

Classics: Ancient History

Advanced GCE A2 H442

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H042

OCR Report to Centres

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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Overview

As last year, the examiners have been generally pleased with the responses to the material studied at both AS and A Level and by the way candidates have approached the issues in a thoughtful and well-informed manner. Most candidates seemed well-prepared and their work reflects some excellent preparation by teachers. Many of the responses displayed both interest and enthusiasm for the topic being studied. Many had a good knowledge of the prescribed material at AS and responded thoughtfully to the stimulus passages. At A2, most candidates had a good range of knowledge. There was a full range of responses, including some outstanding answers which showed a real understanding of the issues raised and a perceptive analysis of the sources. The examiners are extremely grateful to teachers for their continued efforts in enthusing their students and providing them with both the knowledge and the skills required by the specification. The support for the subject in centres is perhaps the most pleasing aspect of the situation at present.

This year there was continued evidence of candidates using source material in a constructive and thoughtful way to answer the questions. Candidates were more focused on issues within a question, although there were some who engaged in a narrative rather than a critical analysis. Candidates continue to be knowledgeable about events and evidence, although there continues to be a tendency for some to fail to address the specific terms in the questions. Constructing a clear and organised argument, especially at A2, is very important and worth developing at both levels. In addition, such an argument needs to be supported by relevant and detailed examples.

As in the past, there were many examples of sound evaluation of the material which was incorporated into the body of the response to the central issues. Generalised paragraphs were less noticeable, but still present in some responses. Many candidates attempted to evaluate the specific source material used as evidence, although this often turned into a generic sentence or two on when the author wrote, their agendas and their biases. There are still some responses which give no or very little evidence from the sources, and more which simply name the author. At AS, it is worth reminding candidates that evaluation is not expected in the (a) and (b) sub-questions.

Despite being in the third year of A2, there are still responses not engaging with the question set. This is true at all levels and in all options. Many candidates either ignore the part of the question asking about the sources or answer it in a sentence or two at the end. Responses to questions which make an issue of the evidence should be arguing and analysing the evidence throughout for higher levels. A failure to deal fully with the terms of the question might be due to an effort to reproduce a previously studied answer that the candidate was trying to fit into a different question.

To repeat the obvious, candidates must think through a question, using a short plan if possible, to establish in their own minds the range of material needed and the focus to be taken. This short thinking-time might also prevent candidates starting a question which they realize, halfway through, they are unable to answer fully.

There appear to have been fewer unfinished responses, although it is still likely that at AS candidates find time management an issue. Also at AS some candidates start the wrong option and waste valuable time as a result. However, it is clear that teachers have prepared their candidates well to deal with the layout of the papers.

There continues to be an issue with candidates recognising and deploying dates and chronology, especially if dates appear in the wording of a question (even when this identifies a whole century). We also continue to see errors about evidence, especially details about authors,

but also about material evidence. Candidates need to be reminded of the requirement for detail at the higher levels both of the prescribed material and the factual content.

There has been no improvement in the legibility of some responses and the effectiveness of communication appears to be becoming weaker. Writing on alternate lines where the writing is large or elaborate can help to clarify it for the examiner. Leaving spaces between questions or starting each question on a new sheet helps to avoid the attempt to add new thoughts between lines of writing. If a term or name is on the question paper it is to be expected that the candidates will at least spell and use the terms correctly. Typed scripts are increasing in number and it is worth considering if a candidate might be disadvantaged for poor hand-writing. However, poor typing can also be an issue. A larger font and double spaces again help examiners in their marking.

The number of centres entering for the subject continues to grow. There is a wide variety of centres now offering the subject to their students. It is pleasing to note that there is an enthusiasm for Ancient History at all levels. This is clearly reflected in the responses to the questions which examiners have seen this year at all levels. The credit for this is due entirely to the teachers in these centres.

F391 Greek History from Original Sources

General Comments

The majority of candidates seemed well-prepared for the examination this year, and their work reflects some excellent teaching and thorough preparation. In all three options there were many excellent scripts that demonstrated a pleasing grasp of the material studied and a confident approach to the demands of the examination. The majority of candidates were able to draw on a wide range of relevant sources in writing their answers, and there was plenty of evidence of skilful interpretation and clear understanding of context. Evaluation remains a more problematic area. There are still too many candidates who trot out prepared general comments about authors that have little bearing on the issues they have discussed in their essay; in many cases these take the form of vague evaluative paragraphs, often tacked on to the end of the essay, which contribute little to the answer and so make little contribution to the mark. Examiners are happy to credit candidates who evaluate their sources as they use them, where the evaluation contributes to the discussion of the central issues in the question.

As in previous years, there is still a small number of candidates who attempt the wrong option; in some cases they discover this before it is too late, but this can waste valuable time in the exam.

The examination paper is structured in such a way as to guide students from less demanding to more demanding questions; the majority follow this pattern and answer first the document question and then turn to the essay. Those candidates who choose to answer questions in a different order are not necessarily disadvantaged by doing so, but they are side-stepping a feature of the paper designed to help them. Relatively few candidates had time problems, though there were as in previous years some rather short essays. There were a very few rubric infringements where candidates answered more than one question from a single section or answered questions from more than one option. It is clear that once again teachers have done an excellent job in making sure that candidates are clear about the layout of the paper.

As last year, Option 3 on Sparta was the most popular option. Athenian Democracy was next in popularity, while Option 2, the Athenian Empire, was taken by the smallest contingent.

In the document question the majority of candidates were able to select from the passage a good range of relevant points in response to (a); the best answers also communicated the context effectively. There was a very small number of candidates who used the (a) question as the starting point for a broader (and in some cases, lengthy) discussion; examiners were able to reward such discussion where it clearly was based on the passage set, but where candidates focused mainly on material from other sources, examiners were unable to reward its use, even if the answer demonstrated a very good grasp of the topic. The strongest answers made convincing use of the passage and were able to draw out appropriate material concisely.

The (b) and (c) questions build on aspects of the passage set. The majority of candidates now seem familiar with the changed expectations in the (b) question, though there are still some who spend time evaluating the sources. This can be credited, but we are no longer looking for this; however, if candidates choose to evaluate the sources they select, they should make sure that what they say is relevant to the question. However, it is important that candidates draw on **other** sources in (b), and there were a few candidates who did not do so – examiners could not credit any material drawn from the passage in (b). There were some excellent responses to this question, focused closely on interpreting the examples selected.

The (c) question remains a considerable challenge for many candidates. The better responses were focused on the question and presented a range of evidence and an argument in which interpretation and evaluation were fully integrated. Weaker candidates should be encouraged to

use the passage on the paper, as a surprising number made no reference to it, even when it would have supported the points they were making.

It is clear that many teachers have encouraged students to engage with source evaluation in a positive way. It is an important element for the (c) question and for the essay, and can prove one of the significant discriminators between answers at the different levels. The strongest answers presented evaluation as part of their discussion of the evidence, and it formed an essential part of their argument as a whole. Less strong responses often separated the interpretation of evidence from any attempt at evaluation, and in far too many cases still the evaluation offered was in a very general form which did not make a significant contribution to the argument and so gained only limited reward. A significant number of candidates once again trotted out the line about Herodotus being the 'father of lies' (sometimes in the same sentence as describing him as 'father of history'), without relating this in any way to the value of the specific detail they had extracted (in many cases, correctly) from the Histories or using it to address the question set. In a similar way, many candidates criticised Thucydides for his habit of making up speeches, even when the issue under discussion did not depend on material from a speech.

The most effective answers seen by examiners were carefully organised in response to the questions, using (in the essays) the bullet points as the basis for a coherent argument; in many cases it was clear from what candidates wrote that their study had been well supported over the course of the year by lively and intriguing debates in the classroom about some of the more challenging aspects of the different options. There were many outstanding essays across all the options where candidates were able to make well-judged use of material they had studied during the year to answer the question to very good effect. This was also apparent in many less strong responses as well, though these were often limited by an uncertainty over detail and a less coherent structure. Some weaker answers continue to rely on the bullet points as an essay plan, in some cases losing sight of the question almost completely. It is worth reinforcing to candidates that they must remember to state the obvious; in Option 1, Question 3, for example, a number of candidates referred frequently to the "the reforms of Ephialtes and Pericles" and clearly knew exactly what was meant by the phrase, but never unpacked its meaning explicitly so examiners could credit them for what they knew.

