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Examiners' report

ANCIENT HISTORY

H007

For first teaching in 2017

H007/02 Summer 2024 series

Contents

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. A selection of candidate 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.

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Paper 2 series overview

There was a wide range of responses to all four questions, with the better answers showing a strong understanding of the period and were able to support their analysis with specific references to the source material.

The mutinies in Pannonia and Germany seemed well known to candidates, the majority of whom could recall the causes of the mutinies and how effectively they were resolved. The passage question was handled well with both passages from Suetonius mined well.

Both Questions 3 and 4 were tackled well with good use of source material across the period in support.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- have secure knowledge of the period studied - have a precise and clear grasp of the chronology - selected sources focused on the specific terms of the question - prioritised the explanation in answer to the terms of the question, using evidence and knowledge in support - evaluation is focused on the reliability of the specific point being made.	- attributed an event incorrectly to a person/group - did not focus on the main issue of the question but offered a generalised account of the period - provided a narrative of events, not an analysis - offered generic evaluation.

Section A overview

Section A produced a range of answers in line with performance levels from previous years. There were still examples of answers relying on quotations or close references to sources in Question 1 as well as evaluation, which is unnecessary. Most candidates were able to go beyond the two Suetonius passages and cite some relevant examples of Nero courting popularity which were analysed well to reach convincing conclusions.

Question 1

1   How effectively did Tiberius deal with the threat caused by the mutinies of the Roman army in AD 14?   **[10]**

The best answers provided a detailed discussion of both mutinies, thoroughly addressing the causes and demands of the soldiers, as well as Tiberius' responses and the handling of the mutineers by both Drusus and Germanicus. The strongest responses demonstrated analytical skills, offering insightful evaluations rather than just descriptive accounts.

However, some answers mistakenly assumed the question was about Tacfarinas, which led them off-track. Additionally, many answers strayed from the main topic by delving into extensive discussions on the downfall of Germanicus, which was not directly relevant to the question at hand.

Exemplar 1

1 Tiberius was effective to an extent to deal with the threat of the military mutiney mutinies. Tiberius was able to use his reputation and knowledge from ~~to end Some~~ mutinies of being a military commander to dealegate the task to end the mutinies to his son and adopted son Drusis and Germanicus, proving capable of dealagating power to heir's ~~iom~~ ~~the~~ to the ~~a role~~ of Princeps as a way of letting them prove themselves capable of military command and gain military influence. However, this decision isn't always presented as effective with Suetonius describing the decision as 'Sending two boy's to do the task' that was Tiberius' ~~dl~~ responsibility. Sources use this to show Tiberius withdrawl from his responsibility and to compare him to his predecessor, Augustus, who would of, in the sources view, taken it upon himself, however Augustus did dealaggate responsibility to others like Aggripa and ~~they~~ other military commanders, especially once after 18 BCE where Augustus had other ~~responsibilit~~ responsibilities. The decision was effective as while Germanicus and Drusis were

		apparently seen to struggle and be	
		ineffective at times. it did end with	
		the mutines ended.	

This response contains some knowledge of the two mutinies but there is no assessment of the two mutinies and this answer is considered partial in both Assessment Objectives. There is some accurate factual information throughout, but this is not always made relevant to the central issue in the question and there is some irrelevant detail about Augustus relying on Agrippa. There is some understanding of Tiberius using Germanicus and Drusus but overall, this is a partial response.

Assessment for learning

?

Question 1 expects candidates to discuss a narrow issue and it is advisable that candidates plan their answers as very little credit is given for discussion of tangential issues related to the central issue.

For example, this year's question expected familiarity with the two mutinies in AD 14. Accordingly, the popularity and subsequent death of Germanicus as well as Tiberius' popularity with all groups in society up to his death over 20 years later would have to be made specifically relevant to the causes and resolution of the Pannonian and German mutinies to be given any credit. This was not the case in many instances where they were used as arguments to address 'how effectively…'.

Question 2

2 Read the following passages.

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On the basis of these passages and other sources you have studied, how important to Nero was his public image? **[20]**

The most exemplary responses demonstrated a thorough engagement with the passages, incorporating multiple quotations to critically evaluate Suetonius' portrayal of Nero. Many answers would have benefited from a more nuanced use of the cited passages, which could have enriched their analyses significantly.

Overall, candidates exhibited a solid grasp of Nero's reign, indicating a genuine interest in this part of the period study. The strongest responses adeptly recognised that Suetonius focused on the early years of Nero's rule and noted the dramatic degeneration following the death of Nero's mother in AD 59. These answers effectively utilised a broad range of source material, including coins and extensive references to Tacitus, to construct a well-rounded and insightful analysis of the emperor Nero's reign.

