

Examiners' report

GCSE

ANCIENT HISTORY

**OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1)
in Ancient History**

J198

For first teaching in 2017

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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. A selection of candidate responses 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 [Teach Cambridge](#).

Please note: OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Ancient History (J198) will no longer be funded in Wales for new learners after **31 August 2026**. Please check the [Qualifications in Wales](#) portal (QiW) for more information.

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Paper 2 series overview

On the whole, candidates were well prepared for the exam and most demonstrated sound understanding and knowledge. Candidates did well using the exam paper to demonstrate all that they have learnt. More centres are drawing on the support materials published by OCR and the number of quality responses using prescribed sources and unseen passages has increased.

Some candidates, however, were unable to fully use their understanding because they struggled to use sources effectively. We would, therefore, recommend all centres to use OCR resources to complement teaching. We are also fortunate to have a very active Ancient History community who support us and the centres who follow this specification.

OCR support



OCR published Prescribed Sources booklets can be found on [Teach Cambridge](#).

The compulsory unit, the foundations of Rome: from kingship to republic, 753–440BC, saw a vast improvement in knowledge of the Roman Republic. In part, this was driven by the passage exploring Lars Porsena which was tackled by most candidates. There was a mixture of responses to Question 5 which considered the archaeological origins of Rome alongside the Roman record of their city's origin.

The Cleopatra depth study continues to be the most popular option on this paper. Some of the strongest responses followed this route. Unfortunately, there were many misconceptions about the nature of power in this period and anachronisms about the role of women in the ancient world. Many candidates did not mention any prescribed sources or focused solely on Plutarch.

Candidates used a mixture of prescribed and archaeological sources, those just using archaeology without reference to the ancient historians were still rewarded for their work. The best responses used a variety of prescribed sources.

Candidates following the Hannibal depth study demonstrated good understanding, but many following this route forgot to include the prescribed sources in their response.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• had very good knowledge of several key events across the whole period studied • focused on the demand of the question rather than the topic of the question • made the ancient source the focus of their response and drew out themes to explore • had very good knowledge of the whole period and selected good examples to support their judgements • drew out inferences and themes from the passage • evaluated the utility of an ancient source in relation to a specific event or opinion • explained how the context of an author or archaeological artefact could add weight to an argument.	• demonstrated insecure understanding and made unsubstantiated statements • used modern interpretations of power and the role of women to judge the Ancient World • wrote responses that lacked examples • made simple comments about sources • rewrote the source in their own words without drawing out any inferences • made reductive comments about the context of the ancient sources, for example, 'we cannot trust Plutarch because he was not there' • did not use key terms or names with accuracy • did not complete all the questions in their chosen sections.

Section A overview

Candidates' understanding of the period is improving. The key themes of military, political, religious, and social initiatives were understood and helped structure many responses. Knowledge of the kings has long been a strength of candidates, but for the first time there were almost as many examples from the Republic.

The least successful responses still missed out questions. Others did not read the question and just wrote a narrative or a brief overview about the topic in the question.

Question 1 (a)

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

- 1
(a) State **one** building Tarquinius Superbus was said to have built. [1]

Most candidates were able to answer this question correctly. The temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus and the Cloaca Maxima were most commonly mentioned.

Incorrect responses suggested Superbus built the Temple of Diana or the Servian Wall. Others were too generic and limited to 'a temple'.

Question 1 (b)

- (b) Identify **one** of the features from the myth of Romulus' childhood. [1]

Most candidates were able to answer this question correctly. Most candidates mentioned the myth of the she-wolf.

Question 1 (c)

- (c) Identify **two** rights that were said to have been granted by the Twelve Tables. [2]

Many candidates had a poor understanding of the contents of the Twelve Tables. In particular, candidates believed the lifting of the ban on intermarriage occurred in the Twelve Tables, when the ban was in fact enforced by the Twelve Tables.

Many students confused the Twelve Tables with Valerio-Horatian Laws or Canuleius' reforms.

Question 2

2 Outline how the Etruscan kings improved Rome.

[6]

Candidates performed well on this question, writing a clear narrative about several key developments.

