

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

ANCIENT HISTORY

J198

For first teaching in 2017

J198/02 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

We have made some minor typo corrections to the marking grids of J198/01 and J198/02 for Questions 4, 5, 8, 13, 18. These changes did not affect the approach to marking in anyway.



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Paper 2 series overview

This was the first examination of the new GCSE Ancient History Specification. J198/02 featured familiar topics but with different emphasis. The compulsory element of the paper extended the study of the Legendary Kings into the foundation of the Roman Republic so that it offered an extended period study. The non-compulsory sections, with their focus on the analysis of ancient historical works and artefacts, provided candidates the opportunity to develop and showcase the skills of ancient historians.

Section A overview

Teachers and candidates are to be congratulated for the thoroughness of their preparation for this new challenge. The overwhelming majority of candidates attempted to answer all of the questions and demonstrated good understanding. In particular candidates were very well versed in the new content which covered the establishment of the Republic and the first two secessions.

Question 1 (a)

SECTION A – The foundations of Rome: From kingship to republic, 753–440 BC

- 1 (a) Name the city that Aeneas travelled from on his journey to Italy according to legend. [1]

The majority of candidates were able to identify Troy or another place which Aeneas travelled from on his journey to Italy.

Question 1 (b)

- (b) Identify **two** ways in which Romulus made Rome safer. [2]

There were many different combinations to this question. Some candidates, however, did not provide answers which were sufficiently different to gain both marks. For example, stating that Romulus fortified Rome, and in their second answer stating that he built a wall.

| | | |
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|  | AfL | Remember to instruct candidates to mention two discrete answers where more than one mark is available. |
|---|------------|--|

Question 1 (c)

- (c) Name the written law codes introduced after the Second Secession. [1]

The majority of candidates were able to provide a correct answer.

Question 2

- 2 Outline how the Republic prevented Lucius Tarquinius Superbus from re-establishing his kingship. [6]

The vast majority of candidates found this question accessible. Candidates that scored highly were able to support each event with a few developed facts which set out why Superbus was prevented from returning to Rome.

Many candidates broke the events into several brief paragraphs to create a short narrative account. Unfortunately, a significant number of candidates who adopted this approach wrote in excessive detail about each selected event which is contrary to the aim of this question which asks for an outline.

The most common points were Rome's success at Silvia Arisia, Lake Regilius and the successful defence of Rome from Lars Porsena. Other candidates explored the Tarquin conspiracy and the introduction of a constitution which was designed to prevent a tyranny or kings returning.

A significant minority of students did not read the question carefully enough and outlined how Tarquin lost his kingship. Another observation was that a number of candidates tried to incorrectly use Passage A to answer this question.

Exemplar 1

Superbus sent ~~a request~~ ~~his~~ ~~for~~ envoys to demand his property back. The Senate agreed at first, but Brutus refused. He started a conspiracy against Brutus and it was discovered by Valerius and Brutus' sons who joined it were executed. The Senate refused to give back Superbus' property. In the war of independence, Romans fought bravely against Veii and Tarquinii who allied to Superbus. For three Roman heroes, Horatius, Mucius and Cloelia moved Lars Porsena who intended to restore Superbus. In the battle of Lake Regilius, Postumius ~~completely~~ defeated them, which ~~no~~ stopped Superbus' restoration and he was 90 years old.

This response received 6/6. The candidate has identified several ways Superbus was prevented from re-establishing his kingship, and these are supported by accurate information.

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|  | AfL | <p>The marking grid for Question 2 requires students to demonstrate accurate and detailed knowledge of “several” features and/or characteristics. In the context of this question, examiners would be looking for three features and/or characteristics.</p> |
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Question 3

- 3 Using details from Passage A and your own knowledge, what can we learn about the character of the 'Etruscan kings' Lucius Tarquinius Priscus and Servius Tullius? **[10]**

This question was tackled in a number of different ways. The vast majority of candidates discussed both kings in their responses and found a variety of features to explore. On the whole candidates found the passage accessible and were able to write at length about what they read.

The most common approach was to select a valid quote from the passage and use this to make a basic inference about each king's character. A significant number of candidates using this approach took the reference to Servius as a slave to suggest this was his character. Higher scoring answers, however, developed the slave reference to explore how this helped him identify with plebeians, or his resilience.

Some candidates did not address the “and your own knowledge” part of the question or only included a very sparse amount of information from their own knowledge and as a consequence limited the mark they could receive.