Section B overview

Both essays were attempted in equal measure with some clear examples of excellent analysis and evaluation. Question 3 required more nuanced interpretation and on a few occasions less successful responses did not discuss the utility of non-literary evidence, relying on just simply providing examples of it (of which there are many).

Succession seemed a more familiar area with the majority of responses focusing on the Augustan succession which is reasonable due to its complexity. Only the better answers analysed whether there was a coherent plan for succession and indeed how far this was effectively implemented and if not, what were the inhibiting factors.

On the whole, examiners were impressed with the knowledge and understanding of the period shown in responses to these essay questions.

Question 3*

3*   How useful is the non-literary evidence for our understanding of the reigns of the Julio-Claudian emperors?

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

There were a number of excellent answers to this question. Some candidates were able to discuss effectively the different merits of using each type of non-literary source material: coins, inscriptions, buildings, decrees, statues. There were some strong parts of essays that looked for example at the *Res Gestae* and then compared this with other authors and archaeological material to understand the reign of Augustus, focusing on key aspects of his reign such as religion, civic administration, restoration of tradition and military persona.

Weaker responses dealt with the emperors' use of non-literary material to appeal to the plebs and even included games and donatives as non-literary evidence. The question is not about the different ways that emperors appealed to different groups in society but how we, as historians, can make use of the non-literary evidence to evaluate the successes and failures of the reigns of the Julio-Claudian emperors among the vast corpus of literary material.

Exemplar 2

While they provide less precise details of imperial policy, coins also provide an invaluable understanding of the Julio-Claudians, especially as they were the main method of imperial propaganda and self-presentation. The sheer number of surviving Roman coins make them an unusually abundant source of information, and the varying denominations also give a sense of which classes of Roman society the message was intended for. Once again, their contemporaneity makes them particularly ~~useful~~ useful, and they can even help ascertain the dating of specific events via the number of years of tribunician power they list for certain emperors.

Furthermore, coins which show individuals other than the emperor give an important insight into imperial dynastic politics, and the prestige of certain individuals, a theme which can be hard to pin down in ~~more~~ later, literary sources. For example, Nero's aureus of AD 54 shows him alongside Agrippina, clearly backing up Suetonius' and Tacitus' claims that she was very close to Nero during his accession, and perhaps further implying that she played a role in orchestrating that succession, an idea which would certainly back up literary accounts. In a similar way, Claudius' choice to present Drusus on his early coinage proves that he was relying on the prestige of his family to gain support before he had won his own conquest, but the ~~later~~ end of this approach really counters Suetonius' claim that Claudius' invasion of Britain was "of no great importance." While coins are often scant on detail, they remain one of the most numerous and direct sources of information for the Julio-Claudians, giving an insight into contemporary priorities and propaganda more directly than any other form of source.

This paragraph is an overall assessment of the value of numismatic evidence in understanding the reigns of the Julio-Claudians. There are some detailed references to some coins with a partial discussion of what literary sources say about some of the themes related to the propaganda on the coins. This is a good starting point, but the analysis is underdeveloped. The first paragraph focuses on the general value of the type of source without using specific examples to support the line of argument. The second paragraph is better as it gives more of a detailed assessment of the propaganda in the coins of Claudius and Nero with some support from Suetonius and Tacitus.

Question 4*

4* How far do you agree that no emperor had a successful plan for succession?

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

The most impressive responses to this question were consistently analytical, with a strong focus on Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius. These essays provided a sophisticated examination of the key figures and their influence on imperial succession, demonstrating a deep understanding of the central issues.

Many responses displayed a commendable grasp of the historical narrative and were able to identify members of the imperial family with accuracy. However, these answers would have been significantly enhanced by adopting a more analytical approach to evaluating the central issues at hand.

Some of the most effective essays delved into the various factors influencing succession, such as the strategic roles played by imperial women and the crucial influence of the Praetorian Guard. This nuanced analysis provided valuable insights into the mechanisms of succession and was rewarded highly under the AO2 Assessment Objective.

Conversely, a significant number of answers attempted to address all five emperors, which often compromised the depth of their analysis. In particular, focusing on Gaius proved to be a detriment, as many responses included irrelevant details about his reign that did not contribute meaningfully to the central discussion. A more focused approach, excluding Gaius, would have allowed for a more in-depth exploration of the relevant emperors and issues.

Assessment for learning

Most essay responses effectively arrived at well-reasoned conclusions grounded in the ancient evidence provided. As emphasised in previous series, it is crucial that evaluations of sources are directly aligned with the specific arguments being made in the essay. Despite this guidance, many responses still included a significant amount of generic evaluation appended at the end. This approach often lacked depth and relevance, leading to a substantial reduction in the credit given. To enhance the quality of their arguments, answers should focus on integrating source evaluations more seamlessly into their analysis, ensuring that these evaluations are explicitly connected to the key points discussed throughout their essays.

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