

Classics - Ancient History

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H042

Report on the Units

June 2009

HX-CLAS/MS/R/09

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Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

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Chief Examiner's Report

It is pleasing to report that the number of centres and candidates entering for this subject has increased again this year, and this gives encouragement for the continued health and popularity of the subject. All the topics on both Units were attempted, indicating a wide range of interest in a variety of aspects of Ancient History in centres. This is obviously good news for the future of the subject, especially with Ancient History GCSE starting in September 2009.

Candidates were generally able to deal with the new format for the examination at AS. Most candidates divided their time between the sections well, but there were also some who spent too long on questions for 10 or 20 marks at the expense of the essay which was worth 45 marks. In general, candidates used the source material in all their answers with only a few failing to address the question of source evaluation.

More importantly there were some who did not appear to understand the instructions and answered questions from two sections instead of answering a question from one section only. Some realised their mistake but lost valuable time in retracing their steps and starting again.

There was a noticeable tendency to use paragraphs of source evaluation attached to the end of the answer. Where the questions ask how useful or reliable the sources are in relation to a particular aspect, the answer needs to relate the evaluation to that aspect and not treat it in isolation.

Another area where candidates failed to gain credit was in their lack of secure factual information, precise chronologies or specific use of sources. It is the case that good answers are based on sound knowledge; it is very difficult to construct a convincing discussion of an issue if errors are made upon which judgements are then formed.

The new specification is very much focused on the use of sources in relation to a specific issue or issues which need to be analysed and addressed in detail. It is also true that answers which focus on the issues and are concise in their approach tend to have a clearer line of argument and use evidence succinctly and accurately. A good, well-organised and cogent discussion is better than a lengthy discursive account of material.

Legibility has become much worse as an issue. It is very difficult to give candidates credit for the work when it is virtually impossible to read what they have written.

Finally, as always, we would be glad to hear from potential new assistant examiners: this is especially important as the change is made to the new specification at A2. Principal Examiners need the support of those who are daily in contact with the subject and the candidates who enter for the examination to provide the most reliable assessment of their attainment.

F391 Greek History from original sources

General Comments

The first session of a new examination provides a great deal of food for thought. The majority of candidates, whichever of the options they were doing, seemed well prepared for the demands of the examination and were able to communicate what they wanted to say effectively. The examiners reported a good range of responses to the questions set; there were perhaps fewer very weak or very strong answers, but the format of the paper allowed candidates plenty of opportunity to demonstrate what they had learned over the course of the year. The best answers were focused on the question set, and made explicit use of a range of sources, which were then evaluated.

The majority of candidates recognised the need to use and evaluate ancient sources. Some weaker responses were rather vague about which source they were referring to, and a number of candidates treated the Cambridge Ancient History or Paul Cartledge just as if they were ancient sources; there were also a number of discussions of the evidence provided by the film '300'. In some weaker responses, the sources were evaluated in very general paragraphs which did not engage with the question and which were repeated as required in response to different questions. Stronger candidates tended to evaluate specific evidence within a well structured response to a question.

Although relatively few candidates were unable to finish the paper in the allocated time, there were certainly examples of poor time management. The majority of candidates tackled the document question first, and a very few of these produced excessively long answers to the (a) or (b) question. For some, this resulted in a very long first question and a correspondingly shorter essay. In a very few cases, candidates either broke off in mid sentence or resorted to bullet points.

The most popular option was undoubtedly Option 3 on Sparta; Options 1 and 2 were much less popular and had about the same number of candidates each. One issue arose for a significant number of candidates taking Option 3. Instead of turning to the relevant page of the examination booklet, a number of candidates started to answer questions at the beginning from Option 1; some of these attempted both questions from Option 1, while others manage to find the right essay question (in Option 3); a third group crossed out what they had done and moved on to the correct section. In preparing candidates, schools might now make sure that candidates taking Option 2 or Option 3 have access to a full examination paper so they are familiar with the format.

The majority of candidates had clearly been very well prepared for the format of the examination. Examiners did not report any cases where candidates answered 2 questions from one section of the paper, though there were a number of candidates who answered questions from more than one option; a very few candidates numbered the questions they did incorrectly, which caused some confusion for those marking the paper.

