

Ancient History

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J151**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **J051**

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

This year saw another considerable rise in the number of candidates taking this specification. As in previous years, many seem to have enjoyed the subject, and gained considerable insight into the Ancient World.

The change in format of the papers also seemed to work well, with candidates having a good idea of the amount that they were expected to write, which may have helped many to judge the time available in the examination more effectively. The move to marking on-line has worked well, but handwriting becomes even more significant for the examiners. It would be very helpful to examiners if teachers could remind their candidates of the importance of writing clearly, and ensuring that the layout of their answers is logical and appropriate.

In general, the candidates' work suggests that teachers and their students are clear about how the examination works. However, it is worth reiterating the idea that candidates should be studying the original sources, both in the written papers and in the controlled assessment, and should be considering both what the sources say, and whether what they say can be taken as reliable. There were some outstanding pieces of work in this vein, but some candidates still failed to engage with the passages on the paper or did not make use of original sources in their controlled assessment. Secondary source material may be useful to help in the interpretation of the original sources, but the original material from the ancient world must be taken as the basis on which the candidates construct their arguments.

In general the standard of the work produced was similar to previous years. However, there is still a noticeable difference in the quality of work on the Roman and Greek papers, in part, perhaps, due to candidates taking the Greek paper in Year 10 rather than Year 11. The level of sophistication and analysis of sources demonstrated in the Women in Ancient Politics paper in particular was considerably higher than that shown in the Greeks at War paper.

The quality of Controlled Assessment seemed markedly higher this year, with many centres entering excellent work. In the main, candidates and their teachers seem to have settled into the idea that the key to success in this area – as in the other papers – is working with original evidence from the Ancient World, and that they must analyse this evidence themselves to draw relevant conclusions.

As ever, it has been pleasing for the examiners to see that students are enjoying the study of the Ancient World, and that they have been able to gain something from their education in this area.

A031 The Greeks at War

In this third year of the specification, there was a considerable rise in the candidature for this paper. It is clear that teachers are offering appropriate guidance to candidates for the examination, and that candidates are responding well to the challenges of this paper. In this summer's exam, there were many excellent and thorough scripts such that the examiners were frequently impressed by the quality of the work. This year Option 2 (Alexander the Great) proved more popular, but candidates were well-prepared for the challenges of the paper whichever option they attempted.

The majority of candidates were able to finish the paper within the time allowed, though there were a few who missed out individual questions or who produced a significantly short essay. The move to Scoris-format papers provided useful guidance to candidates about the length of response expected, and most were able to use the space sensibly. However some candidates either chose to write at considerable length to shorter questions or had very large writing; some of these chose to continue writing their response on either extra sheets of paper or in the space allocated to the essay. It is worth ensuring that candidates know how to make clear what their intentions are. In some cases it was very difficult to find the continuation; examiners appreciated the clear way some candidates indicated what they had done. In most cases the additional response was relatively short and so did not put the candidate under time pressure later in the exam. The layout of the paper, changed as a result of the move to on-line marking, has been advantageous to candidates, as there were fewer excessively long answers to questions worth relatively few marks. One aspect of candidates' work that was commented on last year was that a relatively small number of candidates chose to answer questions out of order; it is no longer possible for examiners to pick this up, except where candidates have prepared their answers on a computer. However it remains the case that the paper is designed to be answered in order (as the questions become more demanding). The first question in each option is designed to allow candidates to demonstrate recall of information, though not all found this straightforward. Most candidates were able to make use of the passage in answering the second question in each section, though, as last year, a significant number failed to make appropriate use of the passage in answering the (c) part of these questions. To answer this effectively there needs to be some use of detail from the passage (as indicated in the wording of the question), so a generalised evaluation of the passage will not access the full range of marks. Some candidates would benefit from further practice at questions of this type, so that they are better able to make use of the passage in their answers.

The third question in each option once again presented a significant challenge for candidates, and discriminated effectively between candidates. Both the (a) and (b) question are marked across all three Assessment Objectives, though there are still too many candidates who do not explicitly address AO3 effectively in the (a) question. This was less marked in the (b) question where there is a direct reference to the sources, but even here there were too many answers that did not engage in evaluation to any great extent. The strongest answers to both (a) and (b) questions engaged fully with the relevant sources, and related the evaluation to the particular examples used to answer the question. Less strong responses could be very general in their approach. The best answers to the (a) question made excellent use of the passage, but some weaker responses picked out little relevant material or misinterpreted the significance of the details they selected.

