

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

ANCIENT HISTORY

H407

For first teaching in 2017

H407/13 Summer 2024 series

Contents

Introduction 3

Paper 13 series overview 4

Section A overview 5

 Question 1* 5

 Question 2* 6

 Question 3 9

Section B overview 11

 Question 4..... 11

 Question 5* 15

 Question 6..... 16

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on answers' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future answers.

The reports will include a general commentary on answers' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of answer answers is also provided. 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 and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Would you prefer a Word version?

Did you know that you can save this PDF as a Word file using Acrobat Professional?

Simply click on **File > Export to** and select **Microsoft Word**

(If you have opened this PDF in your browser you will need to save it first. Simply right click anywhere on the page and select **Save as . . .** to save the PDF. Then open the PDF in Acrobat Professional.)

If you do not have access to Acrobat Professional there are a number of **free** applications available that will also convert PDF to Word (search for PDF to Word converter).

Paper 13 series overview

Performance in this option was generally good, in line with performance levels from the previous series. There was still a number of scripts this year that did not give the correct number for the question being answered, or, worse, no number at all when they started a new question.

Engagement with the modern interpretation was impressive showing that over the lifetime of the specification, answers have become aligned with the principle of analysing 'how convincing' in relation to the historical arguments put forward in the extract rather than simply showing what the ancient sources said on the factual content of the extract. There was still many examples of ancient source evaluation in the answer to Question 3.

Among weaker answers, in both the period and depth essay questions, there were still comments such as 'the sources tell us ...' without any mention of which source(s) was/were being referred to, and there were also several responses with no reference to sources at all. There was also in weaker responses incorrect attributions to Herodotus/ Thucydides/ Xenophon; it should not be difficult to establish a simple timeline of source authors to overcome this. The same applies to confusion over the Hellenic/ Delian/ Peloponnesian Leagues. There were many comments that Herodotus and Aristotle were Athenian and Plutarch Roman.

There was also the use of 'ostracism' as equivalent to exile from Athens; the last ostracism was in 417, and Thucydides was not ostracised after Amphipolis.

In evaluation, it was commonly stated that Thucydides lived in Sparta in his exile, but all he says is that he had 'access to the Peloponnesian side' (V.26).

However, the vast majority of answers dealt well with the subject material. Convincing conclusions were often reached, well supported by the evidence. Answers demonstrated a strong understanding of the Peloponnesian War, particularly its causes and effects.

Depth study answers demonstrated a strong grasp of the key issues addressed in the questions, with responses generally well-argued and supported by numerous examples of in-depth analysis. Additionally, the use of a diverse range of evidence throughout the paper was notably effective.

| Answers who did well on this paper generally: | Answers who did less well on this paper generally: |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrated a thorough understanding of the studied period maintained an accurate and clear understanding of the timeline chose sources specifically relevant to the question's terms prioritised addressing the question's terms, using evidence and knowledge to support the explanation evaluation focused on assessing the reliability of the specific point being made. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> incorrectly attributed an event to the wrong person or group did not concentrate on the main issue of the question, instead giving a general overview of the period provided a descriptive account of events rather than an analysis offered a general evaluation rather than a specific one. |

Section A overview

Overall, answers demonstrated a solid understanding of the key events in the two periods addressed by the essay questions. Successful responses effectively utilised the evidence to draw convincing conclusions. The strongest answers adhered closely to the specific terms of the question, with the evaluation of the evidence often being compelling and relevant.

Question 1*

- 1* 'The emergence of Athens as a superior naval power significantly affected relations with other states in the period 478–446 BC.'

To what extent do the sources support this view?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as your own knowledge to support your answer. **[30]**

This was the less popular of the two option questions, however, it was generally well answered.

A common comment in evaluation was that Thucydides was a contemporary of the *pentecontaetia*, but this is not really valid for at least the first 40 years as he was born in c.460. In considering the effect of Athenian growing power on Sparta many mentioned the (re-)construction of Athens' walls by Themistocles in the 470s. However, the vast majority of these referred to these as the 'Long Walls'; these were not constructed until c.457 (Thucydides 1.107).

Those who were able to use the evidence of Athenian decrees received due credit and, due to the debate over the dating of some, those which could be either 440s or 420s were allowed (Coinage Decree).

Many answers mentioned Thucydides' judgement at 1.23 and this was given if it was related to events of the specified time period.

There were references to the Corinthian complaints in 432 (outside the specified timespan in the question), specifically Corcyra, Epidamnus and Potidaea; this was allowed if it was related to events within 478–446.