In the document question (a), the majority of answers were focused on the passage, though there were a few mini-essays and some weaker responses made very little use of the passage printed on the paper. A small number of candidates wrote at excessive length, which in some cases put them under time pressure later in the paper. The marks for the (a) question are awarded only under AO1 for details selected from the passage; examiners were unfortunately not able to reward candidates who offered an extended evaluation at this point in the paper. The (b) question in all cases asked candidates to draw on the other sources that they had studied; the weakest responses tended to focus only on the passage printed on paper, while the strongest were able to discuss confidently a range of relevant material. The (c) question demanded a short essay on a related topic, and there were some very pleasing responses.

However some candidates did not focus on the key terms in the question they were answering, and sometimes slipped into prepared answers on topics in general relevance. The majority of candidates were aware of the requirement to evaluate the sources that they used and examiners noted some excellent, perceptive examples of this. However, many candidates produced rather disjointed answers, as they placed their evaluative comments about the sources in separate paragraphs of a very general nature, either at the start or, more usually, at the end of their essay. In some cases, this did not suggest a clear engagement with the sources and was hard to credit. This was very obvious where candidates evaluated sources they had not used to answer the question.

The majority of candidates organised their time effectively and so had plenty of time to produce a structured essay of a reasonable length but there were a few, who either worked slowly through the document question or wrote at excessive length, who struggled to complete their chosen essay. A number of candidates showed evidence of planning, using either a spider diagrams or timelines; the examiners felt that in many cases this was very useful, particularly given the broad nature of the questions. Some candidates made effective use of timelines to remind themselves of the fragmentary nature of our evidence and the possibility of change over time. The same issues about the evaluation of sources arose in the essay as in the (b) and (c) sub-questions on the document question: the best answers were quick to point to difference or conflict in the sources used, and integrated their evaluation into their essay at appropriate points, while some weaker responses tacked on at the end of their essay general paragraphs which bore little relation to what they had been discussing. There were also some candidates in the essay in particular who failed to make any reference to sources for detail or for evaluation; this, at very least, tended to reduce the mark they got within the Level they had achieved.

Examiners felt it would be very helpful if schools would advise candidates about presentation standards. The handwriting of a relatively small number of candidates was such as to affect what they communicated on paper; it might well be advantageous to such candidates to present their work on a computer. If centres feel that a candidate's handwriting is likely to be a problem, they can apply for permission for the candidate to do this. Candidates are also reminded that they are expected to show knowledge and understanding of appropriate technical terms; while it is helpful if these are spelt correctly, it is more important than they are used consistently. In some cases, it would be better to guide candidates to use English terms, rather than confuse Greek terms. This was a significant issue in at least one question (see comments on Question 4 below), and a number of answers to different questions were rendered much less clear by confusion of terms (eg *ephors* and *elders*).

Lack of planning also caused problems for candidates and examiners. In a significant number of scripts, paragraphs were out of place, with arrows used to redirect the reader or asterisks were used together with footnotes to add extra information. It is clear that most students are producing their work routinely on a computer, and organising what they want to say on paper is becoming more of a challenge. Examiners try very hard to credit candidates for what they have done, but there were cases this year which made this very difficult. Candidates would be well advised to leave space at the end of their answer; it is good practice to start each question of a new page, and this then allows them space to add extra information if they need to do so.

Examiners felt that some very good candidates to some extent undermined the effectiveness of their answers by not planning what they wanted to say and by writing too much. It is worth stressing to candidates that Examiners are much more impressed by quality than by quantity, particularly if it is very difficult to follow what is being argued. The highest marks are given to those answers which show a clear engagement with the task and are clearly and straightforwardly expressed.

Comments on Individual Questions

Option 1: Athenian Democracy in the 5th century BC

This was a reasonably popular option. There was a fairly even distribution of answers across the questions.

Question 1

This question was reasonably well answered, with some excellent responses. Candidates were generally able to pick out the key parts of the passage and most showed a good awareness of context. In (b) there was some good discussion of relevant passages from the sources. Several candidates discussed the position of women, metics and slaves without making it fully clear that they understood these groups did not have citizen status. A number of candidates were uncertain what 'promoted equality' meant. In (c) there was some well-informed discussion, particularly with reference to the limitations of the democratic system and the significance of leisure and education. Most candidates were able to discuss a range of sources, generally accurately, but some described Xenophon as a foreigner in Athens. Most candidates discussed the success of individuals such as Pericles and Cleon, but a number interpreted the question to refer to the success of Athens. Some responses recognised that Cleon came from a different background than leaders such as Pericles and Cimon but made the assumption that, because he was not from an aristocratic background, he must have been poor.