Evaluation of the sources is a very important element in this examination, and it is important that candidates are well-drilled in the need to address this in both (a) and (b) questions (and then again in the essay) in relation to the demands of the question set. Although on occasion this may lead to some repetition, the strongest answers related the evaluation to the material selected to answer the question. Pre-prepared paragraphs of a general nature were usually a sign of a weaker response.

The essay questions in Section B for both options presented the candidates with much greater opportunity to show how well they understood what they had been studying. The strongest responses were clearly structured and drew on a broad range of relevant examples, revealing an excellent understanding of both the sources and also the chronology of the period; they did not allow narrative to dominate the discussion in response to the question, but some potentially good answers could have been improved by greater concentration on the demands of the question set. Uncertainty over the order of events characterised some of the weaker answers, and references to sources could be vague and prone to confusion; however in many cases candidates were able to convey their interest and enthusiasm for the material they had studied. Answers which used the bullet points as an essay plan could read rather awkwardly; in particular, the discussion of the reliability of the sources could become divorced from the examples chosen by the candidate and so far less effective. As last year, the best responses were written very fluently and communicated a high degree of engagement and understanding.

Some candidates, as noted above, did not make clear where they had included extra material elsewhere on the paper, which did cause some difficulties for examiners. There were also a very few candidates whose writing proved particularly challenging to read on screen.

The examiners were pleased by the standard of work across both options, and feel that candidates have gained significantly from the course and the way it has been presented to them in the classroom.

Comments on individual questions

Option 1: The Greeks defend themselves, 499–479 BC

Section A

Q. 1 This question proved challenging for some candidates. Many commented on the geographical advantages for the Greeks and also on the significance of the site for morale, particularly for those Greeks who lived north of the Peloponnese.

Q. 2(a) The majority of candidates made excellent use of the passage to secure high marks. Some weaker answers were very general and in some cases did not refer to the passage at all.

Q. 2(b) Examiners accepted a range of responses to this question. Most candidates could identify the threat posed by the Persian navy as it sailed towards Eretria, though some talked about the Persian army as if this was a land based attack. The uncertainty at Eretria about what to do was seen by many as reflecting the degree of threat posed by the Persians.

Q. 2(c) There are still too many answers that do not make use of the passage in answering this question. The restricted space allowed by the new-style paper did prevent excessively long general responses, but candidates need to focus on what is in the passage. So for example here many commented on the closeness of Eretria to Athens and the Athenian involvement, and then connected this with Herodotus' likely access to those involved.

Q. 3(a) The best answers made good use of the detail from the passage itself, and ensured that they covered all three Assessment Objectives in their response. Weaker responses made little attempt to address AO3, so could only be rewarded for their 'personal response' under this AO, but stronger answers were able to assess critically the conversation between Xerxes and Pythius and contrast this with something for which there might be more evidence (for example, the army being forced to march between the halves of a body). There were some excellent discussions of Xerxes' relationship with his troops (who had to walk between the halves of the body) and with Pythius specifically, and many candidates picked up on the use of the word 'slave'.

Q. 3(b) This question produced some interesting responses. Weaker responses focused on generalities and did not use either the passage or other sections of Herodotus to good effect. There were some interesting accounts of Xerxes' megalomania (variously spelled), but the best answers took one or two incidents to develop further the picture presented in the passage (such as Xerxes' response to the failure of the bridge over the Hellespont), and many candidates noted that both in the passage and elsewhere there are positive aspects of the presentation of Xerxes. Candidates who tackled AO3 often commented on the problematic nature of the evidence of private conversations between the Persian king and others.

Section B

Q. 4 This essay proved less popular than question 5. Relatively few candidates were clear about the 'Hellenic League', and were not able to identify states who joined or those who did not. Not all of those who answered were clear that by the time of the invasion many Greek states were already under Persian control (eg in Ionia and the islands) or had offered 'earth and water' in advance of the invasion. There were some stronger answers that were clear about the internal divisions in the Greek world (between Athens and Sparta (resolved), between Sparta and Argos, and on a broader scale between mainland Greeks and those living further afield to the West).

Q. 5 This question proved very popular, though some candidates chose to use this as a vehicle for retelling the story of Thermopylae, with very little supporting detail from Herodotus; a few presented Thermopylae as a significant victory for the Greeks, without elaborating how this could be the case. Some candidates developed a contrast between Thermopylae and Salamis, and stronger answers were also clear about Herodotus' judgments on the important contributions of the Spartans and the Athenians. Relatively few candidates were able to discuss the events of 479 BC in any detail. Some well-informed candidates allowed their essays to drift away from the question to a more general narrative of the war. However there were some excellent responses, and the very best answers integrated their evaluation of the sources into their discussion in a convincing and effective manner.