More successful responses had a very good understanding of improvements accredited to the Etruscan kings. Popular responses included the construction of the Circus Maximus and Cloaca Maxima, and the creation of the census.

Some responses lacked understanding of which kings were Etruscan, with several candidates mentioning actions taken by Romulus, Numa, or Ancus.

Question 3

3 Using details from **Passage A** and your own knowledge, what can we learn about how Rome overcame Lars Porsena?

[10]

Most candidates were able to analyse the source and select several features that led to Rome's victory.

The most successful responses confidently analysed the passage and drew out valid inferences. They then developed these themes with accurate knowledge.

Mucius' bravery, Porsena's fear, and Roman defiance were popular themes. Supporting evidence included Porsena's support for Superbus, Mucius' knowledge of Etruscan customs, and Porsena's request of hostages in support of the peace treaty. Others mentioned Roman hatred of tyrants such as Superbus; and the bravery of Horatius Cocles and Cloelia.

Most students linked knowledge to their analysis of the passage, which vastly improved the quality of responses.

Some less successful responses did not use any knowledge or misinterpreted the source. The most common misconceptions were that Rome was besieging Clusium; or they did not understand Mucius was bluffing.

Assessment for learning



Preparing students for the unseen passage can be difficult.

Some centres do so by choosing a selection of short 150-200 word passages from Livy. They turn these into homework tasks for students to complete.

For example, teachers could ask their students to identify 2-4 inferences from a short passage. At home they could add facts to each inference. In the following lesson, candidates could then develop these inferences into themes to answer questions such as, 'why were Rome's kings successful?'. Candidates need to be given plenty of opportunities to practice the skills needed to tackle the unseen passage in the exam.

If you are unsure which passages to use, access [The Foundations of Rome Teachers Guide](#) through [Teach Cambridge](#). This has a comprehensive list of potential passages you could use.

Question 4

- 4 Using details from **Passage A** and your own knowledge, explain the importance of individuals during the foundation of the Roman Republic. [15]

Candidates' knowledge of the Republic was sound and many were able to answer the question.

Successful responses examined the importance of sacrifice, bravery, tyranny, and speeches in the foundation of the Roman Republic. Brutus' role in the foundation of the Republic, and Verginius' role in the collapse of the second Decemvirate were most frequently mentioned.

Some of the most effective responses contained arguments that Tarquinius Superbus, Sextus Tarquinius and Appius Claudius Crassus were catalysts for the foundation of the Republic. Horatius Cocles, Cloelia, Valerius Publicola, and Aulus Postumius were also frequently mentioned in the higher-level responses.

The least successful responses did not use the passage or any accurate knowledge.

Exemplar 1

Certain individuals were very important to Rome's Republic. For example, Gaius Marius was very important. He says "realise what you face from those who will kill you" and then thrust his hand into a flame. These daring acts caused Pompey to offer Rome peace. This shows the importance of individuals in the foundation of the Republic. There were also similarly daring individuals like Horatius. Horatius defended Rome alone on a bridge and ~~was~~ jumped into the river as the bridge collapsed. This shows his daring nature as he would sacrifice anything to save the city. He slowed Pompey's advance. Therefore the acts of daring individuals were very significant in the founding of a Republic.

The importance of individuals is also shown by the impact of the upper class. Marius is described as a "noble youth". This shows how he is from the upper class. This shows how the upper classes contributed greatly to the foundation of the Republic. Moreover, Brutus set up the system of consuls and was the first consul. This dated the beginning of Rome's Republic and shows how the ~~upper classes were~~ individuals in the upper class helped found the Republic. He also killed his two sons who were found plotting the return of the king which shows his dedication to the Republic. Therefore the acts of individuals in the upper class were very important in the foundation of a Roman Republic.

This is an extract from a strong response which achieved full marks in Level 5.

The candidate identifies several themes from the passage. Bravery and class are shown here and are well structured and concise.

These themes are then developed further with accurate and specific evidence in order to explain its importance.

Question 5

- 5 'Ancient historians only tell us about Roman successes and achievements in the period 753–440 BC.'