Question 2

In (a) better responses picked out relevant parts from the passage to answer the question, but there were a greater number of weaker answers than to Question 1. Many candidates commented on the unusual nature of this particular assembly meeting. There was some confusion of the terms *boule* and *ekklesia*. In (b) several candidates concentrated only on the passage without referring to 'other' sources. Common errors were that Pericles' Funeral Speech was after the Peloponnesian War, and that Thucydides and Xenophon were 'much later' historians. Another common idea was an unsubstantiated comment that Thucydides was vehemently opposed to democracy. Stronger responses discussed ostracism in some detail. In (c) there was good discussion from some candidates of the portrayal of Pericles by Thucydides and Plutarch, which was often contrasted to with the presentation of Cleon in the Mytilene debate. There was surprisingly little discussion of Cleon and Nicias in the Pylos debate or use of Aristophanes' *Knights*. A significant number of candidates used examples from Thucydides (such as the Pylos debate) to show that Cleon was able to control the assembly.

Question 3

There were very few weak answers to this question, and several very strong ones. Many candidates demonstrated extensive knowledge of the details of Cleisthenes' changes to the Athenian constitution and how these contributed to the democracy; particularly effective use was made of Cleisthenes' reorganisation of the *Boule*. Some went on to discuss *deme* assemblies and the problems faced by those living some distance from Athens. They were also able to discuss the various groups in Attica (including groups excluded from political activity, such as women and slaves), though few mentioned rich/poor or foreigners and metics. The different elements of the democratic system were generally well understood. All sources were used, the most popular being Aristotle and Aristophanes. Ostracism was cited as the ultimate participation in some stronger answers. Relatively few candidates commented on the space available on the Pnyx for those attending the assembly or on the limited evidence we have all the numbers at meetings (eg Thuc. VIII 72). A number of candidates assumed that payment for attendance at the assembly was introduced by Pericles to encourage wider participation.

Question 4

This question was not as well answered as the alternative with a much higher proportion of weak and very weak answers. Few candidates could cite examples from the sources of the activities of the Council, though most did seem to know the factual details of the administrative and probouleutic functions. There were even some references to Rome! Better answers drew extensively on the Ath.Pol. and a very few commented on the limited number of references to the Council in Thucydides. Many candidates assumed that pay for members of the council was introduced by Pericles, and in some cases quoted sources to support this. The best responses gave a detailed evaluation of the sources used; weaker answers relied on generalisations, sometimes of a rather sweeping nature.

Option 2: Delian League to Athenian Empire

This was the least popular option. Answers were evenly distributed between the two questions in each section.

Question 5

This question produced a few very good answers, but also a relatively high proportion of weaker answers. Candidates were able to pick out relevant parts from the passage to answer (a). In (b) most candidates were able to discuss the significance of the tribute and the difficulties faced by those who tried to leave, with details of Naxos and Samos being well known. A number of responses stressed the importance of the allies' passive role in the growth of Athenian power. Later revolts were seldom mentioned, as was Athens' growing autocracy. There was little discussion of the lack of references in the sources either to the allied congress or to any consideration of the wishes of the allies in Athenian debates. In (c) several answers fell into the trap of merely giving a chronological narrative account of the change (often with evidence) rather than discussing the factors which led to it. Stronger answers were able to discuss factors such as Athens' increased confidence after the Persian Wars, and also the continued threat from Persia (with several also mentioning the impact of the Peace of Callias), the increasing tension with the Peloponnese and Athens' financial benefits from the League. Few answers mentioned either the willingness of some allies to contribute money rather than ships, or the spread of democracy. The best responses demonstrated a secure grasp of chronology and were able to point to change over time.

Question 6

This was generally well answered. Again, (a) posed few problems. In (b) only the very best answers focused on 'How much'. Most were able to quote some sources, especially the Old Oligarch, and discussed factors such as the use of military force against allies, interference in their autonomy, internal factional strife, and the tribute, although only the very best answers were able to cite examples supported by evidence. It was also good to see some answers using inscriptions, particularly the Coinage Decree. The best answers also gave examples of actual revolts, especially Naxos and Thasos, but surprisingly very little mention of Samos. In (c) few answers focused on 'were needed', though most were able to see the threat to Athenian security posed by revolts. Better answers were able to discuss the particular harshness of the proposed punishment for Mytilene, but too many weaker answers merely listed some of the measures used repeating material given in (b).