Option 2: Alexander the Great, 356–323 BC

Section A

Q. 6 Most candidates were able to suggest appropriate reasons for the significance of Philip's murder, though in some Alexander's relationship with Philip and his succession to the throne of Macedonia were mentioned almost as afterthoughts.

Q. 7(a) This proved a straightforward question for most candidates and there were some very effective responses. Weaker responses made limited use of the detail in the passage itself and produced rather general responses.

Q. 7(b) The majority of candidates were able to draw appropriate elements out of the passage, and commented effectively on Alexander's role as leader though some misinterpreted elements of the passage (eg 'the right wing had broken their frontline'). Many candidates recognised the relevance of Darius' example of poor leadership.

Q. 7(c) There are still too many answers that do not make use of the passage in answering this question. The restricted space allowed by the new-style paper did prevent excessively long general responses, but candidates need to focus on what is in the passage. There were some excellent discussions of Arrian's access to material about the battle itself and his attitude towards Alexander.

Q. 8(a) There were many strong responses to this question. Candidates recognised the significant elements in the passage (eg 'low-spirited', 'little expectation of divine support', 'suspicious of his friends') and commented effectively on Alexander's emotional response to

Cassander's reaction to obeisance. Relatively few made convincing use of the final part of the passage. Some weaker answers made little or no use of the passage, and too many candidates did not address AO3 in their answer.

Q. 8(b) There were some interesting discussions of later events in Alexander's life, though there were too many answers that touched very lightly, if at all, on 'events surrounding the death of Alexander'. Examiners were willing to accept a broad range of answers. Some candidates focused more closely on Alexander's relationship with his companions over a relatively long period, while some showed excellent knowledge of the various omens reported in the sources associated with the final days of Alexander. Only the strongest responses were able to make comparisons between the accounts of Arrian and Plutarch. There were some interesting discussions of the sources used by the two authors studied.

Section B

Q. 9 This essay was slightly less popular than question 10. Weaker responses were unable to name individual friends and explain what their contribution was to Alexander's military successes; in contrast, there were some very detailed responses that covered a very good range of specific examples. Many mentioned Hephaestion and Cleitus (particularly his action in saving Alexander from Spithridates' sword at the Granicus). There were some excellent assessments of the importance of Alexander's own leadership in battle.

Q. 10 There were some interesting responses to this question. Some weaker answers tended to a general narrative of Alexander's conquests without focusing on his aims at any stage; and a few concentrated almost exclusively on events from Alexander's childhood, such as the taming of Boucephalas, though it was not always clear how these stories were being used to answer the question. Many stronger responses were able to look critically at the surviving evidence for Alexander's intentions at different points over time, such as his initial incursion into Asia Minor, his pursuit first of Darius and then of Bessus, his expedition into India and its aftermath, and the impact of dissension within the army on his aims. Relatively few candidates made any reference to the discussions recorded in the sources during the final days of Alexander's life when he appears to have been planning further expeditions to the West.

A032 The Rise of Rome

This paper also saw a considerable rise in entry. The quality of work was pleasing, with many candidates getting to grips with the key issues in questions and making thorough use of the sources which they had studied. Candidates should be reminded of the need to interpret and evaluate sources both in the (c) part of the second question of each option and in the third question in each option. Option 2 on Hannibal proved the more popular by a narrow margin, with almost sixty percent of the candidates taking this option.

The paper allowed candidates many opportunities to display their knowledge; it is pleasing to report that there were many very good answers across both the options. Some responses were particularly impressive because a wide range of factual and source knowledge was convincingly and precisely integrated with effective examination technique which revealed an effective balance of description and analysis. There are still some areas, however, that need greater practice and guidance if students are to improve their performance. The most obvious is the evaluation of sources - many candidates are losing marks on 2/7(c), 3/8(a) and 3/8(b) on AO3 because they do not offer any interpretation/evaluation on the sources that is related to the details in the stimulus passages. A focused evaluation in this instance can be more convincingly rewarded than a generalised and less relevant discussion of the author. A second area for improvement is the need for a more careful scrutiny of the wording of the essay question - too often candidates take a title as an opportunity to write 'what they know' and interpret the question to fit this pattern, rather than taking note of the precise focus and stated time-frame. Candidates should be encouraged to take careful note of dates or other limitations on the focus of questions to ensure that the content of their answers is relevant.