Producing handwritten work under examination conditions is clearly a challenge for some candidates who are now used to producing most work on a computer, just as reading what is written and rewarding it appropriately is increasingly a challenge for examiners. Each year there are more candidates presenting their work by alternative means and this is certainly worth considering if the candidate is likely to be disadvantaged by presenting in the traditional manner. Examiners work very hard to assign the appropriate mark to a script, but this can be very difficult in some cases. Where candidates are using a word processor, they should remember that poor typing can also impact the clarity of their argument, and that a larger font, preferably with double spacing and short paragraphs, can enable their work to be marked more straightforwardly. In some cases candidates would be well advised to spend more time planning what they want to say and organising their thoughts before committing them to paper, rather than relying on the sheer quantity of answer produced; this also applies to those writing their answers in the conventional way. Examiners are always pleased to see evidence of planning on the script, as it suggests a thoughtful involvement with the task. All candidates should bear in mind the value of proper paragraphing; where candidates add material at a later stage on the handwritten paper, they should make as clear as possible the links to the extra material. In some cases, candidates with larger handwriting doubled spaced their work which made it easier to reward them appropriately. The advice of schools to candidates presenting in this way can be invaluable.

The clear understanding of the chronology of the period studied remains an excellent indicator of candidate's grasp of the subject as a whole; any uncertainty here is communicated very quickly to the examiner, though, of course, the examiner is looking for more than merely accurate recall of detail. The majority of candidates were able to use appropriate technical terms accurately and clearly, though some might be better advised to use English terms rather than transliterations of

the Greek; in some cases spelling of such terms was shaky. While papers are likely to choose English terms in the questions where appropriate ('assembly' rather than *ekklesia*, for example, or perhaps both), there are some terms for which there is no commonly agreed substitute; so the most effective way to refer to the different groups in Sparta is to use term Greek terms (*homoioi*, *helots*, *perioikoi* etc.).

As in previous years, the examiners were struck by the quality of work produced by individual candidates and centres, which reflect considerable credit on all involved. It is refreshing to see the continuing interest in the classical world reflected in the range of responses to this paper.

Option 1: Athenian Democracy in the 5th century BC

In this option, Question 2 proved the more popular.

- Q. 1(a)** Most candidates found a range of appropriate points from this passage, such as the characteristics which enabled Pericles to both respect and yet also check the assembly, or Thucydides' comment on Pericles' ability to exercise control as first citizen.
- Q. 1(b)** The majority of answers were able to draw on a range of examples drawn from the sources; some suggested control over the assembly, whereas others (e.g. the debate about Pylos in Thucydides or the trial of the generals in Xenophon) suggested that leaders were not able to control what happened once the assembly was in session.
- Q. 1(c)** The best answers focused on those who spoke in the assembly (e.g. Pericles, Cleon, Alcibiades) and the degree to which they were able to exercise control. There were some interesting discussions of Thucydides' accounts of particular assembly meetings, but many candidates also looked at the *Acharnians* or *Knights* of Aristophanes. There were some good discussions of Dikaiopolis' role in *Acharnians*.
- Q. 2(a)** Most candidates were able to pick out the reference to the jury and the 'Order of the Three Obols', and were aware of the competitive and litigious atmosphere in Athens in the late fifth century; the relationship between rich and poor was also discussed.
- Q. 2(b)** There were some excellent responses that showed a very good insight into the evidence for Athenian attitudes towards the courts, as can be seen in Aristophanes' *Wasps* or the *Old Oligarch*. Some weaker responses attributed a range of views to Thucydides.
- Q. 2(c)** This question was generally well answered, with better answers focusing on the assembly and also on ostracism, with some good specific examples, such as the confrontation between Pericles and Thucydides, son of Melesias, described by Plutarch. Weaker responses were often not focused on 'competition'.

Both Question 3 and 4 proved popular.

- Q. 3** Many candidates were able to give at least some details of the reforms associated with Ephialtes and Pericles, though there was some uncertainty about attributing these to one figure or the other; some weaker responses concentrated for the most part on Pericles. There was a significant number who chose this question who were very unclear about the reforms associated with either figure, and many did not focus on the importance of issues such as the introduction of state pay (and our limited knowledge about the details of this beyond the jury courts) or the

significance of the powers of *dokimasia* and *euthune* transferred to the *Boule*. A number of answers concentrated on the reforms of Solon and Cleisthenes, in some cases in considerable detail. Due credit was allowed for this, particularly when their reforms were related to Ephialtes and Pericles. There were some perceptive comments about the value of the Old Oligarch.

- Q. 4** There were some interesting responses to this question that showed a good understanding of the importance of family and wealth, especially in the earlier part of the period. Cleon was frequently used as an example, though his background was not always understood; Aristophanes' attitude towards him was treated uncritically by many candidates. Many of the answers were very general and included few specific examples of individuals, though many did discuss the significance of the Alcmaeonidae, and better answers included details about significant figures such as Cimon, Pericles and Alcibiades (Themistocles and Nicias were less well understood). There were also some good assessments of the changes brought about in Athens in the later stages of the Peloponnesian War.

Option 2: Delian League to Athenian Empire

This was again the least popular option. Answers were evenly distributed between the two questions in Section A, Question 8 was more popular than Question 7. Examiners were pleased to see better responses making reference to sources beyond the prescription, especially a wider range of inscriptions; some weaker responses continue to confuse Herodotus and Thucydides (and Thucydides and Xenophon). There were some interesting evaluations of Thucydides, especially his approach to the speeches in his *History*.

- Q. 5(a)** The majority of candidates were able to select relevant information from this passage, and the best were able to put the figures for tribute in context clearly.
- Q. 5(b)** Some candidates did not focus on the benefits gained by the allies, in some cases focusing more on what Athens gained from the Empire. However, most were able to draw on a range of suitable examples; there were some good discussions of the Methone Decree and the evidence of Thucydides, though it was harder to credit those who argued that the Acropolis building programme was a direct benefit to allies.
- Q. 5(c)** This question proved challenging for candidates who were not confident about the chronology of the period; however, there were some excellent discussions of the evidence of Thucydides, particularly in Book 1, and the wording of some important decrees. Relatively few candidates were confident about the changes during the various stages of the Peloponnesian War, and most were unable to comment in detail on the final stage of the war.
- Q. 6(a)** This proved quite a demanding question, but those candidates who extracted relevant material from the passages achieved very high marks. The best answers focused on the detail of the passages, and there were some good selections made from both passages.
- Q. 6(b)** There were some good discussions of particular revolts, though there were a few very general unfocused answers. Thucydides was one important source used confidently by many candidates, but relatively few commented on the lack of evidence for allies' views of events. Some candidates focused on problematic examples such as Megara and Melos.
- Q. 6(c)** Not all candidates focused on 'political means' in their answer, though examiners were prepared to accept any reasonable interpretation of this term. Candidates

were generally happier to discuss the earlier part of the period, and relatively few commented on the later stages of the Peloponnesian War after the Sicilian expedition.

- Q. 7** The expectation was that candidates would be able to show a good understanding of Thucydides' account of the Mytilene revolt, but some of those who attempted this question were not able to give a clear account of events, and struggled with the details of the debate in Athens recorded in Book 3. There were however some excellent responses which made very good use of Thucydides' account and were able to evaluate what he wrote confidently, particularly with reference to Cleon, and could place this episode in context effectively.
- Q. 8** This proved a popular question, and there were a number of considered responses which recognised the limited impact of allied rebellions, particularly earlier in the period. Some answers would have been considerably improved by a better understanding of events during the Peloponnesian War, particularly the later stages. A significant number of candidates focused on episodes where states not allied to Athens were involved. So there was some confusion over the developing relationship between Athens and Megara during this period. More significantly, many candidates were convinced that Melos was an ally of Athens, though they were less clear about the impact on Athenian power. Examiners credited such answers where appropriate issues were raised.

Option 3: Politics and society of Ancient Sparta

Question 9 proved more popular than question 10 and was generally answered slightly better. Both essay questions proved reasonably popular, and there were many candidates who showed a very good understanding of the relevant sources. There were also once again many references to the 'Spartan mirage' (variously spelt), though it was not clear exactly what candidates understood by this. There were also references by a number of candidates to 'eugenics' in Sparta, though it was often unclear what point was being made. Spelling of Spartan names remains a challenge for some; Tyrtaeus suffered fairly badly this year. It is also worth reminding candidates that the lack of Spartan sources is a considerable challenge for any assessment of the internal workings of the Spartan state; there were some perceptive comments on Xenophon and his peculiar status as an Athenian exile with close connections to Sparta.