Many better responses did discuss relations with Persia, while weaker ones confined themselves to Greek states, or even just those on the mainland, ignoring the Delian League.

Some responses included discussion of other factors affecting relations with other states (economic, attitude of allies), but only the best related this back to naval power; the question did not require discussion of other factors.

Responses often explored the Athenian relationship with allies/ Delian League members – revolts of Thasos and Naxos being commonly identified.

The roles of Pericles and Cimon were sometimes explored in some detail and the Athenian relationship with Persia in the years 478–446. There was some good use of some of the epigraphic evidence integrated well with good use of Thucydides and Plutarch.

Misconception



A large problem among weaker scripts was using evidence from outside the dates in the question (where mentioned) or the dates of the specification (especially in Section B), and not reading the question and extracts carefully; details of this for individual questions are detailed below.

Question 2*

2* How important was the quality of the leadership of Athens and Sparta in the events of the period 446–404 BC?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as your own knowledge to support your answer. **[30]**

The more popular of the Section A optional questions. Again, it was generally very well answered.

Some answers chose to interpret the question as the leadership of the cities of Athens and Sparta within the wider Greek world, and this was given due credit.

The biggest issue for weaker answers (and some stronger ones) was discussing examples from the whole period 492–404 instead of 446–404 as specified in the question.

Evaluation of the sources, for obvious reasons, tended to centre on Thucydides and Xenophon. Discussion of the Corinthian complaint in Thucydides either mentioned that Thucydides was present in Sparta, or that no Athenian could have known what was discussed. Thucydides actually tells us that some Athenian representatives were in Sparta at the time. Others stated that these representatives would have been present for the debate between Archidamus and Sthenelaidas, but Thucydides tells all 'outsiders' were asked to leave the assembly.

There were several answers who confused Thucydides discussion and praise of Pericles' leadership with the Funeral Speech which was actually delivered by Pericles.

Responses identified a good range of leaders – most commonly Pericles, Cleon, Alcibiades, and Nicias for Athens, and Brasidas, Lysander, and Archidamus for Sparta. Less commonly, the following leaders were identified: Demosthenes, Gylippus, Sthenelaidas, and Agis II. The mark scheme also identified Pleistoanax and Lamachus, but these leaders did not seem to have been used at all in responses.

Events typically explored included Pericles' strategy of remaining within the Long Walls during the Attic invasions and the impact of the plague on this strategy, the Athenian victory at Pylos, and Brasidas' successes in Thrace/ Chalcidice. The Sicilian expedition, the occupation of Decelea, and the battle of Aegospotami were also explored.

Some responses also considered the role of leadership in a wider sense, with the leadership of Athens or Sparta being examined over the period in relation to their allies. The role of Persia was also addressed in this question, with leaders' relationships with Persians such as Cyrus and Tissaphernes explored in relation to Lysander and Alcibiades.

There was confusion over the chronology of events around Amphipolis in discussion of Brasidas, some giving the battle in which Brasidas and Cleon died as 424, others stating that Thucydides failed in 422 and then went into exile.

Less successful responses did not answer with reference to the whole period mentioned in the question, concentrating only on 432–404.

Exemplar 1

It seems the importance of the qualities of the Athenian and Spartan leadership in the events between 446 and 404 BC were dramatically important in shaping the outcome of the Peloponnesian war according to our sources, which evaluate their military strategies and moves as they correspond with each other. However these Greek leaders didn't only communicate amongst themselves, Alcibiades is a prime example of Greek

leadership communicating with Persians for aid, which ~~he gets~~ Sparta gets, due to Lysander and Cyrus coming to agreement based off of Lysander's great reputation. Again, Lysander's qualities secure funding for the Spartan navy, displaying its importance. Plutarch breaks off his account here, failing to ever consider the effects of Persian aid or economic factors in the war, but we get most of our information from Xenophon, who seems to ~~place~~ ^{place} most of the securing of funds as a product of Lysander. Although this shows the importance of leadership all the same, it is likely because Xenophon was entranced by Spartan life and figures, having been welcomed there by the king after his exile from Greece Athens. We know he was in administration of Lysander, and so it is a valid assumption he might paint Spartans in a better light over others when given the chance.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | Alcibiades made this even easier to do too, as although |
| | | politically, his qualities speak to two ends of a spectrum, |
| | | in terms of values and morality, his constant side-swing- |
| | | ing was a quality that made many dislike him in |
| | | the ancient ancient world, although we must |
| | | acknowledge how it was still instrumental in its events. |

This is the conclusion of the essay, and it is very strong. It revisits arguments from the main body of the essay and draws together multiple themes explored to reach an overarching judgement which is convincing. There is a good blend of interpretation, analysis and evaluation of the evidence in this conclusion.