Option 1: The origins of Rome: The Kings, 753–508 BC

Section A

Q. 1 Hardly anyone failed to gain at least some marks on this question; most had the 'hair on fire'; a majority had a second point often 'census'; some talked about the centuries; a few confused him with other kings especially Tarquins.

Q. 2(a) Some very good answers with reference to the passage. Some recounted the full story of Hercules and Cacus (a lot with no reference to the passage); the most common omissions were the two families reference or the details of sacrifice. Candidates should be reminded of the need to read the whole passage to ensure that their selection is thorough.

Q. 2(b) This was generally done well using more of the passage than in 2(a). Importance usually boiled down to Hercules being a god and so the Romans liked to associate themselves with gods; rarely was the tradition of the sacrifice and altar mentioned.

Q. 2(c) A large number were generic source comments with no explicit reference to the passage. The stronger answers picked on the family/altar/sacrifice as something which suggested some accuracy; the general 'Livy was not alive at the time so cannot be accurate' line was commonest. A number of candidates felt that the mention of gods meant it could not be true.

Q. 3(a) Most candidates answered this question well. Better answers used the passage and identified the main aspects of 'laws etc', 'buildings', 'use of fear of gods', 'peace', 'calendar etc' and understood this to be a change in culture which helped Rome develop after Romulus; good answers got the main points but did not take it any further in interpreting the aspects to show 'successful as king'. The less strong answers generalised the passage, and showed understanding but did not support it with references. Most had no evaluation or a very generic version - very few went on to discuss the reliability of the source. Very few made use of the archaeological links.

Q. 3(b) This was much as 3(a); stronger answers used the same material to identify 'importance' and related it to the 'early history' in terms of a culture change and a strengthening of Rome. Really good ones could get beyond the passage. Those who could not were restricted in assessing 'help us to understand', although the phrasing did encourage most to offer an evaluation of sorts. The most common point here was that the temple still existed, and so there was archaeological evidence to support Livy. Stronger answers did pick up that Livy seems uncritical and related that to the period of peace he was experiencing after civil war. A lot of candidates seemed to think that Livy was paid by Augustus to write good things about him. Many did not seem to get past the generic evaluation: for higher marks, there does need to be some explicit reference to details in this passage and any other sources which they may have used.

Section B

Q. 4 This essay proved slightly less popular than question 5. Errors mostly involved confusing Tarquins or confusing Tarquins with other kings. Most answers could say something good and bad (mostly bad). Everyone could give detail of Lucretia, most detailed Gabii, and Superbus' evil actions; omission of Priscus was frequent; the order of kings was a problem to some, assuming Superbus followed Priscus directly. Interpretation and evaluation were quite good for the most part, especially the former. There was lots of personal response about the Tarquins as the nastiest kings ever! The discussion on the reasons for the end of the kings was at times fairly simplistic with few suggesting other possibilities in addition to the nasty kings, although some did suggest that Livy was at fault here because he had a purpose (quoting Preface very well) to emphasise the kings as the cause; few detailed what actually happened. Very few scripts drew their discussion together with a conclusion.

Q. 5 Those that knew the story of Aeneas and attempted to answer the question did so well. Lots of summaries of *Aeneid* Book 2 (and bits of Book 4); mostly very accurate and detailed; occasionally the opening of Book 1 (set passage) and some references to Book 6. The account in Livy was less well done - all sorts of spellings of Lavinia, Ascanius, and insecure information about what exactly happened. Good ones knew there were two versions about what happened after Aeneas died. Reliability was generally well-discussed, although reference to 'foundation' myth was infrequent. Most knew that Virgil was a poet and likely to fantasise and that Livy was a historian (and in some cases equally likely to fantasise). A small number got them the wrong way round. Everyone knew that Virgil was in the pay of Augustus and so was untrustworthy.

Option 2: Hannibal's invasion and defeat, 218–146 BC

Section A

Q. 6 Generally well answered; a few thought it was easier and quicker to go via the Alps and also to circumvent Roman naval superiority; the commonest answer was to take Romans by surprise and/or avoid going by sea; some candidates did not see that the point of the question was 'over the Alps' and focused on why he invaded Italy whilst others went too far back (to Saguntum with no obvious link to the question).

Q. 7(a) Generally well answered - odd details omitted such as the fog and/or Flaminius' 'hot pursuit'. Most gave a decent summary of the key points.

Q. 7(b) Most candidates were able to use the passage and give two or three reasons why this showed success. However, 'good preparations' and the understanding of the opponent were omitted often; but most got it was well-organised, taking advantage of the terrain and using surprise.