Other candidates divided their response into a paragraph identifying some features from Passage A and then a separate paragraph detailing some of the achievements of each king which they could recall. A number of candidates adopting this approach struggled to link the points recalled from their own knowledge back to the focus of the question, instead they listed the achievements of each king.

The most frequent claim made by high scoring responses was Servius' resilience. They supported this by a combination of information taken from the passage and their own knowledge such as the story of his childhood slavery, the opposition he faced from Ancus' sons and his patience in waiting for the throne to be passed to him by his mother-in-law. The use of deception by both kings was also very common, but its treatment was less consistent.

Question 4

- 4 Using details from Passage A and your own knowledge, how did Servius Tullius take over from Lucius Tarquinius Priscus as King of Rome? [15]

Candidates approached this question in a number of ways. The key aspect of Question 4 is that it is asking candidates to explain a second order concept such as change, consequence or causation. In this particular question candidates were required to identify the key factors which led to Servius' ascension. High scoring responses were able to organise details from the passage and their own knowledge into key factors such as revenge, religion, deception, ambitus and it was pleasing to see so many candidates assessing the constitutional factors which allowed Servius to accede. The very best responses then evaluated the impact of their chosen factors on Servius' rise to power.

Many candidates wrote a narrative of the events and did not use the passage or address the second order concept. Instead they wrote a detailed account of Servius' life with no evaluation of the different factors which led to his ascension, or analysis of the passage.

Question 5

- 5* To what extent was life for the plebeians harder under the Republic than it had been under the Kings of Rome? [20]

 Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology [5]

Examiners commented on the impressive quality of candidates' knowledge, especially in regard to the events after the foundation of the Republic. The vast majority of candidates wrote at length and were able to offer a valid response to the question.

Most candidates opted to argue that life had been easier under the kings of Rome, but there was a diverse array of responses and arguments which was very encouraging. It was especially pleasing to see many candidates constructing complex arguments. Many of the highest scoring answers argued that while life in the Republic appeared more difficult, by the end of the period life had improved significantly. Others argued that Livy and Dionysius make assumptions about the lives of the plebeians under the Roman kings, and that there is no evidence life was any better until the First and Second Secession introduced plebeians' political rights.

The vast majority of candidates organised their response into two sides and divided these into sections or factors. The most common approach was to explore how the kings could be interpreted as good / bad before applying the same treatment to the Republic. The strongest two-sided responses took the time to assess each factor and link it to the question. In their conclusion these students directly contrasted the two sides to reach a substantiated conclusion.

Other high scoring answers adopted a more sophisticated approach by identified a number of factors, such as military, religious, political, economic and social aspects, and accompanied them with an analysis of the issue and a thoroughly substantiated argument.

Lower scoring responses usually listed the achievements of each king and then outlined the events of the First and Second Secession. While the knowledge and understanding they demonstrated was good, much of it had limited or no relevance to the question. For example, Numa's alleged introduction of a calendar was featured heavily in these candidates' responses. Surprisingly there was a significant minority of students who constructed a strong argument without reference to any specific event or individual. A few key details could have transformed these answers.

Section B overview

Hannibal was a popular option and examiners were impressed by depth of knowledge shown by candidates across the spectrum. In particular candidates seem to write with warmth and passion within this component.

Question 6 (a)

SECTION B – Hannibal and the Second Punic War, 218–201 BC

- 6 (a) Name the role held by Fabius Maximus after the battle of Trasimene in 217 BC. [1]

This question was answered well; only a small number of candidates wrote something inaccurate.

Question 6 (b)

- (b) Give **two** causes of the Second Punic War. [2]

The vast majority of candidates mentioned Hannibal's oath and the siege of Saguntum. A small number of candidates did not choose two discrete features. For example, 'Hannibal hated the Romans. Hannibal swore an oath never to be friends with the Romans.'

Question 6 (c)

- (c) Give **two** difficulties Hannibal faced during the crossing of the Alps. [2]

Very few candidates wrote at length which was encouraging. The most frequent responses were conflict with tribes and the poor weather.

Question 7

- 7 What can we learn from Passage B about Hannibal's character? [5]

Candidates found the passage very accessible and all, but a few, could write at length about Hannibal's preparations.

Most candidates engaged successfully with the source and managed to identify at least the fundamental aspects of the portrait of Hannibal in it: military skill, courage, caution, preparedness. The highest achieving responses were adept at identifying several key features and analysing how they reveal important aspects of Hannibal's character.

Low scoring answers usually identified a feature, but failed to place it in the context of Hannibal's character. For example, they may identify Hannibal 'gaining information' but fail to develop this beyond a statement which suggests that 'this proves Hannibal sent out spies' whereas stronger responses would link this to his preparedness or intellect.