Question 7

This was the less popular of the two essay questions and produced few really good answers. Weaker answers did not concentrate on the benefit allies received from their membership of the Delian League, and some were too focused on Athens. The benefit of protection from the Persians was generally discussed along with the economic benefits and the political impact on states where democracy was introduced. Few discussed the problems faced by those who tried to leave. There was a good range of source material, especially Thucydides and the Old Oligarch, and it was again pleasing to see good use of inscriptions, mostly the Coinage Decree

again, but also the Methone Decree. The best responses commented on the lack of evidence for the views of allies, and the potential for bias in our surviving evidence.

Question 8

This question proved slightly more popular and produced some better responses. There was good knowledge of the various means of control employed by Athens – the use of the navy, demolition of walls and loss of fleets after revolts, cleruchies etc. There were also plenty of examples - Naxos, Samos and Thasos, although surprisingly given question 6, not Mytilene; a number discussed Melos as if it had been an allied state. This question perhaps brought out some of the best discussions of the sources and most were able to cite Thucydides and the Old Oligarch, as well as the Khalkis, Kleinias and Methone decrees. The best responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the chronology of the period, and were able to place the examples chosen in a wider context.

Option 3: Politics and society of Ancient Sparta

This was by far the most popular section. Question 9 was slightly more popular than question 10; the majority of candidates by far chose question 12 over question 11. Although most candidates showed they were able to evaluate the sources they cited, even if in a rather generalised way, not all discussed the problems caused by a lack of Spartan sources, compounded by Spartan unwillingness to allow foreigners full access to their state. Relatively few responses showed a confident grasp of the details of specific sources, and in some cases named sources appear to be included at random. In some cases, answers were focused on single aspects (eg the *agoge*) almost exclusively.

Question 9

Part (a) was relatively well done, although several answers revealed a significant misunderstanding of the beginning of the passage. There were also some confusion over the role of the *gerousia* and some candidates referred to the *ephors* who do not feature in the passage. Part (b) was interpreted in two different ways: some chose to focus on the mechanism of decisions (eg the voting procedure for joining *syssitia* or electing members to the *gerousia*) rather than examples of actual political decisions. This was allowed due credit as long as the details were factually correct and supported by relevant evidence. The role of the *gerousia* was generally well known and most who answered in this way were also able to discuss the actions of the *ephors* (eg Sthenelaidas (Thucydides)) and other individuals such as Hetoimaridas (Diodorus); few were able to discuss any other individuals. The military nature of Spartan society was barely mentioned, and the limitations of the sources unfortunately led to too many standard pre-learned paragraphs. Weaker answers showed considerable confusion between the *ephors* and the elders, and the *gerousia* and the assembly, along with the inevitable misconceptions from '300' cited as fact or even as evidence! Part (c) also produced some good answers, though few discussed the dual kingship. Most were able to give examples of kings in Sparta, especially Archidamus in the debate at Sparta, but fewer examples of kings on campaign. The role of the *ephors* in controlling the kings was also well known, but there was very little discussion, if any, of external pressures on Sparta. Some of the better responses took into account the authority of individual kings such as Cleomenes, the relationship between the two kings at any one time and changes in the distribution of power within Sparta during the period studied.

Question 10

This was less popular than question 9, but generally slightly better answered. Part (a) was well answered, though a few responses included information from outside the passage. Conversely, in (b) weaker answers referred back to the passage and did not include other sources; they also tended not to focus on the economic life of Sparta. Part (b) also produced some very good answers; most were able to discuss the role of helots and perioikoi, Sparta's limited resources and her value system. Very few mentioned the recurring problem mentioned in the sources of bribery and corruption, particularly when individual Spartans had the opportunity to meet

foreigners. Thucydides was frequently dismissed as totally unreliable because he 'made up speeches', and Xenophon as being biased as he lived in Sparta with hardly any candidates mentioning that maybe this made him better informed than most of our other sources. Answers to (c) were remarkable in that hardly any mentioned a single military success in any detail - not even Thermopylae or Plataea. The importance of the *agoge* and the dominance of the army through the communal messes were generally well discussed with good support from the sources, although the reliance on her allies which her unique constitution and system demanded was rarely mentioned. The restrictions imposed by her lack of manpower and the helots however were generally acknowledged, with the better answers giving examples and evidence. Many candidates also commented upon the importance of fraternity and regular practice in hoplite warfare.