To what extent do you agree with this view?

[20]

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

Most candidates tackled this question with some confidence and they used it to express what they had learnt.

Successful responses constructed a logical and coherent line of argument, which was developed with well-chosen and detailed examples from across the breadth of the period. Many of these candidates explored Livy's aims to celebrate Roman greatness, while also using his history to explore morality and citizenship.

Furthermore, successful responses evaluated the relative failures of monarchs and consuls, and argued that these were a catalyst for change. Some compared the relative successes of political, military, religious, and social initiatives. These responses went on to argue that Rome only suffered minor military set-backs, but faced significant failures in the other themes.

Many mid-range responses had organised the period into failures and successes. This approach allowed for the creation of valid judgements. Less successful responses listed successes and failures without analysis and offered a simple judgement that lacked evaluation.

A few responses evaluated the nature of the evidence and compared the historians' accounts against the archaeological record. While candidates do not need to know about the nature of the sources for the period study section of this exam, those that did so accurately were credited in AO1 and AO2 as appropriate. Many of these responses were of a very good standard.

SPaG was much more consistent this year. The spelling of words like plebeian has improved. Most candidates also used paragraphs appropriately. Syntax and sentence construction continues to improve. Responses from across the whole ability range communicated accurately and punctuated effectively.

Section B overview

Nearly all the candidates following the Hannibal depth study understood the key events and chronology of the Second Punic War. They used this knowledge to place the passage into context, explain the significance of Spain and compare Cannae with other battles.

The number of candidates not using proscribed sources and effective source analysis increased this year which limited the effectiveness of candidates' knowledge.

Question 6 (a)

Hannibal and the Second Punic War, 218–201 BC

6

(a) Name the mountain range Hannibal crossed with his army in 218 BC. [1]

Almost all candidates correctly identified the Alps. Those who did not usually gave no response for this question.

Question 6 (b)

(b) Name a Roman consul who led the Roman army at Cannae. [1]

Many candidates correctly remembered the names of either Varro or Paullus. A few, mistakenly, named Scipio.

Question 6 (c)

(c) Identify **three** reasons why Hannibal withdrew from Italy in 203 BC. [3]

Many candidates managed to achieve full marks on this question.

Most mentioned the tiredness and dwindling numbers of Hannibal's forces and his recall to Africa, as well as Scipio's invasion of Iberia. Some also named specific hindrances that had prevented Hannibal from moving onto Rome, such as lack of siege machines or the fickleness of Italian allies.

Question 7

7 What can we learn from **Passage B** about Hannibal's reasons for attacking Rome?

[5]

The most successful responses drew several inferences from the passage and displayed some sophistication in their explanation. These responses identified Hannibal's motivations for war and supported them with additional knowledge, such as for Hamilcar's resentment towards the consequences of the First Punic War.

The framing device of Hannibal's conversation with Antiochus III proved to be confusing for some of the less successful responses. Many concentrated on Antiochus and did not appreciate that this conversation took place after the Second Punic War when Hannibal is fighting for the Seleucid empire.

Overall, however, engagement with the passage was very good and the conclusions drawn were mostly correct.

Question 8

8 Using details from **Passage B**, how accurate do you think Polybius' account of Hannibal's reason for attacking Rome is?

[5]

More successful responses linked knowledge about Polybius' context with the passage.

Candidates commented on his extensive travels, his ability to interview eyewitnesses, as well as correctly identifying the stereotypical nature of the oath anecdote and the impossibility for Polybius to verify a private event between father and son.

Less successful responses typically focused on Polybius' inability to know verbatim what was said between Hannibal and his father or Antiochus.

A trend is developing in the depth study source analysis questions. Less successful responses default to the simple repetition of 'he wasn't there' to claim that the account is useless. This is somewhat problematic, as it shows a poor understanding of the nature of history. If this were so, then history could only be written by eyewitnesses.

Misconception



There was some confusion about the nationality of Polybius, who was often said to be Roman rather than Greek. While this did not affect many responses, it is a common misconception.

Question 9

9 Explain the importance of Spain to the outcome of the Second Punic War.

[10]

Most candidates performed very well on this question.