- Q. 9(a)** This question was generally very well handled by candidates; most were able to draw a good range of material from the passage, and there were relatively few over long (or very short) answers.
- Q. 9(b)** There were some well-developed answers that looked at a range of issues such as the *agoge* and the importance of the *gerousia*. Most candidates were able to draw on sources appropriately, but there was some confusion about what can be found in Xenophon and in Plutarch. To score highly on questions of this sort it is important to interpret the evidence of the sources, so candidates need to do more than simply paraphrase what the source says. For some candidates the opportunity to discuss Spartan homosexuality proved irresistible, and in a few cases this unbalanced the response as a whole.
- Q. 9(c)** Most candidates included a range of material related to women, though only the best responses kept the focus on the impact of the public messes on the relationship between the sexes. There were some interesting discussions of Spartan marriage practices, though relatively few candidates were aware that Spartan men were given greater freedom from communal living as they got older. Many discussed examples relating to various Spartan kings, which were not always analysed in detail. Many candidates recognised the greater freedom allowed to

women in Sparta, though there was a tendency to assume that women had more control over their lives than the evidence warrants. Some stronger responses were able to draw on the evidence of Aristotle to good effect; there were also some interesting discussions of the upbringing of women, though in many cases answers did not make clear our very limited evidence for life within Sparta.

- Q. 10(a)** There were some excellent responses; relatively few candidates noted the stone lion erected in Leonidas' memory.
- Q. 10 (b)** Most candidates were able to give a range of relevant examples. Many focused on the *agoge* and its pervasive influence on the whole of Spartan culture; this was sometimes related to the helot problem, though relatively few mentioned the declaration of war each year against the helots by the Ephors. Many also used Tyrtaeus to good effect. Relatively few mentioned specific examples of military successes (or failures), and there was often considerable confusion in weaker responses about the roles of named individuals such as Aristagoras and Cleomenes. Relatively few candidates mentioned Pylos and Sphacteria, and there was little discussion of the later stages of the Peloponnesian War when the determination to crush Athens led to compromises with the Persians.
- Q. 10(c)** There were some very good responses that focused on Sparta's reputation before or after the Persian Wars; some candidates argued that Spartan actions at Thermopylae reflected the popular perception of Sparta as a leading military state, and used examples from the period of Cleomenes to support this view. A relatively small number of candidates interpreted 'other states' to refer to Persia or Egypt, and there were some interesting and successful responses of this type. Relatively few candidates made extensive use of the passage or Herodotus' wider narrative of the Thermopylae campaign. The story of Dieneces was used by a few as a starting point for a wider discussion of Sparta's military culture. Some weaker responses provided a narrative of Thermopylae without attempting to address the question.
- Q. 11** This proved a popular question. Weaker answers revealed some confusion about the role of the various Spartan governmental institutions, such as the two kings, the *gerousia*, the ephors and the assembly. However the majority of candidates were able to make sensible comments about the interrelationships between different elements of the Spartan constitution, though relatively few successfully addresses 'well governed during the 5th century BC'. There were some good discussions of the Spartan assembly meeting before the Peloponnesian War, and the helot revolt in the 460s BC following the earthquake in Sparta was also used very well by some. However, many answers also showed a poor grasp of chronology, which made discussing the response of the Spartan system to challenges during the 5th century difficult. Relatively few candidates drew attention to the lack of Spartan evidence which makes it very difficult for us to judge how well the system worked.
- Q. 12** There were some interesting discussions of Lycurgus which showed a good understanding of the basic problems for the historian. Weaker answers often contained a basic narrative based loosely on what can be found in the main sources and did not focus on 'importance', but the strongest responses showed both awareness of the limited evidence for Lycurgus' existence as noted by Plutarch (and confirmed by Tyrtaeus' silence) and yet also drew out of the sources the great significance the Spartans themselves attached to Lycurgus' role. Once again relatively few candidates commented on our limited understanding of the views of Spartans about their own institutions and history.

F392 Roman History from Original Sources

General Comments

It is pleasing to report that examiners generally found that candidates had engaged with the subject in an interesting and thoughtful manner. Much of the work submitted included detailed and well-supported arguments and judgements. Answers displayed a range of views mostly sensible and soundly discussed. The central issue is sustaining a good argument with supporting evidence throughout the whole of the answer, which challenges a number of candidates.

All questions were answered; some were more popular than others but in general, most candidates answered with some skill and knowledge. It is worth repeating advice from 2011, that the (b) question does not require an evaluation of the source-material as such. The question 'What can we learn from...' requires interpretation of the source material. Answers which include evaluation will be rewarded; however, in terms of time allowed for this question, answers may be elongated unnecessarily (especially if evaluation is a long general paragraph on the author). Candidates should also remember that no credit will be given to answers in (b) which make use of the passage printed in (a).

On the question of evaluation, again it needs repeating that marks are awarded for specific evaluation of the evidence used, rather than general descriptions of an author's date, agenda or genre. Answers did not always offer interpretation and evaluation of sources of relevance to the topic – answers displayed understanding and were aware of the sources and their background, but did not relate relevant aspects back to the issue of the sources. There were responses which included no evaluation or simply stated a source was/was not reliable. Archaeological evidence was often treated as reliable without explanation as to why.

A frequent issue with answers in both Section A and Section B was the use of information. Answers provided a large amount of detailed factual knowledge but then did not direct it at the question; the issue in the question is the most important element, and information/evidence should be chosen to deal with it.

Examiners noted that candidates tended to quote from one author and attribute it to another. This occurred most often in Option 2. Answers often confused the works of Virgil, Horace and Propertius; prose authors equally could be interchangeable. Candidates should be aware that this damages their mark, especially if they are interpreting and evaluating the reference. It is important to identify the origin of the quotation.

There were a small number of candidates who failed to complete their answers, and time-management for the paper remains an issue. Remaining focused on the question, rather than introducing vaguely relevant factual knowledge, is an essential skill in examinations. The planning and construction of an argument was an area on which candidates displayed under-developed skills.

There were very few rubric errors, although some candidates numbered their answers incorrectly.

The problems of legibility and communication remain, although thankfully in a minority. Centres are encouraged to identify the issue of legibility for candidates and consider some strategies. Scripts that are very difficult to read may suffer in marking, although examiners take every effort to ensure that candidates gain the appropriate mark.

(a) sub-questions were generally well answered. The vast majority of candidates focused on the extract and showed understanding of the issue in the question; some candidates took a very general approach, with barely a reference to the extract. Others quoted extensively without any comment explaining the reasons for their choices. Some answers used only part of the source, in particular only the first half, which may point to the time constraints on the question. Better answers related the source to external sources of information to back up their inferences but in the main this was not done. There is no need to evaluate the source at this point. Giving a context is very useful and can be credited.

(b) sub-questions usually scored well with three or four detailed references to other sources. Better answers linked the sources and developed their argument over the issues through them. General references to sources (e.g. 'as mentioned in Plutarch', 'according to Plutarch') were noticeable in weaker answers. There were in some instances issues with students not tying their information back to the question. The extract should not be used in answers to '(b)'.

(c) sub-questions produced a variety of answers. Candidates produced some answers which did not focus on the specific issues. The same material from the (b) sub-question can clearly be used, but must be directed towards the new question, not simply repeated.

Essays: as with (c) sub-questions, the use of a plan helped candidates to provide well-organised answers. Most answers contained an attempt at an introduction and conclusion. There were some excellently constructed essays, with detailed knowledge and evidence, producing well-founded judgements in many areas. Only occasionally did candidates not take the limits of the question into account. They then tended to produce irrelevant answers, despite having sound factual knowledge. Most answers ended in a conclusion but not always. This may have been due to a lack of time rather than a lack of structure. Even so it is difficult to be sure of the candidate's argument when there seems to be no closing judgement.

The standard of written English was, as always, variable. There were some very articulate candidates who were able to argue a point coherently and in detail; punctuation and capitalisation were used inconsistently. Technical vocabulary was also inconsistent in its use. Expression was occasionally too informal with more than a few instances of slang terms.

All the questions were answered. There seemed to be no overwhelmingly popular question.