Exemplar 2

From passage B, we can learn that Hannibal is quite a clever man and this can be seen when he "wisely gained information". Moreover it seems that he is quite ^{forward-thinking} ~~organised~~ and this can be seen when he 'organised' ~~at~~ all the "security of Africa and Spain" which strongly implies his tactical nous. Furthermore Hannibal is said to have been "careful to promise all things" in his "communications" with the Celtic leaders and this strongly implies that he was cautious in nature and always wary of potential threats. Moreover the source paints Hannibal as an optimist and quite a determined man. This can be seen when he "led his soldiers" to the alps after being told the trek across the Alps would be "very hard and difficult" but not "impossible" and this clearly implies his determination to complete the task at hand.

This answer received 5/5 and identifies a number of Hannibal's character traits from the passage.

Question 8

- 8 Using details from Passage B, how accurate do you think the portrayal of Hannibal's character in the passage by Polybius is? [5]

A good number of candidates provided a reasoned and convincing assessment of the reliability of Polybius as a source. In particular, candidates were able to assess his use of eye-witness accounts to inform his history. Others explored his military background or suggested this passage concurs with Hannibal use of scouts from the other prescribed texts. Strong answers identified several factors which could have an impact on the accuracy of Polybius' portrayal of Hannibal and each was explicitly linked to the passage.

There has been occasional, but recurring, confusion between features of Polybius' and Livy's historiography, with candidates assessing Polybius on the basis of knowledge concerning Livy instead. It must also be noted that several responses, sometimes otherwise well-informed, struggled in connecting their knowledge of Polybius with the content of the passage. More successful candidates elaborated on Polybius' cultural bias and his association with the Scipio family.

| | | |
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|  | Misconception | <p>There was a misconception that Polybius was Roman, rather than Greek.</p> <p>There was also evidence candidates were unsure of when Polybius was writing. Often he was presented as writing either much later than the Punic Wars or exactly contemporary to the Second Punic War.</p> |
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Question 9

9 Explain why Hannibal could not defeat Rome after his victory at Cannae.

[10]

Like Question 4, candidates are required to use second order concepts to support their response. The majority of candidates were able to write at some length on the question, but these responses varied greatly in exhaustiveness, accuracy, and general quality.

Strong answers were able to identify several relevant and important factors and relate their impact on Hannibal's defeat in Italy. The strongest answers presented a variety of factors structured in a logical fashion, with a clear outlining of cause and effect.

The most commonly referenced element was the accusation from Maharbal that Hannibal could not exploit the victory at Cannae, often accompanied by a literal quote. A good number of candidates identified factors such as Fabian tactics and Hannibal's strategy of getting the Italian cities on his side.

Less successful answers did not organise their answers into a coherent response, and instead listed a number of factors but these were not developed to explain why this meant that Hannibal could not defeat Rome. Sometimes factors were simply listed without explanation, most typically 'Fabian tactics' referenced without explaining what they consisted of.

| | | |
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|  | Misconception | <p>A common misconception was the view that Carthage did not for some reason reinforce Hannibal after Cannae. The prescribed texts both make it clear that this only became a problem after the collapse of Carthage's colonies in Iberia after 206, almost 10 years after Cannae.</p> |
|---|----------------------|--|

Question 10

10* How far did the failure of Rome's consuls between 218 and 216 BC allow Hannibal to take control of much of Italy?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as supporting your answer with your own knowledge. **[20]**

Examiners commented on the excellent knowledge and understanding demonstrated by candidates of the key content. Many candidates, however, did not realise that this was a question which requires an analysis of relevant prescribed sources. As a consequence, a significant number of candidates did not explicitly mention the ancient sources that they were utilising. Implicitly, candidates made some reference to the stories outlined in Plutarch, Polybius and Livy, but did not link them with their author.

Most candidates used the same two-sided approach they used in Question 5, although with more varied results. Weaker responses, on the whole, did not explicitly link the prescribed sources to their answer and a few tagged on general learned assumptions about each of the authors. Some responses tackled the battles chronologically and made a statement relating the battle to Hannibal's leadership or the leadership of the consuls.

The strongest responses used the prescribed texts of Livy and Polybius to identify key factors. For example, the accusation made by Polybius, and to a lesser extent Livy, that 'New men' were responsible for Rome's defeats. From this point candidates explored the reasons for these accusations, and whether they provided a valid explanation for the failure of Rome's consuls. This interrogation would include paraphrased examples from the prescribed texts, or well selected knowledge to support their argument. They also analysed their judgements using the context of each historian to strengthen or weaken the claim made in that section.

