



**General Certificate of Education
June 2012**

Classical Civilisation 2020

CIV4D: Tiberius and Claudius

Report on the Examination

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CIV4D Tiberius and Claudius

General Comments on the Examination

Virtually all students showed some engagement with the topics studied, many writing with clearly articulated interest and enthusiasm. Inevitably some topics are more popular than others, an overwhelming majority opting for Roman Epic. Nonetheless all of the less popular topics have a reasonably wide take-up, proving that Claudius and Tiberius, Alexander and Socrates are worth studying at this level.

Most students showed some degree of competence at analysing prescribed sources and varying levels of competence in making judgements based on this. Weaker students tended to be more descriptive in their responses to questions carrying 10 marks, whilst the more accomplished evaluated freely. Thematic essays carrying 20 marks varied from being over-descriptive or unstructured to tightly argued and well balanced. There was also a wide range of quality in synoptic essays worth 40 marks, with the best using contextual frameworks to good effect. It is important to realise that synoptic knowledge and understanding are not optional additions to be stated without much reference to the rest of the content of the essay but integral to the whole.

Lack of specific knowledge was apparent in the 5-mark questions requiring factual recall in Options A and B. This was more noticeable in Question 01 where many students either referred more generally to Tiberius and the senate or mistakenly thought that the question related to the choosing of the governor of Africa in light of the Tacfarinas rebellion, failing to pick up the clue of the explicitly mentioned 'provincial petitions'. Those who were aware of the context tended to focus on the rights of temples regarding sanctuary with few being able to mention a particular city. Knowledge was patchy for Question 04 but most students managed to make relevant points even though only a few scored the maximum of 5 marks.

In the 10-mark questions those who chose Option B did much better than those who opted for Option A. Question 2 proved difficult mainly because many students showed no knowledge outside the passage [referring](#) to the specific case of Silanus or wrote generally about treason trials. Most students did not fully explore the 'significance' asked for by Question 05 but knowledge was displayed of some particular details, notably Claudius' historical writings.

At a basic level, whichever option was chosen, most students showed some knowledge, however this was often incomplete, for example in response to Question 03 when treason trials were omitted from discussions of Tiberius and the senate, or concentrated on a particular area, for example Claudius' building projects and his invasion of Britain for Question 06. Students who were more aware of the possibilities afforded cited an array of knowledge, including for Question 06 discussion of the influence both of Claudius' wives Messalina and Agrippina and freedmen, and evaluations which had a sense of chronology, for example an awareness in Question 03 that Tiberius' relationship with the senate deteriorated over time with his withdrawal to Capri and after the fall of Sejanus.

Although many students showed awareness that synoptic essays should be both wide-ranging in interpretation and detailed in the provision of well-chosen examples to illustrate points made, less confident or less accomplished answers had narrow focus, for example in response to Question 07 failing to distinguish between maintaining power and simple popularity or to notice that Tiberius remained in power despite being unpopular. Others, however, did understand some of the nuances of Question 07, although there were relatively few who were able to

analyse and provide sufficient evidence for all aspects, for example the differences between Praetorians and the legions in the provinces. A common weakness of answers to Question 08 was that some students knew the background on Tacitus and Suetonius (personal histories and sources) but did not provide specific examples for the reigns of Tiberius or Claudius. Some weaker students were confused between Tacitus and Suetonius over chronological and thematic approaches. The best work, nonetheless showed a fairly sophisticated understanding of the sources studied, for example, in the case of Tacitus, the extent to which bias might have affected his choice of material.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

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