Option 1: Cicero and political life in late Republican Rome

Q1 Cicero, *Letters* 3

- (a) Candidates had very little trouble in realising Cicero was confident (even arrogant) about his prospects; various other 'attitudes' were identified in his comments about the candidates; Catiline was occasionally omitted or misunderstood. Weaker answers simply repeated parts of the extract, without showing they understood the issue and the context.
- (b) Most answers made some reference to the change from wanting to defend Catiline to opposing him both in the consular election and during 63 BC. Very few used the extract itself. Most were able to identify Cicero Letters 4 and quote it well. Many used Against Catiline II's description of Catiline's supporters as a mean to show Cicero's change of attitude. Plutarch was well-represented. Some were aware of Cicero's attacks on Catiline during the campaign. Better answers drew conclusions about the 'attitude' of Cicero from the sources chosen, as the question demanded. There were also some misconceptions about Cicero's role in the decision to execute the conspirators; some said that he actually took the decision himself, ignoring the fact that there was a debate on the matter.
- (c) Many candidates failed to notice that the question referred to 'during his consulship'. Better answers used parts of Sallust indicating support at various stages of the conspiracy. They made use of Plutarch's information about support from all classes, being 1st in the poll, Crassus' help and the debate (and even after the execution when opposition to Cicero arose). Cicero's Letters were quite often used to indicate support or opposition; even though they refer to before or after the consulship, good answers made them relevant by arguing that such support was relevant to during his period of office. Weaker answers were unable to be specific about his friends, and often focused on the debate at the end of Sallust. Candidates who used the *Commentariolum Petitionis* as a guide to the friends he should have (or did have) needed to be aware that it is advice rather than an account of the situation at the time.

Q2 Sallust, *Catiline* 51

- (a) This was generally well answered; most answers identified Caesar's view and his concerns about execution - that their predecessors were right to change their practices once the state developed to avoid abuses and that the proposal was an innovation; many knew the nature of the Porcian Law; nearly everyone understood what he was proposing was not exile as such. Some concentrated upon the final part to the exclusion of the rest of the passage. Very few did not know the context of the speech.
- (b) Better answers developed the idea of 'extent'. They noted Cato and Caesar as for and against using the rest of the debate in Sallust or the account in Plutarch. Most included Silanus (who changed his mind after Caesar's speech) and, naturally, Cicero (with his fourth speech as evidence). Answers which considered the issue more in depth noted how Cicero was trying to stay on the fence to some extent in his speech. The precise details of the support by the Senate were not generally known (Suetonius says 'the whole House' apart from Caesar; Plutarch implies the rest of the Senate; Sallust's wording does not imply all senators supported it). The opposition to Cicero after the event was noted in better answers as was Plutarch Cicero 22 where some Romans clearly did not support the action. Weaker answers were focused on the debate essentially.
- (c) Most answers made very good use of the disagreements over the execution without trial, beginning with Caesar's and Cato's speeches, and continuing with the refusal to let Cicero give the oath at the end of his period of office. This was taken up with an account of Clodius' opposition in almost every answer. Better answers linked this to the *optimates/populares* division both before and after the Conspiracy during this short period.

Other answers looked more closely at the antagonism between Cato and Caesar (extended to his opposition to Pompey and Crassus). There were some good discussions about 'how far' the outcome 'contributed' to the divisions, with a variety of soundly argued positions taken up. Some argued well that other factors contributed more to the divisions during the period.

Q3 How useful are the sources in explaining why the role of the Senate was weakened by the political conflict of the late Republic?

A number of answers did not deal with the first part of the question. There was often no conclusion on 'how useful the sources are' and so marks in AO2 suffered accordingly. There was a great deal of information on the challenges to the Senate which may have weakened its role, and much of this was supported by reference in one way or another to source material. However, discussion of its usefulness was either ignored or left to a generic evaluation paragraph at the end. A good number of answers displayed a limited understanding of the role of the Senate. Many thought it passed laws (although it may discuss and approve them - indeed after Sulla, laws had to be approved) and elect magistrates (not until the Empire at least). Better answers had a definite view of its role and how it was affected by the various events of the period. Answers focused much on Caesar and the triumvirate, explaining how the Senate could do nothing to stop them. Catiline's conspiracy, Clodius, violence in general, and corruption were all factors weakening the Senate in its role. The analysis about how these events weakened the Senate was not always developed - it was assumed rather than argued. Many answers didn't really tackle the idea of 'political conflict' explicitly, but focused on the rivalry between the senate and powerful individuals, or the rise of the generals and other factors.

Q4 According to the sources, how important a part did factions play in Roman politics in the late 60s and early 50s BC?

Candidates took a number of approaches to this issue. The commonest was to detail the workings of the *optimates/populares* division from c. 65 BC to 57 BC, with varying degrees of success depending upon the knowledge of events and sources. Very good answers were able to show the extent of importance by using this information judiciously and avoiding a narrative of the years. Equally, very good answers argued that other factors (such as individuals rather than groups) were more important, and that 'factions' supported one individual or another. A number identified and argued for other groups as 'factions' such as Catiline's supporters (an off-shoot of the *populares*) or Clodius and his supporters; the triumvirate was included by many; candidates argued their cases well and provided sufficient material to produce a good analysis at least. Less successful answers suggested that Cicero and Pompey as '*amici*' constituted a faction or Crassus was a client of Cicero and so there was a sort of 'faction' here. Patrons and clients could be argued to be involved in the formation of groups or factions but answers did not always make the point sufficiently well using evidence. Cicero's *Pro Sestio* was frequently used but rarely questioned as a description of the *optimates/populares* - indeed the nature and practices of these two groups was generally assumed rather than developed.

Option 2: Augustus and the Principate

Q5 Horace, Odes 1.37

- (a) This was largely well answered apart from many candidates failing to mention Actium. The attitude taken towards Cleopatra was very well understood and well supported by frequent references to the poem. Some answers included background and evaluation which is not required in this question.
- (b) Most answers focused on benefits to Rome in some way, although there was a limited understanding of the term 'beneficial'. Very few simply discussed how successful a battle it was. Some candidates wished to discuss whether or not it was as important as the sources suggest - really an issue for (c). Answers varied in terms of short or long term

benefits with the majority arguing that, once Octavian won, everything that happened afterwards, from gifts of money to peace established, was a benefit. A minority used Tacitus to suggest that not everything was a benefit. Discussion of extent was a defining factor. Other sources used included Virgil, which was known in detail by a reasonable number, although many did not mention him at all in either this question or (c). There were some good answers from candidates who concentrated on the benefits to Rome, using Paterculus to provide a more focused discussion, which often pointed out that Octavian was the one who benefited the most.

- (c) Many answers focused on the accounts of the battle in Virgil, Horace and Propertius with an occasional nod towards Suetonius and Velleius. Tacitus and *Res Gestae* were also attributed with accounts of the battle. Much of the time was spent on showing how the poets especially exaggerated or fictionalised the battle with answers showing an understanding of what happened in fact. However, the question asked about the importance of the battle being exaggerated. Better answers were aware of the thrust of the question and used their material accordingly. There were also some very good responses commenting on the fact that representing the war vs. Antony as a war vs. 'savage Orientals' was misleading, as well as good detail about Octavian's personal role (or not), and the overall importance of Actium both short and long term. Errors crept in with answers mixing up what the poets had written, not in itself a great problem until, at the evaluation, the candidate was assessing the wrong author. Evaluation was often a statement of when the author wrote (not always accurate) and whether that made them reliable/unreliable. Time was spent by some on a full-blooded account of the battle.

Q6 Younger Seneca, *On Benefits* 6.32 and Tacitus, *Annals* 4.44

- (a) The account of Julia was usually fully described and the nature of Augustus' treatment of her developed with an understanding of his attitude towards her drawn from the passage. Lullus and Lucius were omitted by some or confused with Lucius being executed. The exact relationship of these two to Augustus was not always understood. There was some confusion over his initial public revelation of the crimes and later regret.
- (b) A great deal of information was provided by candidates on a range of family members, including Caesar, Livia, Marcellus, Tiberius, Drusus, Gaius, Lucius, Germanicus, Agrippa, and even Julia (avoiding use of the extract). Maecenas was not a member of the family. The answer sometimes turned into a discussion of the succession only. Better answers, avoiding a list, looked to areas of importance for Augustus such as the provinces, or aqueducts (Agrippa) or his image. Seneca's account of Cinna was often used to support the view that Livia was important to Augustus. Answers also used Suetonius well to stress the 'hands-on' approach he took to his wider family's development. Some candidates misunderstood the question and took it to mean how important 'family' was to Augustus and mentioned social legislation.
- (c) Answers to this question suffered because candidates did not know what his family members actually did in terms of the government. Better answers referred to Horace and the work of Drusus and Tiberius on the frontier, Suetonius on the help of Agrippa and Tiberius provided in various ways, *Res Gestae* and references to Tiberius or Agrippa in the censorship, Lucius and Gaius as *princeps iuventutis*. As in other questions the issue of 'how far' needed to be addressed in some way and good answers argued, for example, that essentially Augustus kept the reins of power securely in his own hands. It was pleasing to see coins used often as evidence of involvement. Succession as in (b) was sometimes the only focus taken.