Misconception



There was also confusion over the trial of the generals after Arginusae with six, eight or ten being executed; eight of the year's ten generals were put on trial of whom six were executed and two (who did not return to Athens for trial) went into exile.

Question 3

3 Read the interpretation below.

... Salamis was a decisive battle because it broke the Persian navy, but it did not drive the Persians out of Greece. Salamis brought final victory nearly into the Greeks' hands, but it was not the last battle of the war.

Contrary to what Eurybiades had predicted at Andros in the autumn of 480 BC, the Persians did not all leave Greece. A large enemy army remained on the Greek peninsula, threatening Attica and the Peloponnese beyond, and aided and comforted by such famous Greek states as Macedon and Thebes. In the end, only a wall of Spartan spears and a sea of Spartan blood would drive them out. The result would bring glory to Sparta but not to Eurybiades, for he was an admiral and not a general. And Athens would gain glory too, for its spearmen stood in the front lines as well and fought hard, but none of that glory would go to Themistocles. 5 10

B. Strauss, *The Battle of Salamis*

How convincing do you find B. Strauss' interpretation of the importance of the battles of Salamis and Plataea for the Greeks' final victory in the war against Xerxes?

You must use your knowledge of the historical period and the ancient sources you have studied to analyse and evaluate B. Strauss' interpretation. [20]

Generally speaking, this passage question was engaged with well by many answers. Points were identified that were convincing/ unconvincing typically included – the battles of Salamis and Plataea, the role of Themistocles and Thebes and Macedon.

Additional own knowledge was usually integrated to support discussion and often this knowledge included; battles of Mycale and Thermopylae, the evidence of the Serpent Column, the retreat of Xerxes and the impact that this had on Persian forces, the role of other Greek states – notably Corinth at Salamis and the clever actions of Themistocles – leaving messages for the Ionians and the message to Xerxes on the eve of Salamis. The most common ancient sources used in relation to this question were Herodotus and Plutarch. When Thucydides was mentioned, it was usually in error.

Only very occasionally were the following potential discussion points identified; the role of Aegina at Salamis, the role of Tegea at Plataea, the low Spartan casualties in the battle at Plataea and the role of Pausanias. Very occasionally, answers demonstrated problems with chronology and incorporated Darius' invasion into the response.

Due credit was given for mention of Mycale as the question does refer to 'the war against Xerxes', so even discussion of Eurymedon was allowed if appropriately set in context; however, others went further to discuss Cimon's victory in Cyprus and the ensuing Peace of Kallias, which were after Xerxes' death.

In discussion of specific points in the interpretation, many picked out the concentration in the interpretation on Sparta and Athens, with several mentioning the Serpent Column as well as Herodotus as evidence of the number of Greek states involved at Plataea. There is still some confusion over the number of states mentioned on the column – it is thirty-one (31).

Many questioned the statement that Themistocles would receive no glory with most discussing his portrayal in Herodotus and Plutarch.

'Athens would gain glory too' was frequently discussed, with the best answers able to refer to the references to Athens' part in defeating the Persians in the debate at Sparta in 432.

Most did pick out the statement about 'sea of Spartan blood' to criticise, with a few noting the small numbers (ninety-one) of Spartan dead. Some, however, thought 'sea' meant this was a reference to a naval battle.

Several suggested that Strauss had fallen for the 'Spartan mirage' created by Leonidas at Thermopylae.

Section B overview

Answers delivered impressive responses to both essay questions, thoroughly exploring and arguing the central issues to reach convincing conclusions. The passage by Plutarch in Question 4 was widely recognised and effectively analysed to evaluate its utility as a source.

The essay question on Philip was less popular than the one on Alexander. Nevertheless, most responses to the 36-mark questions made effective use of evidence and were underpinned by a robust depth and breadth of factual knowledge.

Question 4

4 Read the passage below.

Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions

How useful is this passage for our understanding of Alexander's attitude to his own divinity? **[12]**

The Plutarch passage seemed familiar and enabled answers to draw out multiple valid points of enquiry in relation to the focus of the question. Plutarch as a source was often dealt with well including points that Plutarch is non-contemporary but used contemporary accounts and Plutarch was a moralising biographer and priest.

