OCR

Oxford Cambridge and RSA

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

ANCIENT HISTORY

J198

For first teaching in 2017

J198/02 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

This is the sixth series for this examination and it is very pleasing to see the number of centres choosing Ancient History increasing again. In comparison with previous series, in general, candidates are more confident with the different question types and how the Assessment Objectives are allocated.

Candidates continue to show superb engagement with the narrative element of the Roman Foundations section. Furthermore, most Section A responses are using the passage as a prompt to explore the focus of the question with their understanding of the period.

The Cleopatra depth study continues to be the most popular option on this paper, although Roman Britain has seen a large increase. There were a range of responses to all questions. Candidates following the Hannibal depth study route were, overall, able to use ancient sources with more confidence when formulating a judgement in the extended response.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• knew key elements of Roman kings and used specific evidence to support their judgements • organised their responses into themes which enabled analysis and evaluation • focused on the demand of the question, rather than the topic of the question • made the ancient source the focus of their response • were able to draw out inferences and themes from the passage • made valid substantiated judgements • evaluated the utility of an ancient sources in relation to a specific event or opinion.	• made vague assumptions or unsubstantiated statements • relied on modern interpretations of society to judge the ancient world • wrote responses which lacked examples • made simple comments about sources, for example 'they were biased' • used source analysis to make reductive anachronistic comments about the context of the ancient sources, such as they are biased propaganda • wrote responses which lacked structure or organisation.

Section A overview

Candidates continue to engage with the content of the Roman longer period study and responses demonstrated good understanding of key themes. Less successful responses were able to engage with the source material and draw out some relevant elements. In comparison to previous series, there were more responses which engaged with the questions and made substantiated judgements.

Question 1 (a)

1

(a) Identify **one** of the myths about the childhood of Servius Tullius.   **[1]**

Candidates were able to answer this question and there were a wide range of valid responses.

Question 1 (b)

(b) Identify **one** of the problems facing the plebeians before the First Secession.   **[1]**

There was a wide range of valid responses here. This is indicative of the greater confidence candidates are showing with events after the creation of the Republic. Some candidates did not read the question carefully and referred to events leading to the Second Secession.

Question 1 (c)

(c) State **two** important events that were said to have taken place during the time of Romulus' kingship.   **[2]**

Candidates offered a wide range of valid responses although most focused on the establishment of the Senate and the conflict with the Sabine peoples.

Question 2

2   Outline how Lucius Junius Brutus helped create the Roman Republic.   **[6]**

Candidates performed well on this question. Generally, responses formed a clear narrative based around a selection of key events. This was pleasing. Only a small number wrote a list of two or three bullet points. Most focused on the events leading to the expulsion of Superbus. The story of the Delphic Oracle and the Tarquin conspiracy featured in many responses as well.

Question 3

3   Using details from **Passage A** and your own knowledge, what can we learn about the rights and lives of plebeians between 509 and 440 BC?   **[10]**

Candidates continue to do well on this question. In general, candidates could draw out several features from the passage which answered the question.

The most successful candidates explored how far the rights and lives of plebeians had changed. They made several substantiated judgements drawn from valid source inferences. Most commonly, candidates explored the significance of warfare in limiting their rights and their perception as the 'dregs of society.'

It was pleasing to see that most candidates had moved away from the practice of writing about the source first and then listing their knowledge in a separate paragraph. Most candidates are now building up paragraphs by making an inference, and then explaining it with relevant examples.

Some less successful candidates made judgements based on modern concepts, such as access to the vote in general elections or demands for unemployment benefit. Others paraphrased the text but did not link this to the rights and lives of the plebeians.

Some candidates appear to think that this question is only focused on the source, and that historical knowledge is needed for Question 4.

Assessment for learning

Many candidates create flash cards outlining the successes and limitations of the kings from the first two units of study. To improve understanding, it may help to do the same with the Republic but dividing it into several key periods with clear themes.

Here are several possible headings that may help you and organise key facts into problems and solutions.

Causes of the Wars of Independence, Wars of Independence, Causes of the First Secession, First Secession; Development of the tribunes, The decemvirate and the causes of the Second Secession, Second Secession and reforms.