Q. 7(c) As in 3(c) there is the problem of generic source evaluation without explicit reference to the passage: Polybius travelled a lot and used sources (or even met people from the battle) -

many students are unclear about the details of when Polybius actually lived. Some picked up on the fog and terrain and suggested Polybius had been to look; some thought his description tried to make out that Polybius was saying that the Romans were not to blame because they could not see what was happening - so making it less of a humiliation (except for Flaminius).

Q. 8(a) Most candidates performed well, scoring highly for their knowledge and understanding. The better answers clearly got the two main points with little trouble; some focused on the senate or popularity; a very few thought Fabius was to blame for the disasters he mentioned in the past two years and that was why he was unpopular. Also a few thought the 'insult' in the last line was Fabius leaving or him insulting the people. Most saw that the bad relationship was because the Romans did not understand his plan or viewed it as 'cowardly'. Better responses saw that some (Minucius) were deliberately causing trouble. Very few suggested the insult was designed to make him change. Very few referred to the accuracy of Livy as a source but there was some personal response in understanding also that Livy approved of Fabius.

Q. 8(b) Many understood the importance of Fabius but did not use the details in the passage as effectively as they could to back this up. A very small number said that the **two** passages did not help a great deal, slightly missing the point that they had to use other sources not only the ones on the paper. As with 3(b) some did not get beyond the passage, although they could do quite a lot with what they had in terms of what Fabius was trying to do and why it was important. Very few thought he was not important in some way. Very few compared him to any one else (e.g. Scipio). Better answers clearly could point out the effects of what Fabius did after Cannae (and some used Cannae to show that the other way was not working usually with details of Varro etc). Again evaluation was usually where marks were lost with very few going wider to Polybius and/or Plutarch and some who discussed Livy without any reference to the passage. However, plenty of personal response was evident indicating candidates had engaged with the topic well.

Section B

Q. 9 This essay proved the more popular of the two, and produced some excellent responses. A few candidates did not spot 'war in Italy', and so drifted to Zama and the tactics etc. there. Some spent far too much time on describing the three battles rather than identifying the strategies which made Hannibal successful. Better answers generally pointed out the most important issues such as the lack of supplies, loss of Spain, defeat of Mago, Hasdrubal, Scipio's good work, and Fabius preventing him from getting allies, making him defend his allies etc. The march on Rome was universal, with Livy's quote, but usually there were sensible ideas about why. Only those responses with limited knowledge failed to get somewhere with this question. AO3 was least well addressed of the AOs, because responses usually included the generic evaluation about Livy (most knew when he lived). They insisted that he did not do research (presumably like Polybius) and just copied material from others and then made things up like speeches. They thought he was a client of Augustus and wrote to please him. They also quoted the famous lines about Rome and made no comment about whether or not it is accurate/reliable as a specific example. As in other essays, a lack of a conclusion was an evident weakness of many answers.

Q. 10 There were some very good answers on Scipio and Zama. But again, many candidates were not sufficiently discriminating in assessing the question: often there was far too much on Zama in some cases with very little at times about other actions by Scipio. Equally some balance about what others did (including Hannibal) was to be found only in the better answers. Elephants loomed large in this answer, having a great deal of impact on the outcome. It was apparent that many students were not very secure about what Scipio had done before his campaign in Africa. Also a lot of answers focused on Scipio having learnt Hannibal's tactics and used them against him. There were some who dealt with 'courage' (his actions in the early engagements, pushing for a move to Africa etc). Again there were some difficulties with evaluation: Livy had another fault here - he has no idea about battles so he just copies Polybius. The two set speeches are pure fabrication for most candidates with little understanding that they might help us understand what had happened (at least in Livy's eyes).

A033 Women in Ancient Politics

As in the other two examination papers, there was a considerable rise in the number of candidates taking this unit. This year almost three quarters of them opted for the Cleopatra option. On the whole both topics seem to be taught well by centres with the majority of candidates showing a satisfactory or better knowledge of the people and events. It is clear that some candidates have the knowledge but not necessarily the writing skills to write extended essay style responses. A number of candidates were also giving some inaccurate information about the background to some of the ancient writers such as Suetonius/Plutarch/Tacitus eg date of living/writing incorrect, bias and motive in writing and style of writing. This needs to be addressed with candidates as it can affect their answers, and can lead to some inaccurate interpretation and evaluation which prevents them from getting into the top 'thorough' level of the assessment objectives. The assessment objective dealt with the least effectively is still AO3, as many candidates are not relating their interpretation and evaluation of sources specifically to the question, and are leaving this part of their answer to the end where they just write a generic and general background to the author.