Q7 How useful are the sources in showing how firm a hold on power Augustus had by 23 BC?

The two major issues in this question - 'how useful are the sources' and '23 BC' - eluded a number of the candidates. The two settlements of 27 BC and 23 BC were mentioned in a minority of answers; some candidates used specific evidence of his powers up to 23 BC. There was also a tendency to confuse titles with powers. Some answers discussed Augustus' rise to power in detail from 44BC. Evidence of Augustus' actions and policies towards securing his power (technically later) could be, and was, used in better answers; these discussed the control of various aspects of administration such as the grain supply, and his efforts to gain popularity among all groups including the army; his control of religion as propaganda also featured, as well as his use of building and architecture in establishing his position. However, weaker answers focused on popularity as a sign of a firm hold on power without reference to the date (and sometimes sources). Sources also were not always well used or interpreted. There were inaccuracies about what the *Res Gestae* says about his powers, as well as statements made by authors which were not evaluated (such as Tacitus' claim of 'despotism' in *Annals* 1.3). It would have been helpful if some of the citations could have been given a context explaining what they referred to (eg Tacitus claim that he 'seduced the people with bribes' or *Res Gestae* 34).

Q8 'Augustus had an excellent relationship with the soldiers of his army.' How far do the sources support this view?

Most answers covered the basic detail of Augustus' army reforms, including the creation of the military treasury using either Suetonius or *Res Gestae* or both. The vast majority knew what the *Res Gestae* says about rewards and colonies. Better answers analysed his relationship from the beginning and good ones detailed the changes from the early days, through the triumvirate and into the principate. Most were able to support the narrative and analysis with appropriate source material noting for example how Suetonius (*Augustus* 25) comments that he was more distanced after Actium. The military oath indicated to many a sign of a good relationship. A good many answers argued that Augustus liked to present his relationship as excellent when in fact it was not citing the Elder Pliny's references to mutinies and Tacitus' comment about bribery. The better answers demonstrated some negative aspects of his relationship, citing the evidence in Suetonius showing a cooling of familiarity with the troops as Augustus no longer called them 'comrades'. Some included the praetorians in the list of soldiers with whom he had a good relationship. While many gave details of the pay and conditions, they often assumed this meant there was a good relationship.

Option 3: Britain in the Roman Empire

Q9 *Caesar, Gallic War* 5.8–9

- (a) Few candidates had problems with this other than not developing the use of the extract sufficiently well. Most candidates made a good attempt but few managed to make full use of the passage (especially the second paragraph). Most tended to make comparisons with the first invasion to explain how well Caesar was prepared. Very good answers picked up that again he failed to take account of the good old British weather. The final sentence was sometimes misunderstood when candidates read it as Caesar 'feeling a little anxiety'. The extra word changed the meaning of the sentence.
- (b) Candidates were at liberty to use other parts of *Caesar* and most did, often to the exclusion of other sources such as Cicero, Strabo, Plutarch and Tacitus. Responses sometimes displayed only a vague understanding of these sources. The majority of answers contrasted the first and second invasions, as failure and success respectively. Nearly every answer noted the 20 day thanksgiving (or 'holiday'). More thoughtful ones assessed his aims before assessing his success. Not all mentioned that there were two invasions and some confused the two sets of events. Dio Cassius was used by some candidates to the exclusion of Caesar's own accounts.

- (c) There was a wide variation in the responses to this question and many were interesting in their assessment of the effect of Caesar's invasions. The better answers organised their material to support their argument and offered coherent judgements whether there was an effect or not, short- or long-term. There was a good understanding that any effect was limited to part of Britain in a number of answers. A number of sources were included ranging from references to client kings in *Res Gestae* to archaeological and numismatic evidence of Roman influence; assessment of how far this was due to Caesar was infrequent. Most answers could point to some relationship between Britain and Rome, but an argument as to how far this was due to Caesar's invasion was often not developed. Dio and Plutarch were again used here, often mixed up with more obscure writers; comparisons between Strabo, Cicero and Caesar himself would have been more relevant and would have offered better evaluation and analytical prospects.

Q10 SHA Hadrian 5.1–2, 11.2; Milecastle 38 inscription; Sestertius of Hadrian, AD 134–138

This question was less popular than question 9.

- (a) Candidates had little trouble with the SHA passage, although it was not always put into context, and the coin was usually understood and explained as a symbol of victory and control as official policy. The Milecastle inscription was sometimes omitted or simply stated as an example that Milecastles were built for defence although it does mention the role of legions in establishing the frontier.
- (b) Very good answers could give detailed information describing the Stanegate, Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall as indications of the changes made and therefore the difficulties the Romans had in deciding where to place the frontier. Candidates were able to draw inferences from the evidence suggesting difficulties. A number of answers included the evidence, slight as it is, for problems with the tribes and possible wars (Fronto, Pausanias). A good number of candidates had knowledge beyond the prescribed material which can be well rewarded when used appropriately. Detail of Hadrian's Wall could be well-rewarded when used, but too often responses provided only vague descriptions.
- (c) Better answers could use the archaeological evidence from the two walls to support their views on the purpose of the walls, whether it was to separate the barbarians or not. The issue as always was the level of detail - simply stating there were gates or Milecastles or forts without naming one or giving an idea of the evidence meant the answer tended to make assumptions rather than arguments based on interpretation of the evidence. Archaeological evidence needs to be interpreted carefully, and evaluation is especially important if answers are not to be a series of assertions. It was interesting that the better answers used evidence such as the Rudge Cup to discuss the shape and usage of the wall, and the very best ones obviously knew that the Antonine Wall was smaller and more northerly and therefore supposedly closer to the enemy and argued its construction meant Hadrian's Wall was ineffective.

Q11 How useful are the sources in helping us to understand the difficulties the Romans had in conquering Britain in the period AD 43–c. AD 60, before the revolt of Boudicca?

The most common problem in responses was extending the account beyond the capture of Caratacus. Answers often ended at this point, excluding governors beyond Scapula, the problems Romans were having with the Brigantes, and the problems in Wales which Suetonius was having to deal with before Boudicca rebelled. There was also some imbalance in the earlier period - answers either detailed the invasion up to the arrival of Scapula or detailed the governorship of Scapula and the problems he had. A number of candidates mixed up Dio Cassius and Tacitus with occasional reference to Suetonius. Better answers not only contrasted the relative ease of the early stage with the difficulties of the later part, but also added

archaeological evidence of inscriptions and fort building to show the movement of the army. Equally the remains of hill forts were used to indicate the British resistance. The mysterious comment by Suetonius that Nero thought of leaving Britain was well used by some to emphasise the difficulties. Tacitus was criticised for being vague about geography (it would indeed be helpful if answers displayed a good sense of the geography of Britain at times). Dio was considered a late writer and therefore unreliable. A few answers drifted into explaining Caesar's difficulties.

Q12 'Britain was an unattractive area for the Romans to conquer and control in the period up to c.AD 60.' How far do the sources support this view?

Many suitable answers detailed a variety of Roman views on the subject of Britain - Cicero and the poets were interpreted as finding Britain unattractive, although better answers argued that the poets' assumption that Britain would be conquered one day suggested that Romans found it attractive. Strabo's view was universally used, if not always fully or accurately quoted. Caesar's view of Britain was commonly employed to show that Britain was attractive, if not economically, at least politically. Many made this point in the case of Claudius who, according to Suetonius, needed a triumph (and, like Suetonius, candidates often did not develop this idea beyond a bare statement and did not evaluate the evidence for it). The Mendip lead pig and torcs were evidence of the Romans' desire for minerals which made Britain attractive. Many answers had a range of source material which was often taken at face value and thus not developed to consider 'how far the sources support this view' as the question asked. The issue of control was not always tackled but those who did had some details of the difficulties the governors had after the Claudian invasion. Again it was possible to point to Caesar's difficulties as indicative of the unattractive nature of Britain. Good use was made of the client kings who helped the Romans. The evidence of rapid Romanisation in the South was employed to show that not everything went badly nor was Britain unattractive. There was variable, often general, evaluation as to how factual the sources were and what impact the writer's lack of travel and personal knowledge would have; few really came to terms with Caesar's negative opinions or why Strabo might contradict himself re farming, and fewer still realised that much of what later writers learnt came from Caesar many years later.