Question 4

4 Using details from **Passage A** and your own knowledge, explain why plebeians' lives did not significantly improve between 509 and 440 BC. **[15]**

Candidates' responses were much improved and generally, most focused on the focus of the question. Most also explored the challenges faced by tribunes, the imbalance of power and the comparison of different consuls' approach to plebeian demands.

Successful candidates drew out themes from the passage and explained how far this affected the lives of the plebeians. Many drew comparisons between the First and Second Secessions and how progress was limited because of the self-interest of the Senate.

Less successful candidates repeated their responses to the previous question and did not explain why lives failed to improve.

Some candidates appear to think that this question is only focused on historical knowledge and do not refer to the passage.

Exemplar 1

4		from Passage A, it can be learnt that Plebians lives did not improve due to the reluctance of the Patrician class (who held the vast majority of political power in the Roman republic) to accept them. this is shown as Livy describes the Patrician senate as viewing plebians as "the dregs of Society", suggesting a lack of respect and dissmissal of Plebian problems, which can be supported as the actions of Coriolannus after the first Sucession show a lack of compassion towards plebian issues as he blames the famine on the Plebians. Moreover, Appius Claudius the first dismissed Plebian issues in the leadup to the first sucession, saying that it would be a good idea to simply arrest the protesting plebians so that the rest will fall in line. This shows a reluctance on behalf

| | | | of the upper-classes to accept Plebrians due to |
| | | | the deeply agrained classism in Roman society. |

Exemplar 1 demonstrates how the three Assessment Objectives can be combined to create a clear and substantiated judgement. This candidate clearly identifies a key theme which is focused on the question. They then demonstrate where it has been drawn from the passage before selecting several examples from their knowledge to illustrate this point. This response was given a Level 5 as the candidate has used this technique several times to good effect.

Question 5*

5* 'All of Rome's kings failed.'

To what extent do you agree with this view? **[20]**

(🖊) Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology **[5]**

The most successful responses created a set of criteria to judge the concept of failure. In this way they were able to judge the limitations of each king and evaluate the extent to which they failed. Most common themes were military, political, social and religious initiatives. The most successful responses made substantiated and sustained judgements which used examples from across the period.

Many candidates organised the kings into failures and successes. This approach allowed these candidates to organise their response and create valid judgements. However some candidate adopting this approach lacked analysis with candidates listing each king's achievements or failures. Superbus was commonly chosen to represent failure, although there was a good range of valid responses.

Less successful responses wrote a narrative account of the kings and did not clearly evaluate whether they failed.

A few responses evaluated the nature of the evidence, this was credited under the first Assessment Objective. Candidates do not need to know about the nature of the sources for the period study section of this exam.

Section B overview

Candidates who studied the Hannibal depth study generally demonstrated a good understanding of the whole period and understood the nature of the different ancient sources. Question 10 had a wide range of responses and a significant number of candidates used the context of the sources to make judgements about how far their conclusions were valid.

Question 6 (a)

6

(a)　Name the leader of Carthage, appointed by Rome, after its surrender in 201 BC.　　　**[1]**

Many candidates correctly identified Hannibal. Some candidates expected the leader to be a Roman.

Question 6 (b)

(b)　Identify **two** ways Spain helped Carthage during the Second Punic War.　　　**[2]**

Candidates answered this question accurately. Most focused on the provision of soldiers and silver.

Question 6 (c)

(c)　Identify **two** problems facing Hannibal after the battle of Cannae.　　　**[2]**

Candidates responded to this question well. Most focused on the lack of siege weapons and the return to Fabian tactics.

Question 7

7　What can we learn from **Passage B** about the aftermath of the battle of Trasimene?　　　**[5]**

The most successful responses drew several inferences from the passage and displayed some sophistication in their explanation, such as the heavy losses on both sides, and the failure to find Flaminius' body demonstrates that there was confusion after the battle.

The vast majority were able to draw out at least two inferences from the passage and explain its significance.