Question 11

This did not prove a particularly popular question, nor was it particularly well answered. Some answers tended to focus on Sparta's relationship with Athens rather than the other Peloponnesian states, and there were some responses which did not mention any other states by name; a few concentrated on Sparta's relationship with Messenia. The better answers were well aware of Sparta's relationship with Argos, and also of the pressure that Corinth was able to bring to bear on Sparta at certain points during the fifth century. Relatively few dealt with any other states in the Peloponnese in significant detail. There was limited reference to the sources and essays tended to be dominated by pre-learned paragraphs on their varying reliability.

Question 12

This was by far the most popular question on the paper and produced some excellent answers, though many responses tended to run through what we know of Spartan women, without reference to sources or evaluation of their reliability. The bullet-points were the best used in this question out of all on the paper. All aspects of women's life in Sparta seemed to be well known, though only the best were able to discuss their right to own property as being unusual in the Greek world, or cite the evidence. Plutarch and Xenophon were the most popular sources, but also Aristotle and some good use of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, with the best answers pointing out that this was a contemporary foreigner's view of Spartan women written for comic effect. There also seemed to be some strong reliance on Bettany Hughes as a source in certain candidates' answers without any ancient evidence in support. The attitude of women to the Spartan value system was well discussed in better answers with the 'on your shield. . . 'anecdote often being cited, but without its source. Herodotus' anecdote about Gorgo and Cleomenes at the time of Aristagoras' visit was often also quoted (though normally without the details or source) and without the realisation that the most striking thing about it is that Gorgo was only a child, rather than it being evidence of the respect in which women and their advice were held in Sparta. There were some interesting discussions of the evidence gathered together by Plutarch; some candidates were clearly well aware that Plutarch's experience of contemporary Sparta might undermine the reliability of some, at least, of the material included in his various accounts.

F392 Roman History from original sources

General Comments

It is always a slightly nerve-wracking experience to issue a completely new style of examination on to a candidature who, if not entirely unsuspecting, may react to the demands made of them in terms of time and technique in very different ways, and it is only honest to admit that the results were anticipated with bated breath and a certain amount of apprehension. Thus it is a positive delight to report that candidates did not merely cope with the new format of the examination, but that in many instances they demonstrated a good technique and allocation of time to the various parts and showed that they were familiar with the detail of relevant source material and were well-prepared to write focused and detailed answers to the questions set.

It is interesting to note that of the three options into which the paper is divided, approximately half the candidature had studied Option B on Augustus, though a significant number have continued to study the late republic, and numbers for Roman Britain have grown slightly against last year's Ancient History cohort, while the majority of Classical Civilisation centres who studied Roman Britain have dropped it at least at AS.

Before addressing individual questions in each of three sections, there are a number of remarks which need to be made which refer to different types of question or general issues which apply equally across all three sections of the paper. These issues will all be addressed in full at INSET and teachers are encouraged to make every effort to attend one of the two planned INSET sessions in November 2009, one in Birmingham and one in London (contact OCR for details).

Lessons from the old specification still apply. Candidates need to read the questions. One Assistant Examiner noted that 'Many candidates are failing to read the questions properly and consider what is being asked of them. Instead, they are keyword-spotting, thus losing marks through not answering the questions which have been asked'. Examples of this include focusing answers to 9(b) and 9(c) solely on Boudicca because of 9(a) and the given passage, the emphasis on 'reliability' of the sources rather than 'portrayals of British leaders' in 9(c), and the concentration on the army under Agricola's governorship rather than up to the end of it in 10(c).

The standard of written English was sometimes unsatisfactory; the ability of candidates to spell, punctuate or write coherent sentences was lacking in many cases, as was essay structure. Candidates and centres need to understand that these issues do have an impact on the ability of the candidates to communicate their knowledge carefully (see mark grids under AO2 for this issue).

Finally, a very few candidates answered questions from the wrong option, despite the listing of options and instructions on the front of the paper. If they have been prepared for Option 3, they need to be shown how to find it in advance (this issue was also noted in the companion Greek History paper F391) so that they do not try to answer the first question they come across.

The document question is worth a total of 55 marks and the essay is worth 45 marks. A number of papers have been seen where a great deal of energy was applied to the different parts of the document question and some unnecessary material was included, especially in (a). The net result is that a short essay which failed to score high marks often accompanied a very competent and thorough document question. Candidates need to be prepared to spend sufficient time on the essay, and this could be achieved by showing them how to address (a) and (b) succinctly.

