presented by Tacitus? Justify your answer, and consider other options.

Questions 14: What is Tacitus trying to do in this lengthy description of the murder of Agrippina and its aftermath, and do you judge him to have been successful in his objective?