Question 8

8 Using details from **Passage B**, how accurate is Livy's description of events after the battle of Trasimene? **[5]**

It was encouraging to see most candidates interrogating the source rather than making reductive conclusions about Livy's value as a historical source because he wrote many centuries later.

The most successful candidates explored Livy's historical approach and his acknowledgement of the different sources available to him. Many candidates recognised that Livy's description of Hannibal paying respect to the dead was not typical, and therefore potentially accurate.

Less successful students critiqued Livy because he was not present and was prone to hyperbole, with limited or no reference to the source.

Question 9

9 Explain the main mistakes that the Roman consuls made at Trebia, Trasimene and Cannae. **[10]**

This question had a very high level of engagement and knowledge was generally very good.

Less successful candidates wrote a narrative account about the three battles. They did not explore the mistakes of the Roman consuls.

The most successful candidates identified common themes, such as the pursuit of glory which encouraged consuls to rush into battle which gave Hannibal an advantage.

Question 10*

10* 'Hannibal's greatest achievement was crossing the Alps.'

To what extent 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]**

Candidates, generally, had a good degree of engagement with the ancient sources to evaluate the validity of arguments.

Most candidates could find examples of why crossing the Alps would be Hannibal's greatest achievement as well as potential alternatives. Most of the alternatives were battles, but Ager Falernus and the siege of Saguntum and Capua were offered as viable alternatives.

Most candidates were able to evaluate these opinions with reference to the nature of the evidence we possess. Polybius and his experience of the Alps was the most used example to validate candidates' views. Livy and Plutarch were also used by many candidates with varying success.

Less successful candidates wrote a limited narrative about the Alps or Hannibal's battles without a direct link to the question.

10* 'Hannibal's greatest achievement was crossing the Alps.'

Section C overview

Cleopatra was the most popular depth study. As such it had the widest variety of responses. Many candidates rely on basic assumptions about the nature of the historical sources and view them as Augustan propaganda. The most successful candidates continue to explore and contrast the value of using biographical, poetic and historical sources to assess the validity of their conclusion.

Question 11 (a)

11

(a) Give **two** details from the preparations for the Battle of Actium. **[2]**

This question had a wide variety of responses. There were many candidates whose responses were excessively vague and could have applied to any war preparations. Others did not read the question carefully and they focused on events during and after the battle. The most common responses focused on naval preparations and the decision to fight at sea, rather than land.

Question 11 (b)

(b) Give **two** visual features of Cleopatra's appearance in representations from Greek archaeological sources. **[2]**

There were also a wide variety of responses to this question. Some candidates focused on modern interpretations which focus on her beauty or misunderstood the question and described modern depictions of Egyptian pharaohs. The most common responses were typically the Ptolemaic nose and diadem.

Question 11 (c)

(c) Which goddess did Cleopatra dress like, when she met Antony at Tarsus? **[1]**

A significant number of candidates incorrectly answered Isis although many correctly answered Aphrodite.

Question 12

12 What can we learn from **Passage C** about Cleopatra's visit to Rome and her reception there? **[5]**

There was good engagement with the two passages.

It was decided at standardisation that candidates only needed to engage with one passage to access all the marks, but the vast majority engaged with both.

The most successful candidates were able to combine elements from one or both passages to create a more sophisticated explanation about her negative reception.

The least successful candidates used the passages to invent stories about Cleopatra, Julius Caesar and Cicero's relationships.

Question 13

13 Using details from **Passage C**, how accurate do you think Dio **and / or** Cicero's accounts of Cleopatra's visit to Rome and her reception are? **[5]**

Candidates engaged with this question well and the opportunity to choose one of the two sources served them well here, as there were candidates who were clearly stronger in the knowledge of only one. The treatment of Cicero was commonly the strongest as candidates were able to analyse him as a contemporary author who was writing in confidence to a colleague.

There were some strong candidates who used the two sources to discuss how they supported or contradicted each other.

There were a significant number of candidates who made sweeping, unfounded or inaccurate statements about bias. The most common was the assertion that both men served Augustus writing propaganda for him or that all Romans were xenophobic and hated foreigners.

Misconception

?

