

## Interpreting the Evidence: Our Knowledge of Roman Britain

### 1. What are the three different types of evidence?

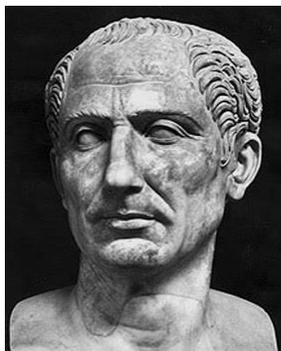
1. **Literary evidence:** what the ancients wrote about Britain
2. **Archaeological evidence:** objects found at archaeological sites
3. **Inscriptional evidence:** inscriptions in Latin found on tombstones, buildings, altars, monuments, etc.

### Literary Evidence

### 2. What two well-known writers have produced works that provide information about Roman Britain? Describe each authors work.

**Julius Caesar:** an account of his reconnaissance mission in 55 B.C. and his return the next year with a greater force when he stormed the fortress of a British king. Caesar was trying to justify his actions to the Senate and Rome.

**Tacitus:** a biography of his father-in-law, Agricola, about his career in the army and his campaigns as governor of the province. Tacitus was anxious to honor and glorify his father-in-law.



Caesar



Tacitus

## Archaeological Evidence

### 3. What two things do archaeologists look for at a digging?

1. the existence and position of any building foundations
2. the way in which the various levels or layers of earth change color and texture

### 4. What type of objects do archaeologists look for?

bones, pottery, jewelry and coins

### 5. What is the goal of the archaeologist?

To find out as much as possible about the people who lived in the buildings, what their lives were like, when they lived and how they died.



### 6. What can the following objects commonly found at an archaeological excavation tell the archaeologist?

**coins:** can help to date the other objects found at the same level

**pottery:** can help date a level and also tell of the extent of trade and commerce

**charred pottery:** points to possible destruction by war

**mass rubble:** possible demolition of a building for the purpose of erecting a bigger and more advanced structure

### 7. What tells us that life in southern Britain was relatively peaceful whereas life in the northern parts was fraught with war and civil unrest?

The fact that there were many Roman-British buildings in southern Britain whereas in northern Britain we find most of the Roman fortresses.



## Inscriptional Evidence

### 8. What is the most important form of inscriptional evidence?

The tombstones of soldiers.

### 9. What do the following words and abbreviations mean in regards to tombstone inscriptions?

**D M** - Dis Manibus or the spirits of the dead

**L** - Lucius

**F** - Filius (son)

**L F** - Luci filius (son of Lucius)

**TER** - Teretina (one of the 35 Roman tribes)

**ARE** - Arelate (a town in southern France)

**VETERAN** - veteranus (a retired soldier)

**LEG** - legion

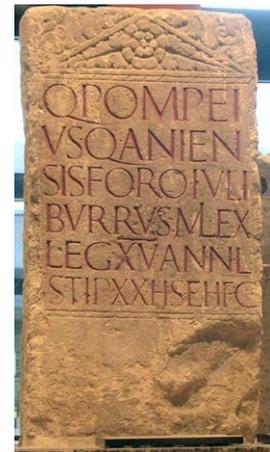
**AN** or **ANN** - annorum (years old)

**VIX** - vixit (lived)

**STIP** - stipendia (years of service)

**H S E** - hīc situs est (is buried here)

**H F C** - hērēs faciendum cūrāvit (his heir put the stone up)



\*\*\*This is not all you need to know. Re-read the reading.\*\*\*