F393 Greek History: conflict and culture

General Comments

The quality of the work this year was similar to that in previous years, although there was a tendency, as last year, for a considerable number of candidates to write general, narrative accounts of what they had learned, rather than engaging with the question set. The questions elicited a full range of responses from candidates, including some outstanding answers which showed a real understanding of the issues raised and a perceptive analysis of the sources. There were, however, all too often general accounts of topics with little or no reference to the sources, which formed a narrative of the period or topic rather than a critical analysis of the subject under consideration. Candidates should be reminded of the need to read the question carefully and consider what it is asking them to do. In too many cases candidates who might otherwise have scored more highly simply recalled what they knew, and made little attempt to form this knowledge into an argument. The same principle applies in the evaluation of the sources: this evaluation needs to be relevant to the argument, and to support the argument as it develops. The weaker responses failed to show knowledge of the basic 'facts' of the topic. Again, candidates would be well advised to learn these facts together with the source(s) from which they have gained them.

Option 1: Greece and Persia 499–449 BC

- Q1.** The best answers included detailed information on the events running up to the Battle of Marathon, and included the demands for earth and water in c.507 BC and the role of Hippias in this period, as well as considering the Ionian Revolt and expedition of 492 BC. Many were able to recall some of what Herodotus said about the battle itself – in particular the Greeks' fear of the Persians prior to the battle – but did not necessarily use this effectively in developing their answer. One key area which was not considered by many candidates was the change in Spartan attitude after the Battle of Marathon and the creation of the Hellenic League. Some answers also included the role of medising states such as Thebes, and looked at how their role had not changed. A considerable number of candidates saw this question as an opportunity to write everything that they knew about the Persian Wars, and some saw the opportunity to use parts of a previous answer on Salamis as a turning point in the conflict.
- Q2.** The question highlighted the need for candidates to know the detail of the Persian Wars and Herodotus' account of them. Those who did were able to produce a clear analysis of the role of the Persians in the battles that they chose to consider, and to focus in on some of their key weaknesses. However, many candidates struggled to recall the details of battles as described in the sources and then articulate clearly why the hoplite phalanx seems to have been too much for Persian soldiers in close combat (more references to vase paintings of hoplites and Persians would have been very useful to back up the literary sources). Good answers realised that luck, leadership qualities, Greek strengths and strategies, as well perhaps as divine support, all played a part. Too many focused on Thermopylae and then struggled to fit the events of the battle to the question. Good answers also recognised that the Persians must have had some military strengths to have such a large empire. Too few answers focused on the Persians' reliance on diplomacy and buying people off. The strongest answers picked up on problems with the Persian command structure collapsing once individuals were killed and also internal divisions - eg Artabanus failing to engage with his 40,000 troops at Plataea.
- Q3.** Many candidates failed to exemplify their arguments with relevant examples. In particular, many candidates did not seem to be familiar with Herodotus' own statements on his aims in the Preface, and also failed to notice that the question was focussed on

the 'conflict between the Greeks and the Persians'. Too many candidates decided that this was an essay about whether Herodotus was a reliable historian or not, and often focused on the idea that Herodotus was the 'Father of Lies' as opposed to the 'Father of History'. The best answers realised that you can entertain and inform at the same time – they evaluated references to the divine etc carefully, pointing out that although fantastical to us they were perhaps not so to a contemporary audience. Good answers also appreciated Herodotus' bias against Corinth and Thebes, and how the theme of hubris and nemesis comes to the fore, building Darius, Xerxes and Mardonius up so that their fall can be more dramatic and exciting, and therefore entertaining. Again a lot of candidates did not explain clearly why their quotes/references to Herodotus were either dull or entertaining. Far too many answers seemed to simply narrate a story and then claim that it was entertaining.

- Q4.** Answers to this question tended to be weaker, because candidates did not have a thorough knowledge of the events between 479 and 449 BC. They therefore decided to summarise what they knew of the events before 479 to show that the Persians did think that Greece was worth conquering and left it at that. Many became fixated on the Peace of Callias, and when it happened or whether it happened at all. The best answers looked at how you might judge a conflict to be major, and argued that Eurymedon and the campaign in Egypt could be described thus. Good answers also argued that perhaps it was more a case of the Persians not being able to conquer Greece rather than making a strategic decision. Not enough candidates commented intelligently on the paucity of the sources and the fact that no source indicates that the Persians thought Greece was not worth conquering. A number of candidates seemed to think that this essay was about why the Greeks and Persians made peace.

Option 2: Greece in conflict 460–403 BC

- Q5.** Most candidates were able to compare basic facts on Thucydides and to compare his biographical details with those of Xenophon, Aristophanes, Plutarch, and sometimes the Old Oligarch. Better answers were able to point to inscriptions and what they reveal. The best answers were fully focussed on 'conflict', but surprisingly few thought to go into the effects of conflict and deal with the plague. Too many answers only dealt with the causes of conflict without seeming to have much knowledge of campaigns, battles or effects. Specific examples from Thucydides were often lacking in weaker answers: candidates should be encouraged to refer to specific examples to exemplify their arguments.
- Q6.** This was a popular choice, and candidates mostly grappled with the issues effectively. Weaker answers concentrated on an account of Athenian imperialism and the Athenians' treatment of their allies without fully focussing on the motivation of Athens for these actions. Those who considered Athens' motivation were able to evaluate Thucydides and other sources intelligently. The best answers pointed to the wealth of detail provided by inscriptions such as the Coinage Decree and the Thoudippus Decree as well as the Athenian Tribute Lists.
- Q7.** This was the least popular choice, but those who attempted it did well, focussing on what the sources reveal about policies in Sparta and Athens, but rarely considering other states such as Corcyra, Thebes and Plataea. The better answers looked at various effects in Athens, including the Plague, and the changing fortunes of Pericles, Cleon and Alcibiades, as well as effects on the democracy towards the end of the war. Weaker answers failed to see the issues with any breadth and were over-focussed on the decline of one or two individuals. There was a lack of evaluation at times, given that both Thucydides and Aristophanes have obvious strengths and weaknesses to focus on.
- Q8.** This was a popular choice, which enabled most candidates to construct a clear argument, but fewer were able to give a range of good, specific examples to back up

their points. Many made good use of Thucydides' accounts of Sparta's relationship with Corinth and of the debate in Sparta, which often led to pleasing, appropriate evaluation of his presentation. Fewer candidates made mention of the Mytilene Debate and fewer still of the Melian Dialogue, opting instead to refer to examples of Athenian Imperialism, often from before 460 BC. The best answers looked at inscriptions alongside literary evidence. In general, candidates were more successful when they were precise when referring to source material and detail.