A lot of candidates are not approaching the interpretation and evaluation of sources in a way that demonstrates the requirements of a level 4/5 'thorough' answer. The tendency in essays, as in the other questions, is to leave any mention of sources, or any real evaluation of their reliability and usefulness, to the end of the answer. Treating the sources almost in isolation to the rest of the question means that there is often not enough, or no, correlation between the discussion of the sources and the main focus of the question. This therefore does not give enough opportunity to show that the candidate is aware of the kinds of information given by an ancient author about a person or event and at the same time how reliable/useful/complete a picture this is. Some candidates are quite good at looking at what two different sources say, and this is a good way of demonstrating thorough knowledge and a personal response as it shows the candidate's ability to interpret a person/event through comparison and contrast of the sources, which will lead to the candidate being able to develop a reasoned judgement. Candidates should be encouraged to do this kind of evaluation throughout their answer and link the points they are making to the question itself. For example, in the Cleopatra essay on her influence and control of Roman leaders, the sources should be a main focus throughout and be used as evidence to back up the AO1 knowledge they are giving about Cleopatra's relationships. At the same time, candidates should be questioning how far these sources can be trusted in what they are telling us about the amount of control and influence she has. Likewise in the Agrippina essay, candidates should have employed a continued use of source evidence for the ways in which Agrippina was able to gain power throughout the reign of Claudius and into the reign of Nero throughout their answer alongside their own AO1 knowledge, and at the same time be questioning how far the sources are reliable or useful or even how complete a picture they give us of what Agrippina was doing. Where candidates use material evidence - and they should be encouraged to use this type of evidence where possible - it is usually treated fairly well in terms of its description of what it shows and how far it is useful in answering the essay question. Candidates should again be aware that material evidence can also be evaluated for reliability in the same way that written evidence can. In a lot of essays candidates have made some references to what the sources say throughout, but still need to go that extra step towards evaluation each time they make a reference as it will push their answer up into the higher levels in the marking grid.

Option 1: Cleopatra and her impact on Roman politics 69–30 BC

Q. 1 Candidates need to make sure they are giving TWO relevant points and also giving some explanation/detail of each one to gain full marks as some candidates are still only giving one point or two points but with no detail. Some responses just included whatever the candidates knew about the topic without making it relevant to the specific terms of the question. These

responses could not be credited highly: candidates must use factual knowledge correctly to answer the question or they will not gain any marks.

Q. 2(a) The majority of candidates were able to pick out at least two relevant details to show how Caesar treated Cleopatra. Better answers picked out a range of details.

Q. 2(b) A lot of candidates were not as good at answering this question as they did not relate their understanding of why Caesar's relationship was important to him to the details from within the passage. Better responses used the passage to show understanding of the issue raised in the question: referring to the fact that she was a queen of an important country and so he could use her as a client queen to gain power in Egypt and harness the important grain, trade etc. Many candidates did not gain above level 4 because although they gave some thoughtful responses, they did not make any reference to the extract. Many candidates also misread the question and just effectively rewrote their answer to question 2(a) by explaining the outward signs that Cleopatra was important to him, rather than addressing the issue of **why** she was important to him.

Q. 2(c) All too often candidates are writing generic answers for this question, which requires them to demonstrate their abilities under AO3. This question asked students to evaluate the passage on the paper: Better responses related their general evaluation of the particular source to the specific details within the given passage. Some candidates did this very well, and pointed out the references to 'Naso had written', and 'certain Greek writers' to suggest that Suetonius was obviously using other sources to inform his own biography. Some candidates however simply gave their own interpretation of whether Cleopatra and Julius Caesar would have acted in this way without cross-referencing their behaviour in this passage to any other sources or evidence. This resulted in some answers gaining low marks as candidates were just quoting from the extract and then saying 'and I know this is true because they did this.' This would need to be fully developed by explaining how they know Caesar and Cleopatra would do such things from other passages/sources/evidence.

Q. 3(a) There were many good points about Cleopatra's character/personality/appearance in the source extract that could have been referenced and the majority of candidates dealt well with this question. Many however did not develop their answers to show understanding of the issue raised by the question - **why** Mark Antony would have found these things attractive - and so scored less well under AO2.

Q. 3(b) In the main candidates were able to answer this question effectively, and many used some good relevant comparisons of Cleopatra's character, personality and/or appearance from other sources, in particular some good use of archaeological/material evidence for Cleopatra's appearance including coins and statues/reliefs. Candidates must remember, however, to use the extract first and bring in other sources and knowledge to compare and contrast with it, as some candidates were not making good use of the passage given on the paper. Again, candidates must make sure that they are interpreting and evaluating the sources throughout their answers.