Document study (a) (b) and (c)

It should be noted that (b) questions are worth twice as much in terms of marks as (a) questions (20 against 10) and (c) questions are worth 25 (10 for knowledge of sources and facts, 15 for the development of an argument appropriately supported).

In brief, (a) questions need to use the passage and comment on it with some indication of context and reliability as necessary, answering the simple question 'What does this passage tell us about' in a straightforward manner. Depending on the passage there are more or fewer possible points; we accept that poetry or inscriptions may be more demanding and make allowance for this, but candidates need to use the passage in detail. There are no marks for a mini-essay about the author in this part of the examination.

Part (b) questions are perhaps the most demanding part of the paper. The theme of the question derives from the passage, but requires candidates to use their own knowledge of sources to construct an answer addressing the issue in the question and relating it to a citation or a view. In answers seen this year, some unnecessary material seen in (a) responses would have been better located here (or was occasionally repeated in both). Some papers did not have any response to the (b) question at all. The mark schemes provide information on what might have been included here. The focus needs to be maintained on the question, and some attempt at addressing 'how far . . .'. There can be no hard-and-fast rule about the number of sources needed to provide a good answer, because the possibilities and available material will vary from question to question; but given that 20 marks are available for this question it should contain at least the same amount of additional source reference as a top-range (a) question plus competent and thorough evaluation. The best responses seen this year were able to do this in a reasonable compass.

Part (c) questions are a 'mini-essay' very similar to the (b) questions in the old papers 2451 and 2452. Here, general narrative was seen quite often without reference to sources, or else we noted old habits such as introducing narrative treatment with a phrase such as 'according to the sources'. The reappearance of sweeping statements or very short – even single-word – phrases in quotation marks with an attribution such as (Tacitus) or (Plutarch) also limits the level of marks which can be awarded. Focus on the sources should be paramount during the delivery of the course, and candidates should be in a position to make detailed use of them.

Another feature of many answers which failed to score many marks for their authors was the appearance in the (c) question of a general paragraph about the reliability of the sources studied, usually in the form of a potted biography, but making no reference to the demands of the question. Sometimes all this was repeated verbatim in the essay.

Essays

A similar point needs to be made about the essays as the part (c) questions. The focus in studying the AS module should be the sources and these form the basis of the essay question. At 45% of the marks – 20 for knowledge of sources and factual information, 25 for the development of the argument and evaluation of sources and issues – between 35 and 40 minutes should be reserved for it, and a few minutes set aside for a plan!

Perhaps the most important lesson to pass on after reading through so much of candidates' work is to stress that the focus and scope of the question is contained in the essay title, and the bullet points which follow it are not an essay plan but an indication of what issues should be covered in the essay itself. They do not correspond to the old (a) (b) and (c) divisions of the source-based essay papers 2454 and 2455. The bullet-points are included by way of a 'prompt' for candidates, and mirror the layout of AS essay questions across the Classics suite. A very significant number responses were seen which addressed each bullet-point in turn, and confined their treatment of the sources to a general overview (eg 'The Res Gestae . . . Suetonius

. . . Dio . . . Velleius . . .) without relating the precise information in them to the question set and evaluating the reliability of those parts.

Finally, a request is made that candidates are coached in leaving gaps between their answers or, better still, starting each sub-question at the top of a new page so that there is room for examiners' comments – and that in some instances application is made for transcription. Some handwriting was well-nigh illegible and although examiners always do their best to read what the candidate has written, in some cases this year this was very difficult.

These limitations were by no means universal, and overall teachers and candidates deserve credit for the very positive way in which they have responded to the demands of the new examination format.

Comments on Individual Questions

Option 1: Cicero and political life in late Republican Rome

Question 1

The (a) question was generally well answered, perhaps because extracting information was fairly straightforward, though some found it hard to focus on 'problems'. In the (b) question answers did have information to supply from other sources, usually Cicero's letter, Plutarch, and other parts of CP, but (a common factor in all (b) questions) discussing 'how far' was not done well. Candidates did know about the status of a *novus homo* and that family, wealth and status mattered. In (c) candidates generally made good use of the information in the sources about alliances. The factual knowledge was generally good; the sources were less obviously used and the issue of 'useful' was addressed briefly at times. This is when the general evaluation paragraph often appeared unrelated to the subject and source extract used.

