



Latin 307: The Trial of Cn. Piso (20 C.E.)

Fall 2024 TWF 9:30-10:20 a.m. Professor Gregory Rowe

Tacitus saw the treason trial of Cn. Piso as a key moment when Roman senators rushed to enslave themselves to the new emperors (*ruere in servitium*). In the 1990s copies of the senate's official verdict against Piso were discovered on bronze tablets from southern Spain. The senate's "Decree Concerning Piso Senior" does not represent one of Tacitus' documentary sources so much as what the historian was fighting against. This course will explore Tacitus as a critical reader of state propaganda, and philology as a weapon of dissent. The course will have a special focus on the art of the Latin sentence.

- develop your ability to read extended passages of Latin prose
- study the structure, style, and rhythms of Latin sentences
- interrogate the bombast of Roman state propaganda
- examine the insidious innuendo of Tacitus

Prerequisite: Latin 202, or permission of the department.