Option 3: The culture of Athens 449–399 BC

- Q9.** This question led to some excellent answers, but too many were either narrowly focussed on Socrates and whether or not he was a sophist, or simply gave a narrative account of the sophists and their differing beliefs. There was also considerable discussion of the question of *nomos* and *physis* which was not well focused on the issue raised by the question. The best answers were able to draw on a range of material such as Euripides' *Medea* and Aristophanes' *Clouds* and then consider whether these sources showed that the sophist were undermining religious belief in Athens. Even the stronger answers on occasion went off the point, and began to look at other areas which the sophists affected, in particular the Democratic system, but without tying this back to the question of religious beliefs. Some candidates gave detailed accounts of Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen* or Plato's *Apology* but failed to make effective use of them by relating them back to the question. The best answers looked beyond the sophists and considered other evidence for the strength of religious belief in Athens at the time (such as the developments on the Acropolis and Thucydides' account of the Alcibiades and the desecration of the Hermae), and came to consider the influence of the Sophists in the context of their knowledge of religion at this time.
- Q10.** Some candidates were able to consider a range of plays which might have led the Athenians to question their society. The most commonly considered plays were Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Oedipus*, Euripides' *Medea* and *Hippolytus* and Aristophanes' *Clouds* and *Thesmophoriazusae*. The trap which a number of candidates fell into was giving a general account of the play, and then either making a very general comment about how this either led the Athenians to question their society and its values or not. Often the comments were not well related to the summary of the play. Candidates would be well advised to focus on key episodes and know these in detail so that they can make effective use of them in developing their arguments. On occasions, as well, candidates seemed to know a summary of the play, and then make forceful statements about its meaning which bore very little relation to the play itself. Some, for example, seemed certain that *Antigone* would simply have encouraged the Athenians to celebrate democracy because Creon was a tyrant. This point was not, however, explained or developed with reference to any other elements of the play. Likewise, *Medea* was often taken to be a criticism of the contemporary treatment of women, but there was very little argument to show why this was the case. There was, however, some excellent use of Aristophanes' statements in both the *Acharnians* and the *Frogs* on the role of the poet as an educator.
- Q11.** This question gave plenty of scope for the candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of the numerous festivals in the Athenian calendar and to consider what they knew of Athenian society. Many candidates took the opportunity to interpret the question as one related to women and festivals, which dealt with some of the issues raised, but failed to address every element in the question. The major failing of many of the responses to this question was a distinct lack of sources. Many candidates narrated details of the festivals, but seemed to be unable to relate these to the sources from which the information had come. There were, however, some good accounts of the frieze on the Parthenon: unfortunately, however, many of these then failed to analyse their content with any depth. There was also some good use of Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*. A few candidates

made use of vase painting and other archaeological evidence, all of which could be used effectively to support an answer. Some answers fell into the trap of writing at length about the different sections of society in Attica, but failing to relate these to the question of religious festivals.

- Q12.** There were many good answers to this question, but only some managed to analyse the evidence for the building programme thoroughly. One key element to success in responding to this question was to acknowledge Athens' role in the Delian League and the use of treasury funds, as outlined by Plutarch. Many candidates hinted at this, but failed to give the necessary detail. Likewise, in the analysis of the buildings on the Acropolis some candidates were able to give a detailed account of the design of the buildings and their sculpture, and analyse these to show how the political messages of the time were reflected in them. There was also a considerable number of candidates who assumed that Thucydides spoke directly about the building programme. Although the sections to which many referred may imply a discussion of the building programme, candidates should be careful in relating Thucydides' account of this time to the individual buildings. In particular, a number seemed to imply that in his account of Pericles' Funeral Oration, Thucydides was referring directly to specific elements of the building programme. There was some excellent use of Pausanias and Plutarch in evidence, and some candidates seemed to have a good sense of the difficulties of interpreting the archaeological evidence.

F394 Roman History: the use and abuse of power

General Comments

Now that we are into a third year of the specification, it is clear that candidates are engaging with the material; their answers to a large extent display an enthusiasm for the subject which comes through in the many, varied and interesting ways in which the questions are approached. Even the weaker candidates seem to have gained from their course of study, and this is a credit to those in centres who have worked hard and long to enthuse their students.

As usual the very best candidates were remarkable for the range and detail of the information that they supplied, as well as their familiarity with the source material, often down to quite specific references (rarely wrong when checked).

Many of the answers displayed a detailed knowledge of the period of study and the evidence relating to it; factual knowledge was generally sound, and given the context of an exam, largely free from inaccuracies. Misunderstandings of the context of a citation or the period of an author's writing appeared in places, and this could affect the judgement being made. It is important that these relatively minor errors are avoided if possible.

It continues to be important to remind candidates that the information and argument in their answers has to be relevant to the specific question. This is especially true of quotations from sources or reference to sources. However, it is also important to stress that answers which deal with an issue in depth, whether it is evaluating a piece of evidence or interpreting an event fully, considering alternative views, can often score highly; this is true even in comparison to a scatter-gun approach of loading an answer with as much information as possible, some of which, if reflected upon, would be seen as not relevant.

Candidates need to be constantly reminded that questions which do not include the word 'sources' in their wording still need to be answered through the evidence; this is explicit in the marking grids and mark schemes.

Candidates still need reminding that lengthy prepared paragraphs of general evaluation are rarely helpful in answering the questions and in fact they often detracted from the flow of a sound argument. Evaluation should be tied closely to the specific reference made in support of the answer. If an answer uses the citation from *Res Gestae* about '82 temples', a paragraph about how Augustus includes only good news does not help to evaluate this particular claim. Equally, argument based on Tacitus' alleged anti-imperial, pro-republican sympathies, needs more than an assertion that Tacitus hated the emperors (which is not entirely correct anyway).

The majority of candidates are aware of the need to approach the questions in terms of themes rather than a chronological narrative, and to cover the period in question thoroughly. This does not mean necessarily a factual account of the full period but it does mean including any relevant material from the period as a whole.

Dates and basic understanding of institutions, power, control, decision-making, administration, and political activity remain problems for a number of candidates; sometimes there are errors of basic fact/understanding which will affect the answer as a whole.

The handwriting remains a growing problem. Centres need to be alert to the issue since an examiner cannot mark what he/she cannot decipher. The spelling of the specific vocabulary continues to be an issue in AO2.

Examiners would encourage centres to ask candidates to begin each answer on a new page, leaving space for any later additions and for the examiner to record marks and comments.

Option 1: The fall of the Roman Republic 81–31 BC

All questions were attempted. This year candidates were better at avoiding the narrative and focusing on themes.

There was a variety of responses to **Q1**. Answers gave a great deal of information on the groups and factions (optimates, populares, the triumvirates, Clodius and his gangs etc), and were able to indicate the various struggles between them with appropriate reference to evidence from a range of authors (Plutarch most often but Cicero, Sallust, Velleius and Appian among the selection). Answers were less successful in identifying whether or not the struggles were about the control of the Republic or had a more limited aim (e.g. Caesar's consulship and the specific demands of the triumvirate). There was a tendency to focus on the middle of the period with events surrounding the second triumvirate often omitted. Answers often included the relevant quotes from Plutarch but these were not developed to focus in on the terms of the question. Better answers also dealt with 'to what extent' and argued that politics was about more than a struggle between groups. Good practice was seen in the answers of those candidates who chose specific aspects and dealt with them in depth from across the period. Those who looked at what the sources tell us of politicians' aims and evaluated these in depth produced worthwhile arguments.

Q2 asked the candidates to consider how far the sources supported the view that politicians only got their way by using violence and corruption. Clearly there was plenty of scope for the candidates to produce a wide variety of opinions on political activity. Most answers obliged with personal interpretations, having engaged with this topic in some way or other. Unfortunately some focused on the quote so much they that appeared to forget the second part of the question. While providing appropriate sources, answers did not always assess the evidence in order to provide a judgement on the extent of source support. At the same time the answers spent most time on 'violence' barely mentioning corruption, other than to point to Bibulus and Caesar bribing electorates in 60 BC. Clodius featured most often and Bibulus having dung poured over his head (although Plutarch does not say this was by Clodius, contrary to most answers). A number of answers concentrated on the late 60s and early 50s ignoring much of the early period or later events. Better answers took a thematic approach and provided balance by suggesting some politicians achieved success through other means. Usually this meant using Cicero and Cato, although not all had a full understanding of their careers.

Q3 was generally popular. Apart from the occasional answer which suggested that since he was adopted he was not typical, most answers dealt with the question reasonably well. They made sufficient use of the actions of other tribunes during the period to argue for or against the view. It was rare, however, for answers to include the full range of his actions as tribune, most being content to refer to 'free grain' and the legalisation of the collegia. There was a lot of material about his behaviour outside his tribunate which, for the most part, was directed towards his general aims and behaviour as tribune, especially his use of violence and intimidation. This in itself made him untypical for the majority. Most often Vatinius, Gabinius and Manilius were used in comparison; better answers extended the range to the tribunes of the 70s (Macer et al.) and some later ones such as Trebonius and Curio. Some did go into the 40s, but very few. What mattered most here was the strength and thoroughness of the argument, based upon a detailed examination of the evidence, rather than a definitive judgement since it can be argued either way.

Q4 was less popular. Detailed knowledge of some of the sources was required for this question and most answers provided details of some aspects. All candidates seemed aware of the focus by Plutarch on individuals, but few were aware of his more general comments on the failure of the Republic in certain parts of the Lives. Sallust was often used, but again his opening chapter

to the Catiline and his assessment of the underlying issues were not cited by most candidates. Cicero also has material in his letters and speeches which focuses on problems (In Catilinam II for example). Some answers identified the problems (corruption, economic issues, constitutional issues, military powers etc) and tried to show the sources dealing with them. Some approached the question by suggesting that individuals **were** the problem, and so the sources were right to focus on the individuals. Better answers offered a balanced view; weaker answers provided information on the actions of individuals with general reference to source material.