Less successful responses understood the importance of Spain as a source of resources, in particular its silver mines and manpower. The geographical importance of Spain as a bridge between Italy and Africa was also well understood.

The most successful responses usually included an analysis of how Scipio's invasion of Spain and siege of Carthago Nova proved to be a turning point for the war, and how this reflected the importance of the region. The very best responses also included observations on the broader historical context, such as the Ebro Treaty or the siege of Saguntum.

Question 10*

10* 'Cannae was the most important battle in the Second Punic War'

To what extent do you agree with this view?

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

[20]

Candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the key battles and the importance of Cannae in the context of the Second Punic War. Narratives of the battles were usually very detailed.

Less successful responses sometimes gave extremely detailed retellings of the battles with little to no analysis. They typically provided an account of the battle of Cannae and compared it to at least one other battle. Many did not mention sources at all. Others would support a simple statement with 'Livy says...' or 'Polybius says...'.

More successful responses typically analysed multiple battles, with Trasimene, Trebia, Zama, and Carthago Nova being the most commonly mentioned. Convincing arguments about their respective importance were commonplace.

Some responses were limited by poor source analysis. Reductive comments, while often credited, argued that Polybius and Livy were unreliable and useless. Many of these reductive comments came at the end of a paragraph which had used the prescribed sources extensively to say why a particular battle was so important. This juxtaposition undermines the effectiveness and control of a candidate's argument.

The most common reductive comments concerned Polybius' patronage by the Scipio's and the strange assertion that Livy was an 'armchair historian'. There was, also a revival of anachronistic evaluation of Livy who was frequently said to be writing 'to entertain' or even to be writing 'a bestseller'.

Some centres are using Livy's philosophy, such as Stoicism, and his promotion of virtues to explain his value for understanding the Punic Wars.

Where source analysis was attempted, it was usually good, with several elements of the respective backgrounds of Livy and Polybius being teased out and their relevance explained, such as Polybius' ability to interview eyewitnesses, his experience as a military man, and his personal connection to the Scipio family.

Many responses focused on Fabius because he urged caution after Cannae. Others discussed the importance of Polybius and Livy for providing a detailed account of Scipio Africanus' role in Spain. Some suggested that Polybius' account of Scipio's character is drawn from personal experience.

Using prescribed sources to develop your argument

Higher performing responses signpost where they have used an ancient source, and then analyse it to add weight to their argument. This is most effective when the candidate uses their analysis to state why the ancient source is useful.

Mid-level responses usually add a small section exploring the context of the ancient historians at the end of their response. These candidates frequently use reductive analysis which states that ancient historians were biased or worthless. Candidates who compared Plutarch, Polybius and Livy in a mini conclusion to show the strengths of each can often reach, or surpass, the mid-level descriptors of AO3.

For example, some responses referred to Livy's use of Maharbal's speech. The best responses identified that this may be artistic licence to insert Livy's own views into his history but were also able to demonstrate that Livy had access to a range of sources which no longer exist.

Less successful responses may simply state that Livy was writing much later and therefore would have no idea about what happened. This would only receive a low-level credit at AO3 for knowing Livy wrote much later.

Exemplar 2

I would ~~as~~ argue that the battle of Zama was the most important battle in the second Punic war, as it resulted in the end of the war. In the negotiations before the battle, the Carthaginian government tries to sue for peace with Scipio Africanus, which he agrees to do. However, when Hannibal returns from Italy, the Carthaginian government breaks off negotiations and ~~tells~~ decide to fight Scipio. However, Hannibal had significantly ~~fewer~~ troops, so attempted to sue for peace with Scipio again. Scipio was now furious, and fought Hannibal at the battle of ~~at~~ Zama, where Scipio won and ended the war. ~~Both Poly~~ Polybius' account may be more reliable than Livy's, as ~~the~~ Polybius reportedly spoke to Massinissa, and was also good friends with his grandson. Massinissa fought for Scipio in the battle. Combined with his military knowledge and tactical understanding, Polybius' account appears to be fairly reliable. On the

other hand, Livy wrote 300 years after the 2nd Punic war, and had limited knowledge of military strategy. Therefore his account is much more unreliable than that of Polybius. However, both had a "grudging respect" for Hannibal, so may have made Carthage look bad in order to show that it was not Hannibal's fault.