Many candidates seem to have the view that the Romans were xenophobic and hated foreigners. This is a common misconception. Roman society relied on assimilation of other peoples and cultures. Roman army relied on many cultures and peoples to maintain its strength.

We do not have a clear accurate picture of how Cleopatra was received in Rome, but it is probable she was received as a client queen who contributed to the expansion of Roman influence. It is also worth noting that the Ptolemaic dynasty was of Greek heritage with links to Alexander the Great. The Romans had a great deal of respect for the Greeks, and Cleopatra would, we can surmise, have been afforded the same respect.

Question 14

14 Explain the difficulties Cleopatra faced after the death of her father Ptolemy. **[10]**

There was a wide range of responses to this question. Most candidates highlighted Cleopatra having to co-rule with her brother, Ptolemy's advisors, Egypt's debt and the impact of famine.

The most successful candidates were able to develop these factors with specific detail and explain its impact.

Less successful candidates confused the timeline and focused on events which led to her death. There were also a significant number of candidates who believed that Roman racism and xenophobia was her greatest difficulty.

Question 15*

15* To what extent do the ancient sources help us to understand whether Cleopatra's downfall was caused by the rivalry between Antony and Octavian?

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

Candidates' responses were varied. Most candidates discussed the nature of the ancient sources but did not give much detail about the nature of the rivalry or its impact on Cleopatra. Other candidates discussed the rivalry but did not mention the ancient sources at all.

More successful candidates discussed the nature of the sources to explain negative portrayals of Cleopatra. Plutarch's focus on character and relationships provides the historian with insights into personal rivalries, and Virgil's poetry shows how Octavian's ambition was a key factor.

Successful candidates also drew on the Donations of Alexandria, Actium and Antony's relationship with Octavia. Less successful candidates relied on sweeping statements such as Cleopatra being to blame for running away or inaccurate assumptions about Roman historians and their hatred of other races.

Exemplar 2

15.		I agree to an extent that the ancient sources (such as the Aeniad and Plutarch) help us to understand whether Cleopatra's
		downfall was caused by the rivalry between Antony and Octavian. Although the actions of Antony and Octavian had effect on Cleopatras' downfall, it was ultimately her fault for her downfall.
		When planning for the battle of Actium, Antonys' idea was that it should be fought on land as his soldiers were better equipped for land fighting, but Cleopatra insisted that the battle should be fought at sea. Antony did as she asked and the battle against Octavian at Actium was fought at sea. This, however arguably led to Cleopatras downfall because they lost the battle of Actium due to the decision of having the army at sea, even though they were not well equipped or prepared to fight at sea. The battle of Actium is depicted on Aeniar' shield in the Aeniad and reveals the battle at sea and the failure of Cleopatra and Antonys army. This however may not be fully accurate because Virgil (who wrote the Aeniad) wrote stories, meaning that some of the information in the Aeniad may be exaggerated.
		Contrastingly, the battle of Actium, which led to the death and downfall of Cleopatra did not begin by her doing but actually because of the ongoing rivalry between her husband Marc Antony and Octavian. Octavian waged war against all of Cleopatras workers, slaves and herself, only because it was highly frowned upon to wage war against one of your own people, so by waging war against Cleopatra and her people, Octavian would also be at war with Antony because he knew that Antony would defend his wife

Cleopatra. Therefore, the war that led to the downfall of Cleopatra was due to the rivalry between Octavian and Antony. Plutarch talks about this in his Plutarch life of Anthony biography which is accurate because Plutarch gathered all of the information on what he wrote about from primary sources.

Overall, although Octavian and Antonys rivalry played a big part in the downfall of Cleopatra, Cleopatras decisions in the battle of Actium against Octavian led to the downfall of her as the queen of Egypt and her death.

Exemplar 2 is a good Level 3 response. There is accurate knowledge and some understanding to support a series of judgements.

This response has been chosen as it shows how a mid-level candidate can use the nature of the historical sources to assess the validity of the judgements made. For example, Plutarch is writing a biography and Virgil poetry.

To achieve Level 4 the candidate could have developed this further by explaining how Octavian's desire to have the Battle of Actium remembered as part of an epic poem reflects his ambition and may explain his rivalry with Antony.