Q. 4 A substantial minority of candidates chose this question. Some of these answered very well and used a range of evidence to support or oppose the claim. Those who did not do this question well generally used the same types of information as those who answered essay question 5, but were then unable to assess it in terms of how far it showed Cleopatra to be a success or a failure and so the answer became more narrative than evaluative.

Q. 5 The majority of candidates chose to answer this question. Responses gave confident descriptions of the relationship between Cleopatra and both Caesar and Antony. Some candidates were also able to bring in relevant details about how far Cleopatra was able to influence/control Octavian which is pleasing as it showed a deeper level of understanding outside of the main two Roman leaders. Some answers did not use the information about her relationship with Caesar to show influence and control as effectively as they did for Mark Antony,

although some good answers were able to effectively argue that Cleopatra was not able to influence and control.

Option 2: Agrippina the Younger and her influence on Roman politics AD 41–59

Q. 6 Some candidates only described Nero's feelings towards his mother and did not relate these specifically to how he then behaved towards his mother and evidence for his actions. There were many good answers which showed an understanding of changing feelings and behaviour from the beginning of his reign to his attempts to kill his mother.

Q. 7(a) Many candidates were able to pick out points showing both negative and positive attitudes towards Agrippina from the passage. Many candidates were a little confused between the attitudes being from Tacitus, who had written the passage, and actually from the characters mentioned themselves ie Seneca and Burrus, Pallas, Nero and the Senate.

Q. 7(b) This question was not answered well by some, with responses talking generally about why people may or may not have liked Agrippina, rather than referring back to the passage to make their answers specific to the attitudes of those characters mentioned above, or just repeating the same information about what attitudes people had as they did in 7(a). Better responses that gained marks in levels 4 and 5 discussed why those people mentioned in the extract itself would have had those particular attitudes.

Q. 7(c) see Q. 2(c) for comments on source evaluation.

Q. 8(a) Many candidates were able to pick out a range of reasons why Agrippina was persecuting Domitia Lepida. Candidates must make sure that as well as picking out points from the extract they show an understanding of why such a background to Lepida would cause concern/threat for Agrippina, and evaluating/interpreting the source throughout. Many responses left their evaluation of the source to a generic and general paragraph at the end of the answer which did not relate to the specifics of the extract itself.

Q. 8(b) This question was not done as well as part (a) as many answers did not compare and contrast Agrippina's treatment of Lepida with her treatment of other specific rivals or threats and so could not reach the higher levels in the marking grid. Many answers talked generally of how Agrippina usually behaved towards people, but should have tied this evaluation in to discussion of any specific rivals which could have included even Claudius and Nero themselves. There seemed to be an incorrect assumption that Agrippina killed Lepida in this passage or afterwards. However, others such as Statilius Taurus could have been cited as evidence for Agrippina killing people for wealth/status etc. With a lack of contrast and comparison, many answers just repeated the same information as in part (a).

Q. 9 The majority of candidates did this essay and displayed some good knowledge about the background to Claudius and reasons why he had a reputation for not being in control of his own actions and decisions. Better responses included specific details about Agrippina's actions and presentation in the sources and used these to form a thorough argument throughout.

Q. 10 Not as many candidates attempted this essay question. Those who did answer were not very good at using the factual information and evidence to suggest how far Agrippina's role in politics was exaggerated, and many answers ended up being a potted biography/history with not enough evaluation and analysis. Some inaccurate information about the ancient source authors also affected the ability to evaluate and give a reasoned and informed personal response to the answer.

A034 Controlled Assessment

Candidates this year performed well in the controlled assessment, and the questions seemed to offer plenty of scope for candidates of all levels of ability to perform well, and explore their interests. Fewer centres this year failed to use original source material, and it was pleasing for the moderators to see some well-argued pieces of work which were clearly based on a strong analysis of original sources. Some of the work was of outstanding quality, and showed that candidates had really researched their chosen area thoroughly, and thought carefully about the implications of the source material which they were studying. As in previous years some centres had clearly directed their students to one topic, whilst others had given them the choice, and candidates answered from a range of questions of their choosing. Both approaches worked well, although moderators did notice on occasion some issues with centres applying the marking criteria differently to different topics. Teachers should be reminded of the importance of marking all work to the same standard.