This is an extract from a good response, achieving 16 marks in Level 5.

The full response explores numerous battles and compares their impact on the outcome of the Second Punic War. This particular section has good knowledge of the events leading to the war and its outcome. While it lacks specific details about the actual battle, it has contextualised the battle to show its significance.

This extract has primarily been selected to demonstrate how prescribed sources and their authors can be used to validate an argument. While the conclusions were far from the best seen, this treatment of Livy and Polybius is a good example of how candidates can use analysis to support their arguments.

This analysis, although insecure in places, will score highly in AO3 because the candidate is using the context of the authors to add weight to their judgements.

Examiners are not looking for outstanding performance in this question, but are looking for candidates who can combine their knowledge and analysis of the prescribed sources within a well-constructed argument.

Section C overview

This was by far the most popular option. It saw some of the best responses. Many had a very thorough understanding of the key events in Cleopatra's life and how her political initiatives became entangled in Roman politics.

The misapplication of modern attitudes about power and gender on Ancient Rome continue to be an issue for some less successful responses. Some even comparing Cleopatra's actions to a social media star. Others dismiss her achievements out of hand because they do not have secure understanding of the role of women in the ancient world. Many candidates argued that women could not have power or make decisions in Ancient Egypt which is why they needed men to control them.

Question 11 (a)

Cleopatra: Rome and Egypt, 69–30 BC

11

(a) Name the man who ordered the execution of Cleopatra's sister (Arsinoe). [1]

Responses to this question usually correctly identified Marc Antony.

Incorrect responses generally named Julius Caesar, Ptolemy XIII, or Octavian.

Question 11 (b)

(b) State **two** features of Cleopatra's likely education and upbringing. [2]

Most candidates managed to answer this question correctly.

Many mentioned Cleopatra's education in the Library of Alexandria, the fact that she had prestigious tutors, and spoke several languages.

Candidates who did not gain marks here either gave vague responses such as 'she was beautiful' or gave responses which were outside of the required time range and pertained to Cleopatra's later life, such as the Battle of Actium.

Question 11 (c)

(c) Identify **two** events from the civil war between Cleopatra and Ptolemy XIII in 48–47 BC. [2]

Most candidates answered this question correctly.

Candidates usually mentioned the death of Ptolemy XIII, Cleopatra meeting Caesar, and the death of Pompey.

Question 12

12 What can we learn from **Passage C** about Cleopatra's relationship with Mark Antony?

[5]

Most candidates engaged positively with this passage. Most were able to tease out some inferences. In particular, that Cleopatra was trying to manipulate Antony.

Higher level responses were supported by a good understanding of the general context, with some showing an awareness of the impact of the Treaty of Brundisium upon Antony, Cleopatra and Octavia.

Many candidates believed that Cleopatra's displays of distress were authentic. Others described Cleopatra as 'toxic' and some argued that Cleopatra starved herself in order to seduce Antony. Modern interpretations of Cleopatra's relationships are becoming more common and this, to some extent, explains why many candidates perform less well on this option.

Misconception



Candidates are analysing Cleopatra's relationship with modern attitudes, or with simplistic views of women in the Ancient World.

The misapplication of modern tropes associated with abusive relationships is becoming common. Candidates have suggested that Cleopatra was a 'love bomber', a 'gas lighter', 'toxic' or a manipulative 'gold digger'.

Some ancient sources may describe Cleopatra as a seductress or manipulative, although some candidates are using this to describe Cleopatra as vapid or unintelligent because she is only interested in men.

The ancient sources could not disagree more. Many candidates do not seem to know about Cleopatra's management of the Egyptian economy and her use of her son to rule independently, by using an existing precedent in Egyptian history.

Others misunderstand ancient world attitudes to women and marriage. Some apply the concept of rights to ancient women, rather than apply ancient concepts like *pater familias* to understand the role of women. Others state that Caesar married Cleopatra to become king of Egypt, or vice versa.