Option 2: The invention of Imperial Rome 31 BC–AD 96

This was a more popular option. Detail of the evidence varied and there was a tendency to reference sources in a general way ('according to Suetonius', 'Tacitus tells us') when giving factual knowledge. This was often followed by a very generalised evaluation of the author which had no specific relevance to the information used. Question 5 was the most popular.

There were some very good, well-argued and well-organised responses to **Q5**. Most candidates kept the question in mind, although some went off on a tangent and discussed whether the emperors were considered good or bad through their building projects. There were also weaker answers which mentioned specific buildings but made simple assertions about the benefits either for the emperor or the people. There was no need to mention every building of every emperor! Better answers took a thematic approach. For example, they identified the ones which were in the interests of the emperor as a group (although defining what those interests were would have helped). Better answers argued that there was a complex range of interests. Assertions were made about the benefits for emperors from a project. Weaker answers did not go into detail about the projects but simply stated the name of the building. For example Augustus' forum is more than an open space for social meeting by Romans, and there are some quite detailed descriptions of it which could have been developed. Vespasian and Domitian were often treated briefly - Vespasian's temple of Claudius could have been developed. Nero only built the Domus Aurea (variously rendered). Weaker answers confused Tiberius, Gaius and Claudius.

Q6 was less popular than the others. As in other questions in which the focus is on the evidence, a number of answers simply did not deal with that part of the question. There was much factual knowledge on the relationship of emperors with the Senate (often equated with upper class). This was shown to be good for some (Augustus, Vespasian) and bad for others (Tiberius, Domitian). However the answers did not always identify the ways in which support was gained and maintained as the question asked. Frequently answers explained how it was lost by some. Other parts of the upper class (e.g. equestrians) were largely omitted and freedmen were occasionally included. Frequently used was the quote from Tacitus 'men fit to be slaves', but it was not clear how this answered the question, other than showing what not to say if you wanted the Senate to be on your side! Better answers used examples of Augustus giving out roles, and administrative tasks, money, patrician status, etc., to senators and roles for equestrians such as the governorship of Egypt and the prefecture of the Praetorian Guard. Another feature was that answers offered wholesale generalisations e.g. Tiberius was hated by every member of the upper class; Augustus was loved by all often accompanied by general reference to the source material.

Q7 was reasonably popular and produced a range of good answers. The majority of answers made good points about the consistency of policies between emperors, and also argued that emperors were sometimes inconsistent with themselves. Better answers made valid comparisons between emperors in the argument on consistency. Many answers developed some idea of policy, interpreting the actions taken by emperors. Better answers identified specific areas of administration, e.g. grain supply, water supply, policing, fire fighting, etc. Much use was made of Suetonius and Tacitus regarding the actions of emperors, although there was confusion about who said what. Some answers gave factual information about the structure of administration in terms of the various commissions and boards of magistrates, and the

innovations by Augustus, for example. This aspect was less well known by the majority of candidates.

Q8 was quite popular. Many had good factual knowledge of alternative religions such as Isis, Christianity, Mithras, etc, and the opposition or support offered by emperors. This was often supported by specific reference to Suetonius and Tacitus (and sometimes Josephus). Juvenal was also employed to indicate the rise of the oriental cults, although evaluation of satire was often quite weak and generic. There were some who showed confusion over the actions of the emperors, particularly emperors' attitude towards Isis. There was also a tendency to make claims for Suetonius or Tacitus which were erroneous. The imperial cult was very often included in answers either as a sign of an alternative or as a development of traditional religion. The evidence for emperors' attitudes towards traditional religion was less well known, and less well documented, despite three examples of the Saecular Games in the period for example, numerous temples built or restored and both Augustus and Domitian acting in support of religion. Good answers did need to deal with parts of the question when assessing the sources. Often the assessment would deal only with the lack of effort or the support by emperors to halt the rise of alternatives. There was a tendency for candidates to simply write all they knew about 'religion' without really addressing the terms in the question.

Option 3: Ruling the Roman Empire AD 14–117

Candidates generally had knowledge and understanding of the evidence available. There were some excellent answers with detailed use of a wide range of evidence. Answers presented a range of good ideas, often well-argued even when limited by focus on a specific part of the period.

The responses to **Q9** varied considerably. The terms of the question focused on the ways the Empire was ruled and the extent of the emperor's control over these ways. A good number of candidates approached this by discussing the extent of the emperor's control of the Empire itself. Often in the course of this, answers dealt with the various ways in which emperors kept control of the ruling of the Empire. There was usually a range of evidence, literary and archaeological, to support the argument. Much of it focused on Britain, for which there is good material, and evidence of other parts of the Empire was sometimes barely included. Equally, answers used only Pliny and/or Tacitus' *Agricola*. The means by which emperors controlled what happened in the provinces developed in answers included appointment of governors, and holding them accountable, use of freedmen and procurators, personal involvement in the provinces, civil and military actions etc. As elsewhere, general assertions about Nero's complete lack of interest in the Empire are best avoided.

Q10 was popular and produced some very good well-documented answers. As in Q9 there was some tendency to focus on Roman Britain, partly because evidence to some extent is more accessible. The better answers had a focus on the evidence, as the question required, rather than on the extent of Romanisation. In addition answers needed to concentrate on 'social' rather than economic issues. Tacitus *Agricola* 21 was most candidates' first piece of evidence. Better answers used the limited archaeological evidence to evaluate this passage. Weaker answers either took it at face value or added that Tacitus cannot be trusted because of his relationship with *Agricola*. Pliny's *Letters* were used extensively, although not in ways always well directed at the question. Archaeological evidence of towns and villas in provinces was judiciously used by some, remembering the period of the option. Inscriptions were sometimes cited as evidence of the effects, and those who did use them did so accurately. There was a tendency to produce a statement about inscriptions, that since they were often fragmentary, they were limited in use. Since this did not apply to some of the ones used, the evaluation seemed unhelpful.

Q11 was answered by a large number of candidates. Pliny and *Agricola* were common examples of governors, and evidence that governors were not incompetent. Germanicus was occasionally cited as an incompetent governor. References to 'governors' in general

characterised weaker answers where there was a lack of knowledge of governors beyond the main two. Better answers could provide something of a range and very good answers had specific detail of governors. Procurators was a more limited topic, although Catus, and Classicanus were reasonable examples, with some possible references to procurators in Pliny Letters. For most the army was simply brutal, with evidence from Tacitus of the Boudicca revolt. Better ones moved past this and used examples of the army in other contexts (although still brutal in Judaea and among the Frisii). Few seemed to be aware that the army was involved in administration beyond mistreating the provincials. As before the key question was whether the sources supported the view, and the evaluation of the material was often generic rather than specific in arguing the case. Tacitus' portrayal of Agricola was totally unreliable; Pliny was making himself look as good as he could; Josephus hated, first, the Romans, then the Jewish lower class. Better answers saw the limitations of the sources but were able to differentiate between the unreliable opinion and the reliable fact.

For **Q12** it was to be expected that Boudicca and the Jewish Revolt of AD 66 would figure largely in the answers. Some narrated the events at length. Better answers selected elements which provided evidence for the discussion of 'widespread'. This was taken both geographically and quantitatively by candidates. For example, since the revolts were localised to the province it did not mean there was widespread dissatisfaction. The difficulty was that building an argument on the basis of two revolts did not lead to a convincing judgement. Better answers had more examples - Tacfarinas, the Frisii, Sacrovir, the second Jewish revolt under Trajan, even Decbalus' behaviour, and Venutius in Britain. Other minor problems were added by more knowledgeable candidates such as the first Iceni revolt over weapons and other uprisings among the Jews and in Africa over various issues. Another issue was identifying the causes of these revolts, and the evidence for them. These were not always accurate and sometimes involved more speculation than fact. There was some confusion about who said what about Gaius and the Jews, and what exactly were the grievances of the Jews in AD 66. There were some good answers which balanced the revolts with examples of satisfaction among the provincials, such as Cogidubnus, or at Aphrodisias, or in Pliny Letters. Good arguments were made that sometimes there was a difference between elites and the ordinary people in their attitudes, and that our information from the provincials is limited in the sources.

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