To turn this into a good Level 4 response the candidate would have needed a greater focus on how the rivalry led to Cleopatra's downfall and more specific details from their knowledge to support the factors they chose.

Section D overview

There was a significant rise in the number of entries for this depth study and the quality of responses has improved significantly from previous years. Some candidates do not appear to understand the difference between archaeological and literary evidence. More successful candidates flourish because they are able to compare and contrast the two types of evidence.

Question 16 (a)

16

(a) Name the governor of Britain who attacked the Druids at Mona (Anglesey) in AD 60. **[1]**

> There was a wide range of responses to this question. A significant number identified Suetonius Paulinus as the correct response.

Question 16 (b)

(b) Give **two** reasons why Aquae Sulis was important to the Romans. **[2]**

> Candidates were generally able to correctly identify one valid reason. Its use as a bath and religious centre were the most common responses.

Question 16 (c)

(c) Identify **two** actions of the Governor Ostorius Scapula. **[2]**

> Candidates were generally able to provide two valid responses. The most common being the suppression of revolts and the ban on weapons.

Question 17

17 What can we learn from **Passage D** about the economic impact of the Roman Army and traders? **[5]**

> Candidates were able to identify a range of valid inferences. The most common were the opportunities to trade, Roman currency and the impact of roads.

Question 18

18 Using details from **Passage D**, how accurate do you think the evidence presented on the Vindolanda tablet is about the economic impact of the Roman Army and traders? **[5]**

Candidates who knew that the Vindolanda tablets were archaeological sources generally created very thorough responses.

A significant number of candidates did not know what the Vindolanda tablets represent and were therefore confused about the nature of the evidence.

Exemplar 3

18		The vindolanda tablets are exact buisiness documents from the time period in which the Romans occupied Britannia, suggesting accuracy, however as they are but a fragment of the economic state in Britain, it can be suggested that they lack accuracy, given that it is often random chance on what does and does not survive the passing of time, it is not truly accurate as the economic state may have vastly varied across the British province. Moreover, the tablet discovered is fragmented, with aspects missing so the full story cannot be neccicarily understood, further suggesting innaccuracy.

Exemplar 3 is a top Level 3 response. The candidate shows a thorough understanding of the nature of the Vindolanda tablets. They are aware of the significance of the tablet for understanding the British economy, but also the fragmentary nature of the tablet. It could have been improved with a slightly sharper focus on the content of the tablet.

> **Assessment for learning**
>
> Archaeological sources like the Vindolanda tablets provide historians with an insight into life on the northern frontier of the Roman empire. They are a set of ink written tablets which cover all aspects of life in the fort. While many are fragments and incomplete, they still reveal surprising glimpse into what life was like for non-citizen soldiers and their families garrisoned in Roman Britain. The British Museum website has excellent resources which may help candidates develop their understanding about the significance of the tablets.

Question 19

19 Explain why the Roman Palace at Fishbourne was significant. **[10]**

Candidates engaged well with this question and the vast majority were able to explain its archaeological significance or its significance as an example of romanisation.

More successful candidates were able to develop these ideas with specific examples and they demonstrated a good understanding of the history of the palace and its changing purpose.

A significant number of less successful candidates incorrectly identified the palace as the home of a Roman emperor or described in anachronistically. A small, but significant, number of candidates struggled to answer questions which were based on archaeological findings.

Question 20*

20* 'Caratacus' resistance campaign was the most successful of the Britons' resistance to Roman rule.'

To what extent 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]**

Candidates engaged positively with this question and many candidates were able to provide at least one reason why Caratacus' campaign was successful. Most candidates argued that the Boudiccan revolt was the most successful and could draw on a range of reasons. It was pleasing to see some candidates contemplate Calgacus and the Caledonians. It is always pleasing to see candidates incorporate recent archaeological findings into their work. This year there were mentions of 'Agricola's road' discovered near Drip and his marching camps near Ayr.

The strongest candidates combined archaeological and literary sources to support the validity of their judgements. Some of the best responses to the depth study essay came from this option.

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