Question 13

- 13 Using details from **Passage C**, how accurate is Plutarch's description of Cleopatra's relationship with Mark Antony? [5]

Candidates who focused on and answered the question tended to perform well.

More successful responses explored Plutarch's nature as a biographer, the moral nature of his works, the fact that his '*Parallel Lives*' established a comparison between Antony and Demetrius Poliorcetes, and the unreliable nature of his own stated sources.

The most common misconception was that Plutarch was xenophobic and/or misogynistic. Such terms are too simplistic to define Roman attitudes. The Roman Empire was openly multicultural and adopted elements of several conquered cultures. Romans were patriarchal rather than misogynistic, believing in strictly defined gender roles and disliking people who moved outside of those gender roles. Indeed, in this very source Plutarch is drawing a comparison between Cleopatra and Octavia, greatly praising the latter as a faithful wife who conforms to Roman standards of femininity.

Less successful responses attempted to argue whether Antony and Cleopatra were truly in love or that Plutarch was 'not there' so this was all made up.

Exemplar 3

It is very difficult to assess the accuracy of Plutarch's description of their relationship. First Plutarch was writing three generations later and so was not privy to what was going on between them. Secondly, he rarely cites his sources but, when he does, they are not that impressive, e.g. the fact that his grandfather knew a doctor

who knew one of Cleopatra's cooks. Moreover, Plutarch was in the habit of writing biographies rather than a historically accurate narrative and so a few embellishments can be expected. For example, how could he have known that "she would let her eyes fill with desire for him"? That having been said, ultimately Plutarch describes here a woman who loved Antony. There is plenty of objective evidence to show that that is likely right, not least the fact that they had three children together. Also, that she could not bear to live without him proves correct as, after his suicide, she ultimately commits suicide as well.

This response considers various aspects of the passage and uses Plutarch's context to analyse them. While the candidate does identify the weaknesses of Plutarch's work, the candidate also uses evidence and wider understanding to show how Plutarch has contributed to our understanding of their relationship. This response was given 5 marks, in Level 3.

Question 14

14 Explain the significance of the birth of Caesarion.

[10]

The most successful responses explored the importance of Caesarion to Cleopatra, and the potential threat he posed to Octavian. Others considered Cleopatra's potential ambitions concerning his Roman connections.

Archaeological sources such as the coinage from Cyprus and the reliefs from Dendera were used frequently to confirm Caesarion's status in Egypt. Many also offered a nuanced argument as to why the impact of Caesarion's birth was both positive and negative for both Caesar and Cleopatra.

Less successful responses became incorrectly fixated on the idea that Caesarion was 'heir to the Roman throne', showing a misunderstanding of the nature of power in Rome in this period in history.

Question 15*

15* 'The Battle of Actium destroyed everything Cleopatra achieved.'

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]

This question allowed many candidates to share their learning. Unfortunately, many responses did not use prescribed sources to develop and analyse their judgements.

Most candidates tackled this question and less successful responses were able to outline the Battle of Actium and a few of Cleopatra's achievements. They were also able to construct a balanced argument agreeing or disagreeing with the question.

Less successful responses did not consider prescribed sources. Many of those that remembered to use prescribed sources just used statements such as 'Plutarch says...' or concluded that the Roman historians were not trustworthy.

Many candidates still believe that Cleopatra and Antony committed suicide immediately after the Battle of Actium. In reality, there was a significant amount of time between the two events and Antony even had some minor victories against Octavian.

There was also considerable confusion about the different historians. Many believed Dio was a contemporary poet. Others confused Virgil with Livy; and some even accused Virgil of being an 'armchair historian' who controlled propaganda for Augustus. Many candidates dismissed the sources as inaccurate because they were misogynistic or xenophobic.

More successful responses constructed a logical argument which considered how Cleopatra created her legacy, and the extent to which it was tarnished by the Battle of Actium. They supported these judgements by well-chosen examples from the prescribed sources and showed full awareness of how its context could strengthen their line of argument.