Most typically the points most identified and discussed included: the differing attitudes to Greeks and Barbarians by Alexander, the anecdote of Philip the 'so-called father', the injury of Alexander and the anecdote of Alexander and Anaxarchus.

Additional knowledge used to expand discussion typically included: the Mallian campaign, Alexander at Siwa, the adoption of Persian customs, dress and proskynesis by Alexander and Macedonian/ Greek attitudes to this. The anecdote of Olympias and Zeus was often mentioned as well as Alexander's adoration of and links to Achilles. Other valid sources also were brought into discussion, notably Arrian. There was some use of epigraphic and numismatic evidence, such as the coins of Lysimachus and the Porus Medallion, but this was often less focused on the question and insecurely used.

Exemplar 2

The source references Alexander's ~~haughty~~
 'haughty and majestic attitude' to the
 Persians. This is shown to be
 useful because Arrian corroborates
 this, in ~~his~~ reference to
 Alexander's ready acceptance of religious
 consecration of divine institution
 as Great King, in line with Persian
 custom, accepting divine ordination
 unhesitatingly. The source also gains
 utility in its reference to Alexander
 claiming divine birth, referring Philip,
 his 'so-called father'. This is
 seen in Plutarch's reference to
 Cleitus marking this a central
 complaint, prior to his death, and a story
 about his birth of Olympian lineage with

a serpent. The reliability of this claim is also seen in the prominence of Heracles on Alexander's bronze (AE), and silver (AR) coinage, given his ~~of~~ claim as 'the son of Zeus', his relation to Heracles would reaffirm this view of his own divine paternity, especially given its prominence ~~of~~ on his own coinage, used as propagandistic mass media. As such, one sees convincing aspects in the passage, unharmed by the reliability of Plutarch or repudiation by the source.

Where the source is less useful, is in its claim that Alexander was 'more restrained' with the Greeks. His ^{influence} ~~importance~~, seen in both Arrian and Plutarch's accounts, of ~~the~~ proxenia, and the backlash faced from Macedonians ~~and~~ such as Cleitus, who Alexander killed for the protest. The story of Callisthenes to practice the same, despite its very diverse constitution for the Greeks, shows that Alexander's

| | |
|---|--|
| 4 | <p> attitude to his own divinity were not more 'restrained' around the Greeks, and lacked much of the implicit cultural pragmatism intimated by Plutarch here. Furthermore, the suggestion that 'some years later', Alexander then began to deny his aspects of divinity, especially at the siege of the Mallians, runs contrary to his continued Madness, and implicit acceptance of prosternation, as per Arrian's reference to Coenus' complaints, and his readiness to be smelt out the Bessir and Tru, near Hephaestion. The rethinking of the claims around the </p> |
|---|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p> Mallian siege, where Arrian records Alexander being an arrow to the leg, given that Arrian, citing Ptolemy, a likely primary witness, does not mention anything like this, having Plutarch's reliability here, a likely consequence of his literary purposes, to write character biographies with moral elements only itself known hither. </p> |
|--|--|

This response earned full marks for its strong analysis of the passage's usefulness regarding the divinity of Alexander. The passage from Plutarch is explored in great detail, leading to well-supported judgements. The response effectively incorporates own knowledge and references to other sources (Arrian) to strengthen the analysis. The answer maintains a clear focus on evaluating the source's utility rather than simply discussing what the passage tells us about the central issue.

Question 5*

- 5* 'From his accession in 359 BC to the Peace of Philocrates in 346 BC, Philip's only aim was to make Macedon secure.'

How far do you agree with this view?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as your own knowledge to support your answer. **[36]**

Typically, the answers were focused on the early years of the date range in the question and on Philip's aims and efforts in securing Macedon. Good discussion of Macedonian/ tribal relations with Ilyria, Paeonia was seen as well as the use of marriage alliances to secure borders and cement alliances. Relations with Athens with rival claimants and the position of Amphipolis were discussed as well. Philip's military reforms were generally well covered with regards to the phalanx and sarissas, but less so with the development of cavalry, siege engines and hypaspists.

Relations with Olynthus was commonly explored in detail with Demosthenes' speeches coming into discussion here but often supported by generic evaluation. In addition, the seizure of Crenides and the implications of controlling the mines were used successfully in stronger answers. There was some discussion of Philip's intervention in the Sacred War but the Peace of Philocrates was only occasionally mentioned or explored, as was Methone and Pydna.

Some responses ignored the timeframe set and discussed Philip's later years.