On a practical note, it is particularly helpful to the moderators that the teachers marking the controlled assessment annotate the work, so that it is clear where credit is being given for each of the Assessment Objectives. This is most easily done by writing AO1, AO2 and AO3 in the margin next to the points where credit is being given for these areas. Clear comments on the front cover, which should be related to the Assessment Grid, are also most welcome. Many candidates failed to add a word count, and some did not include a bibliography. The former is essential for the moderation process; the latter, whilst not integral to the assessment, is helpful, and gives a good indication of the level of scholarship and approach to the work.

Centres should also be reminded that the use of the internet is not permitted during the 'write up' (High Control) sessions, and that candidates should not take phrases or paragraphs from material that has previously been published either on the internet or in printed format, without acknowledging and referencing it. The candidates should produce work which is clearly their own, and represents their own thoughts and lines of argument.

In general, whilst the standard of the work produced was high, teachers may like to remind their students of the importance of looking for the key issues in the question, and not just writing a narrative account of the topic under consideration. Candidates would also benefit from thinking carefully about the details of the sources which they have included, and considering whether these details suggest that each source is reliable or not. The best answers will consider the question of reliability in relation to the specific issue raised by the question.

In general, the candidates produced the best work where their teachers had provided them with a context through which to view the evidence. More guidance in the early stages seems to be needed in order that candidates do not stray outside the time period of the question, and have a clear understanding of what is meant by primary material.

As in previous years, Egypt and the pyramids proved particularly popular, but there was a range of questions answered. Some, however, did not receive enough responses for detailed feedback to be given.

Ancient Egypt 3000–1000 BC

The question on pyramids was by far the most popular. The best answers looked at the thinking behind the design of the pyramids, and considered how the evidence helped us to understand their function. Some candidates included considerable information on both areas, but failed to draw clear conclusions based on the evidence which they had supplied. Whilst some candidates made good use of secondary material to support their arguments, all should be reminded that this material is intended to help them in their interpretation of the archaeological remains and other evidence. Trying to use the archaeological material and argue from the evidence of the

pyramids themselves too often resulted in a rehearsal of the dimensions of the pyramids without further comment. In a question like this, candidates should be reminded of the need to set their ideas about the function of the pyramids in the context of Egyptian culture more widely, but also to ensure that what evidence and arguments are presented are tied back to the key issue in the question. The question was often not attacked or defined enough which consequently undermined evaluation.

The other question on the influence of Egypt received fewer responses. Many were well done, but a common failing here was to treat the period far too loosely, with some candidates looking forward to the Roman Empire for much of their answers. Whilst the period is loosely defined and evidence from outside the period may be used to support an argument about the period itself, in a question like this there is a need to note the phrase 'in this period.'

Ancient Crete: Minoan Civilisation 2000–1400 BC

This topic proved less popular, but there were a few centres whose candidates responded well to the questions. The second question was a little more popular than the first, with some candidates producing perceptive analyses of Minoan art and sculpture. The best answers were able to use the archaeological remains and analyse the detail of them to construct some intelligent arguments about the structure of Minoan society. Candidates should, however, be reminded of the need to use original source material, both archaeological and literary, in constructing their argument.

Troy and the Mycenaeans 1450–1100 BC

A good number of centres opted for this option. There were some excellent answers, particularly on the question of military campaigns, which proved to be the more popular topic. Too many candidates in this question, however, failed to move away from weaponry to consider military campaigns more broadly. On a more positive note there was some excellent analysis of archaeological evidence, and some candidates made good use of parts of Homer.

Ancient Persia 630–499 BC

Persian religion was well answered by the few candidates who chose this option. Again, the candidates were well steered by their teachers in how to collate and catalogue the evidence which enhanced the planning of their essays and the subtlety of their conclusions.

Persian expansion was popular as a topic and usually well answered. Candidates sometimes adopted a tactical as opposed to a strategic approach, but were generally sound in their understanding of the material. In this topic teachers are reminded of the importance of looking at the dates: although the Greco-Persian Wars may provide some evidence for the period, they do not fall within it, and candidates should only be using evidence from this time in as far as it will help them to 'read back' into the prescribed period.

The Hellenistic World 323–133 BC

The question on Alexandria only attracted a few centres, but their work was often excellent. The variety of the primary source material lent itself to cross-referencing and some subtle interpretations of what could be gleaned from the evidence. Judging from the notes attached to the back of the scripts, the teachers had encouraged the students to use a strategy to help them analyse the sources, discussing provenance, bias etc which helped the candidates have a clear overview of the process and encouraged a more strategic approach.

The Celts c.500 BC–AD 500

The number of candidates offering this topic was too small to offer detailed feedback.

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