Question 2

Part (a) was quite straightforward. Most candidates could see what Cato said and how the triumvirate was self-interested. Again in 2(b) there was perhaps more obvious factual information about political friendships to use; even so assessing the danger to the state ('problems in Roman politics at this time') was lost in the answer. In sub-question (c) 'motives of individuals' seemed to cause some problems, as though this was a concept new to the study of this period. A number of answers made to reference to the passage.

Question 3

This was sometimes well done, but problems arose when several answers did not stick to 'causes' and went on to a general 'telling the story'. The sources on the causes in Cicero and Sallust alone should have been sufficient but they were not often treated in detail, and reliability was not tackled well. Better answers did compare the two main sources and did use that to show differences or similarities. Some identified causes other than Catiline's ambition, such as the economy, social distress, debt, and the political structure.

Question 4

Fewer attempted this; some answers were quite well done using examples of speeches and how they affected events and careers. Cicero's speeches on Catiline were the obvious choices; however the speech on the Manilian Law, defence of Murena etc were included from the prescribed texts. Other answers made good use of the contrasting speeches in Sallust Catiline 51 and 52, or noted the importance of rhetoric in the *Commentariolum*. Cicero's career was again an example of success using rhetoric; the question of importance was addressed by showing how other factors mattered as well. This question produced some thoughtful and well-supported answers.

Option 2: Augustus and the Principate

Question 5

In Option 2 this was much less popular than Question 6 – perhaps 25% of candidates opting for it (or using it because it came first and they did not turn the page). In 5(a) use of the passage was quite good, in terms of identifying the key points although interpreting them seemed to prove difficult and there was some odd exegesis of Augustus' role. In 5 (b) candidates often did not know the titles in specific detail and tended to focus on what was in the passage. The contrast between pro and anti-Augustan versions was occasionally included. The use of specific information was noticeable throughout. In 5 (c) the treatment of religion in propaganda was reasonably well done although some focused on other aspects more, and evidence for religion was a little sparse at times, especially archaeological, and obvious links between the literature and the temple-building or coin evidence were only rarely explored.

Question 6

There is a wealth of relevant material in the passage set, and 6(a) needed some interpretation to extract the information although answers tended to note the obvious reactions. Few noted Velleius' exuberant reaction in writing the passage. As for 6(b), considering the range of benefits possible, it was disappointing how limited the range of material cited was, and the sources also were not really evaluated, which was disappointing especially as the majority of candidates knew about propaganda. Conflicting evidence was sometimes in evidence, with the cynical Tacitus to the fore. Well-prepared answers to 6 (c) showed good detail of plots etc, citing at least names if not the nature or the extent of the opposition. Many answers did not note the question asked 'why' and tended simply to discuss how serious it was.

Question 7

Answers to both essays in this option included a paragraph or two on reliability which was not part of the answer strictly speaking. Answers to Question 7 tended to be one-sided rather than balanced. The settlements were usually discussed accurately although there was some conflation of them into one event. Analysis of Augustus' rule tended to take an extreme line, with only rare understanding of his sharing of power at specific occasions, and some answers did not progress much beyond the second settlement of 23 BC.

Question 8

This question produced weaker answers than Question 7, since many candidates had limited information on the actions of friends and family; most argued that they helped rather than got in the way, tending to generalize and the sources were not detailed. Friends were limited to Agrippa and Maecenas as one might expect. However there were some better responses which gave more coverage of 'family' and discussed the whole of his reign, including the interference of Livia, the counter-productive behaviour of the Julias, and Tiberius, developing a balanced supported treatment.

Option 3: Britain in the Roman Empire

Of the two document questions, 9 was far more popular than 10, though it was heartening to see a full range of responses to the first-ever passage consisting of inscriptions, which shows that they are being used in teaching!

Question 9

9(a) was quite well done and the reasons were picked out well, although few noted Boudicca's personal qualities in stirring up her followers. Quite a few answers were distracted into writing a paragraph or two on the causes of the rebellion based on Tacitus and did not make much reference to the source printed on the paper. There was a little confusion caused by the term 'wholesale', leading to amusing but wrong interpretations relating to the economy. Answers to 9 (b) ran into trouble on two counts: they often did not pick up the invitation in 'all Britons' to

discuss positive as well as negative aspects of Roman policy (though there were some good discussions of Verica, Cogidubnus and Cartimandua). Secondly, sources was a problem here – weaker responses indicated good and bad treatment but did not handle the requirement to include ‘other sources’ very well; they did offer balance in the view with references to Cogidubnus and Caratacus or Prasutagus; some used the treatment of the Trinovantes.