Examiners did express their frustration at seeing Livy described as an 'armchair historian', the 'JK Rowling' of the Classical World or 'Octavian's propagandist'. Likewise, Polybius described as the intrepid adventurer who can do no wrong. More sophisticated treatments are needed to achieve the highest levels.

| | | |
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|  | AfL | Candidates are reminded that they should use and analyse the ancient sources they have studied in the depth study essay. Of the 20 marks available, 10 of these marks are for AO3 so a failure to use and analyse the ancient sources will limit the mark they can receive. |
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Section C overview

This was the most popular of the optional Sections. On the whole centres and candidates were well prepared for the exam and could access all of the questions and write at some length.

Question 11 (a)

SECTION C – Cleopatra: Rome and Egypt, 69–30 BC

11 (a) Name Cleopatra's father.

[1]

The vast majority of candidates answered this question correctly. Some candidates produced 'Ptolemy' but with the wrong number. A good number of candidates were able to specify his nickname of 'Auletes' as well.

Question 11 (b)

(b) Give **two** successes Cleopatra had as ruler of Egypt.

[2]

Candidates used a vast array of responses to this question. The most common answers explored Cleopatra's alliance with Rome and the removal of her rivals.

Question 11 (c)

(c) Give **two** difficulties Cleopatra faced at the beginning of her reign.

[2]

The vast majority of candidates received two marks for this question. A few candidates gave excellent and succinct descriptions of Cleopatra's dilemma with the Gabinians and Bibulus which showed real knowledge and understanding. A minority of candidates chose examples from much later on in her reign and others did not give enough detail to explain what the difficulty was, for instance 'her brother'.

Question 12

12 What can we learn from Passage C about Cleopatra's character?

[5]

The vast majority of candidates could access the passage, although some weaker answers found Horace's language confusing and difficult to interpret.

Most candidates engaged successfully with the source and managed to identify some aspects: bravery, powers of seduction, her resilience and her intellect. Surprisingly, very few candidates identified the description as referring to Actium. Some excellent responses discussed the metaphor of 'drunk on Italian wine' and analysed the similes to good effect.

The highest scoring answers were very adept at identifying several key features and analysing how they reveal important aspects of Cleopatra's character.

Weaker answers either repeated the wording of the passage or did not link it to a character trait. There were some recurring misconceptions on the identity of 'Caesar' and whether the 'empire' mentioned was the Egyptian empire.

Question 13

13 Using details from Passage C, how accurate do you think the portrayal of Cleopatra's character by Horace is?

[5]

A good number of candidates provided a reasoned and convincing assessment of the reliability of Horace as a source. In particular, candidates were able to assess how, as a poet, his depiction of historical events may be distorted for dramatic effect. Others explored his patronage by Maecenas but most struggled to sufficiently link this to the passage.

Many answers also discussed effectively the contrary descriptions of Cleopatra. There was plenty of mention of Horace's bias against Cleopatra and good answers referred to Roman xenophobia and distrust of politically powerful women, whereas weaker answers just asserted that Horace 'hated Cleopatra'.

Too many candidates made simple inaccurate statements based on a simplification of Augustan politics and claim that Augustus was paying significant sums of money to create propaganda for his regime. It must also be noted that several responses, sometimes otherwise well-informed, struggled in connecting their knowledge of Horace with the content of the passage.

Question 14

14 Explain how Antony's actions led to his defeat at the Battle of Actium.

[10]

Like Question 4, candidates are required to use second order concepts to support their response. The majority of candidates were able to write at some length on the question, but these responses varied greatly in accuracy and general quality.

The majority of answers showed good knowledge of Antony's actions before and during the battle. The most common points were his decision to fight at sea, as influenced by Cleopatra, and to flee the battle, but candidates also discussed a range of other ideas such as his treatment of Octavia and his delay in attacking. The best answers had a clear sense of causation, rather than just narrative with implicit links to the question, and presented a variety of factors structured in a logical fashion, with a clear outlining of cause and effect.

Weaker responses did not organise their response into a coherent response, and instead listed a number of factors. Knowledge was usually good, but did not sufficiently address why these events led to Antony's defeat.

Question 15

15* How far was Cleopatra able to use her relationships with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony to increase her political power?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as supporting your answer with your own knowledge. **[20]**

Answers were very variable but overall there was a pleasing amount of knowledge on display. Many candidates, however, did not realise that this was a question which requires an analysis of relevant prescribed sources. As a consequence, a significant number of candidates did not explicitly mention the ancient sources that they were utilising. Implicitly, candidates made some reference to the stories outlined in Plutarch, Horace and Livy, but did not link them with their author.

