



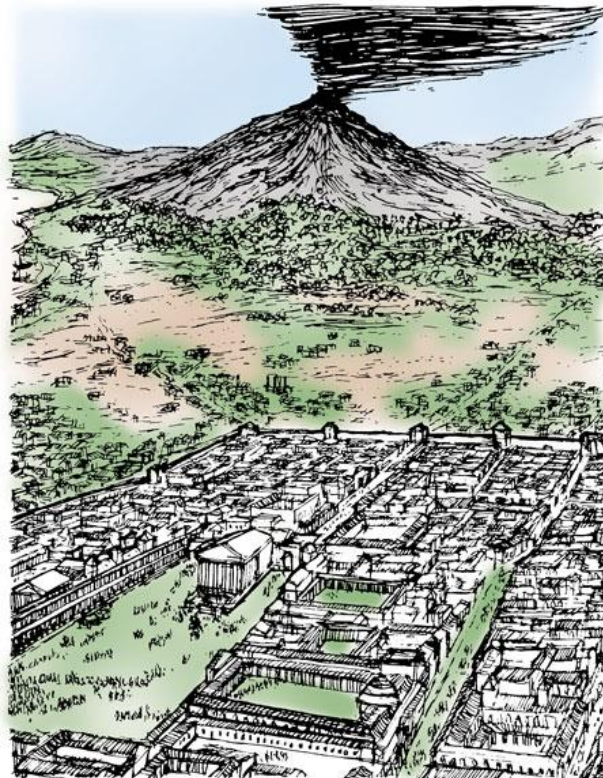
CSCP Support Materials

for
Eduqas GCSE Latin
Component 3A

Latin Literature (Narratives) Pliny, *The Eruption
of Vesuvius*

For examination in 2020 and 2021

Section H



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Pliny ends his account saying that he is confident Tacitus will know which part of the account to use in writing his history. Pliny assures him that he either witnessed these events at first hand or was told about them immediately afterwards, so his account is accurate.

Notes

1 interim Miseni ego et mater -: Pliny gives the impression that he is going to include his own story and then breaks off – a literary device to create anticipation? He records his personal experience and that of his mother in letter VI:20.

nihil: supply *est*.

1-2 nec tu... voluisti: an echo of *petis... scribam* in section A, line 1 where Pliny says Tacitus has asked for an account of his uncle's death.

finem ergo faciam: a short and to-the-point phrase with *finem* placed first to emphasise that Pliny's account is at an end.

3-4 quaeque statim... audieram: i.e. in the days immediately following his uncle's death.

cum maxime vera memorantur: Pliny is confident his story is accurate as he found out the details immediately.

tu potissima excerptes: Pliny is sure that Tacitus will be able to choose the most important details.

5-7 aliud est... aliud... aliud... aliud: 'it's one thing...and another thing...one thing...a different thing'. Different genres of writing demand different things. Note the contrast between *epistulam* and *historiam*, and *amico* and *omnibus*. The repetition of *aliud* (anaphora) adds to the effect.

Discussion

Pliny's account of his uncle's death comes to an end but he anticipates the other letter he will write about his own escape (*interim Miseni ego et mater*). Here, he has done what Tacitus asked him to do. There is a touch of flattery

when he expresses his confidence that Tacitus will know what to include in his own account: as previously discussed, this part of his *Histories* has not survived.

Questions

1. Look at lines 1-2 (*interim... faciam*):
 - Why has Pliny finished his story at this point?
 - What else might he have written about?

2. Look at lines 2-3 (*unum... persecutum*):
 - From what **two** sources has Pliny obtained his material?

- Why is he confident that it is accurate?
3. Look at lines 4-5 (*tu... scribere*):
- What will Tacitus need to do?
 - In your own words, explain why he will have to do this.
4. **From the whole of the letter**, what impressions have you gained of a) Pliny's uncle and b) Pliny himself? You should give evidence from the text to support your view. You do not need to refer to the Latin.