9 (c) raised an issue over what is meant by ‘British leaders’. For most candidates there was no problem understanding what was meant by ‘British leaders’ and the standard ones were used (Cassivellaunus, Caratacus, Cogidubnus, Boudicca, Cartimandua, Calgacus); however a minority of candidates interpreted this as ‘leaders in Britain’ and wrote about Roman leaders in Britain, discussing Aulus Plautius, Suetonius Paulinus, and Agricola. The issue was raised at the standardisation meeting and it was agreed for this session only that we would credit such discussion as there was by giving it the benefit of the doubt. However centres should take note that we have used this term for many years in the past and have never seen this interpretation before, nor is it an interpretation that would be recognised in Ancient History as an academic discipline. In future years no such benefit of the doubt will be given. ‘British leaders’ means ‘leaders of British origin’ or ‘Celts’.

Better responses a range of British leaders and most seemed to do this well at least in factual terms. There were responses where the treatment of ‘reliable’ was superficial and amounted to a sentence at the end. Weaker responses focused exclusively on and displayed a Pavlovian reaction to the word ‘reliability’ and relayed everything they had heard, half-heard or invented about Tacitus’ and Dio’s possible agendas, with no or minimal reference to the actual leaders.

Question 10

As noted above, fewer candidates tackled this question, but it was encouraging to see that it could be done, and a range of responses to all parts was noted, broadly in line with suggestions in the mark scheme. Good answers to (a) understood that these were all auxiliary cavalrymen on active service rather than veterans, that auxiliaries were not Roman citizens, and that the findspots of these inscriptions could contribute to an understanding of the spread of the Roman invasion, but other answers were limited and rather bare. It was not necessary for the visual aspects of these inscriptions to be recalled, but where they were this was rewarded. Part (b) saw the deployment of archaeology as well as literary sources in the best responses, with a balanced and considered, supported treatment of the question; examining factors such as the submission of tribes, Verica’s flight to Rome, the impact of prior contact and the delay caused by the army’s near-mutiny before leaving Gaul, but the majority of candidates focused on military supremacy, with varying degrees of knowledge as to the military manoeuvres undertaken. In (c), as well as the military functions, better responses discussed issues such as administrative and fiscal roles, the building of roads and forts and economic interaction through the entire period required by the question. Other candidates wrote solely about military functions, and a very few reacted again in a Pavlovian fashion and focused their answers solely on the years when Agricola was governor.

Question 11

Just under half the answers in Option 3 addressed this question, though it was not often done well, with a limited range of sources used and sweeping generalised statements about ‘reliability’. Good answers were secure in their knowledge and were able to draw on the literary and material sources for relevant information on the pre-Roman and post-Roman economies such as coinage, burial evidence and industrial remains as well as accounts in Caesar, Strabo and Tacitus which they then subjected to comparison and interpretation, commenting on the contradictions. Weak responses frequently misattributed or misidentified sources and references, launched into irrelevant narrative and were unable to interpret the sources credibly or structure cogent arguments.

Question 12

A weakness in practically all answers to this question was lack of knowledge about the Stanegate system and the period before AD122, though there were one or two notable exceptions; but most answers here were on the average to weak side. There was a general insecurity in the use of the walls themselves as primary sources; very few candidates were able to go beyond the fact that there were some milecastles and forts, and more than a few were unable to manage even that. There was confusion between SHA and Suetonius, Tacitus' Agricola was occasionally invoked as an authority on the walls, and the Vindolanda tablets made occasional appearances masquerading as specific evidence about legions and/or life on Hadrian's Wall. Several candidates provided a lengthy narrative on the army's progress from AD 43 onwards and Kent northwards, with the merest of nods in the direction of what the question actually asked. A paucity of understanding of northern frontier chronology and movement was also very apparent.

Grade Thresholds

Advanced Subsidiary GCE Classics - Ancient History (H042)
June 2009 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
F391	Raw	100	70	60	51	42	33	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
F392	Raw	100	73	63	53	43	34	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
H042	200	160	140	120	100	80	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
H042	11.6	31.4	55.8	76.2	87.6	100.0	965

965 candidates aggregated this series

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