Most candidates used the same two-sided approach they used in Question 5, although with more varied results. Weaker responses, on the whole, did not explicitly link the prescribed sources to their answer and a few tagged on general learned assumptions about each of the authors.

A few candidates answered a different question along the lines of 'To what extent did Cleopatra use her relationships with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony just to increase her political power?', and were side-tracked into discussing the genuine (or not) nature of her relationships.

Strong responses tackled the topic thematically; most approached it chronologically which led to a certain amount of repetition about gaining land and heirs. The main stumbling block was the use and analysis of sources, with many answers neglecting to refer to any ancient sources. Even some strong essays, with good understanding and knowledge, found it difficult to use source evaluation within their argument, often leaving a tacked-on stock response about why Plutarch might be biased.

Section D overview

This was the least popular of the three depth studies. Candidates were, on the whole very well prepared. Examiners were aware that candidates seemed to have limited knowledge of the prescribed literary sources and instead most relied on the archaeological evidence in their responses.

Question 16 (a)

SECTION D – Britannia: from conquest to province, AD 43–c.84

16 (a) Name the river that Claudius helped his men to cross. [1]

The majority of candidates were able to identify the correct answer.

Question 16 (b)

(b) Name **two** tribes who resisted Roman rule. [2]

The vast majority of candidates were able to identify at least one tribe.

Question 16 (c)

(c) Give **two** of Agricola's achievements. [2]

Surprisingly, answers were rather poor to this question as more should have known about Agricola given that a number of sections from Tacitus' *Agricola* are prescribed.

Question 17

17 What can we learn from Passage D about how the Romans and the British prepared for the battle? [5]

Candidates found the passage very accessible and all, but a few, could write at length about the battle preparations.

Most candidates engaged successfully with the source and managed to identify at least some of the aspects within it: Roman preparedness, British disorganisation, variety of troops; Roman leadership and caution. The highest achieving responses were very adept at identifying several key features and analysing how they reveal important aspects about the Roman and British forces.

Low scoring responses usually identified a feature or two, but did not link them to preparations. For example, they identified the Britons had their families present, but did not develop this beyond a statement which suggests that 'they were not prepared'; whereas a stronger response would be able to make valid inferences about the impact of having families on the battlefield.

Question 18

- 18** Using details from Passage D, how accurate is the evidence presented by Tacitus about the battle preparations? **[5]**

Some candidates provided a reasoned and convincing assessment of the reliability of Tacitus as a source. They were able to assess how, as a near contemporary, his depiction of historical events may be distorted to promote a particular message, and his knowledge of Britain was thorough, because his father in law was Agricola. Most answers discussed the negative depiction of the Britons and the complimentary descriptions of the Roman forces.

Question 19

- 19** Explain why the situation in southern Britain was significant in Claudius' decision to launch his invasion. **[10]**

Like Question 4, candidates are required to use second order concepts to support their response. The majority of candidates were able to write at some length on the question, but these responses varied greatly in accuracy and general quality.

Many candidates offered vague responses about Britain already being influenced by Rome or talked in general terms about the disunity of the tribes. As such many candidates showed understanding of the general reasons for Claudius' decision, but did not support these with concrete examples. Much of the explanation was implicit and did not satisfactorily deal with the second order concept of causation.

Strong responses identified several relevant discrete factors and supported them with well selected evidence and then explicitly evaluated their importance in Claudius' decision to invade Britain. These factors were structured in a logical fashion with a clear focus on the question.

Question 20

- 20*** 'Roman rule completely changed the lives of all Britons in this period.' How far do you agree with this statement?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as supporting your answer with your own knowledge. **[20]**

Answers were very variable but overall there was sound understanding of how life changed for the Britons. Candidates had a sound understanding of the archaeological evidence and dealt with the changes in the broadest sense. There was a limited use or acknowledgement of literary sources, particularly Tacitus.

Unlike the other two optional sections, most candidates understood that this was a source-based question, and they based their response on the archaeological remains in Roman Britain. As a consequence, the impact of Roman engineering and, to a lesser extent, Roman culture was well covered in most of the responses.

Most candidates used the same two-sided approach they used in Question 5, although with more varied results. Some candidates described the physical impact and changes on southern Britain and the lack of significant change in the north. Stronger answers explored the idea that Britain was already changing as a consequence of its trading links with the Roman Empire, and explored the factors which led to rapid change and others which led to slow but permanent change.

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