Question 6

- 6* 'Alexander was not interested in governing the places he conquered; he just wanted the glory of conquest.'

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as your own knowledge to support your answer. **[36]**

Points commonly used to illustrate Alexander's lust for glory included: the Battles of Granicus and Issus, the attack on the Mallians, the pursuit of Darius, the Gordian knot, the siege of Tyre, the burning of Persepolis, the Sogdian Rock, the Gedrosian Desert, the destruction of Thebes and the mutiny of his army.

Examples used to discuss evidence of Alexander as a ruler included: the use of satraps, the reinstatement of local rulers like Porus and Ada, his marriages and adoption of Persian customs and the establishment of the *Epigonoï*.

Sometimes the destruction of Persepolis was used to support discussion that Alexander was now the ruler of a new Empire or the reception this may have had in Greece in revenge for the Persian invasion.

Less common examples used to discuss evidence of Alexander as a ruler included: the appointment of Antipater and Macedonian governors like Antigonus, the establishment of cities and Greek/ Macedonian garrisons.

Evaluation was often above generic with answers aware of the potential problems of using Arrian and Plutarch, Curtius and Diodorus. Many answers drew on evidence such as the Alexander Sarcophagus and the Porus medallion but often unexplained as to why this evidence was being used to support the argument being put forward.

Supporting you

Teach Cambridge

Make sure you visit our secure website [Teach Cambridge](#) to find the full range of resources and support for the subjects you teach. This includes secure materials such as set assignments and exemplars, online and on-demand training.

Don't have access? If your school or college teaches any OCR qualifications, please contact your exams officer. You can [forward them this link](#) to help get you started.

Reviews of marking

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#).

Access to Scripts

We've made it easier for Exams Officers to download copies of your candidates' completed papers or 'scripts'. Your centre can use these scripts to decide whether to request a review of marking and to support teaching and learning.

Our free, on-demand service, Access to Scripts is available via our single sign-on service, My Cambridge. Step-by-step instructions are on our [website](#).

Keep up-to-date

We send a monthly bulletin to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, [sign up here](#).

OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular professional development courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

Signed up for ExamBuilder?

[ExamBuilder](#) is a free test-building platform, providing unlimited users exclusively for staff at OCR centres with an [Interchange](#) account.

Choose from a large bank of questions to build personalised tests and custom mark schemes, with the option to add custom cover pages to simulate real examinations. You can also edit and download complete past papers.

[Find out more](#).

Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals (examined units only).

[Find out more](#).

You will need an Interchange account to access our digital products. If you do not have an Interchange account please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username, or nominate an existing Interchange user in your department.

Need to get in touch?


If you ever have any questions about OCR qualifications or services (including administration, logistics and teaching) please feel free to get in touch with our customer support centre.

Call us on
01223 553998

Alternatively, you can email us on
support@ocr.org.uk


For more information visit

 **ocr.org.uk/qualifications/resource-finder**

 **ocr.org.uk**

 **facebook.com/ocrexams**

 **twitter.com/ocrexams**

 **instagram.com/ocrexaminations**

 **linkedin.com/company/ocr**

 **youtube.com/ocrexams**

We really value your feedback

Click to send us an autogenerated email about this resource. Add comments if you want to. Let us know how we can improve this resource or what else you need. Your email address will not be used or shared for any marketing purposes.



I like this



I dislike this

Please note – web links are correct at date of publication but other websites may change over time. If you have any problems with a link you may want to navigate to that organisation's website for a direct search.



OCR is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored. © OCR 2024 Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registered office The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA. Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.

OCR operates academic and vocational qualifications regulated by Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA as listed in their qualifications registers including A Levels, GCSEs, Cambridge Technicals and Cambridge Nationals.

OCR provides resources to help you deliver our qualifications. These resources do not represent any particular teaching method we expect you to use. We update our resources regularly and aim to make sure content is accurate but please check the OCR website so that you have the most up to date version. OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in these resources.

Though we make every effort to check our resources, there may be contradictions between published support and the specification, so it is important that you always use information in the latest specification. We indicate any specification changes within the document itself, change the version number and provide a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource, please [contact us](#).

You can copy and distribute this resource in your centre, in line with any specific restrictions detailed in the resource. Resources intended for teacher use should not be shared with students. Resources should not be published on social media platforms or other websites.

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content: N/A

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR or are thinking about switching, you can request more information using our [Expression of Interest form](#).

Please [get in touch](#) if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support you in delivering our qualifications.