Supporting evidence included Cleopatra's death, and achievements during her rule. Many candidates argued that the damage to her reputation occurred before the battle.

Using prescribed sources to develop your argument

Higher-level responses use ancient sources to add weight to their arguments. They understand that the different context of each source can reveal different aspects about the past.

In contrast, lower-level responses dismiss the sources as useless because they were not eyewitnesses or they came from a Roman perspective.

Mid-level responses usually add a small section exploring the context of the ancient historians at the end of their response. To improve these summaries, they could consider how each historian has contributed to our understanding.

For example, Plutarch's biographies are comparing the virtues of different historical figures; while Dio is interested in the development of Rome's political structures and how historical events shaped them. In contrast, Virgil's Aeneid helped reinforce Cleopatra's legacy by presenting the Battle of Actium as a great pivotal moment in Roman history.

Section D overview

The quality of responses from candidates who follow this route has improved again. Although there are still a significant number who do not have a good grasp of the key events. Candidates continue to be more confident with archaeological sources than the historical accounts by Suetonius and Tacitus.

Question 16 (a)

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

16

(a) Name the Emperor who invaded Britain in AD 43. [1]

Most correctly identified Claudius.

Question 16 (b)

(b) State **two** examples of Caratacus' resistance to Rome. [2]

Most candidates were able to correctly identify one answer. The alliance with the Silures and the use of 'guerrilla tactics' were the most common responses.

Question 16 (c)

(c) Identify **two** tactics used by Agricola. [2]

Most candidates were able to correctly identify one answer. The most common responses were the use of client kings and the use of auxiliary troops to protect the legions.

The most common mistake was the suggestion that Agricola used 'guerilla warfare'.

Question 17

17 What can we learn from **Passage D** about Caligula's preparations for an invasion of Britain? [5]

More successful responses drew inferences from the passage to demonstrate Caligula's 'madness' and theatrical invasion.

Less successful responses misunderstood the passage and suggested that Caligula was so well prepared that his men had time to collect seashells. Others did not understand that laying out siege machines on the opposite side of the English Channel was evidence of Caligula's 'madness'.

Question 18

- 18** Using details from **Passage D**, how accurate do you think Suetonius' account of the preparations for an invasion of Britain is? **[5]**

Most candidates had a good understanding of Suetonius' context, and how the nature of his writing might provide an insight into Caligula's preparations.

Less successful responses focused on the use of direct speech or the unlikely nature of the anecdote.

More successful responses were aware of Suetonius' use of gossip and desire to portray Caligula as a madman, as well as his access to the Imperial Archive and documents from Caligula's time.

Question 19

- 19** Explain what caused the Brigantes to rebel in AD 69. **[10]**

More successful responses provided good narratives of the events surrounding the rebellion and delved into the context to explain the rebellion. These included the client king system, issues with taxation, and the law preventing Britons from carrying weapons in public.

Less successful responses provided a basic narrative with little analysis. Many focused on the role of Cartimandua but did not add much detail.

Question 20*

- 20*** 'The development of towns and buildings was the most significant impact of Roman rule on Britain.'

How far do you agree with this view?

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

Most candidates were able to organise their response into a two-sided argument and almost all resources engaged with at least one archaeological source. Most made an active attempt to examine the features and impact of the archaeological sites, and what it can contribute to our understanding of Roman rule in Britain.

Most frequently mentioned were buildings such as Fishbourne Palace and the baths at Aqua Sulis. Roman roads and the settlements at Colchester and St Albans were also used frequently, often with reference to Roman remains still visible there today.

More successful responses also incorporated literary sources such as Suetonius and Tacitus, showing a good understanding of their context, broader background, and reasons for reliability. Often these good responses pitted archaeological sources and literary sources against each other, convincingly arguing that they prove different elements of Romanisation were most impactful.

Coinage was also often used and analysed as both evidence for Romanisation and a source conveying information through its iconography. There seemed to be a frequent mistaken belief that coins were introduced to Britain by the Romans, whereas they were introduced before the conquest by Britons copying the Gauls.

Less successful responses listed and described buildings, but often in limited terms and without any attempt to truly analyse their significance.

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