

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

ANCIENT HISTORY

H407

For first teaching in 2017

H407/21 Summer 2023 series

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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 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 21 series overview

This series is the fifth for this specification, although in effect only three examinations have been taken. There has been much disruption over the past two years for the present cohort and no matter how much teachers have sought to mitigate the issues with continued effort and skill, the extent to which candidates have been able to familiarise themselves with the techniques and skills required by the specification continues to be a concern. This is especially the case with the analysis and evaluation of evidence, both literary and material. This paper covers a wide range of differing evidence which require varying skills if the candidates are to deploy the sources successfully. Candidates must attune themselves to very different historical contexts of the Period Study and the Depth Study. However, examiners have experienced excellent work across the paper from a good range of candidates, with only a small number lacking the skills and knowledge to perform well.

The examination questions proved accessible to candidates with very few who appeared not to understand the scope of the question or its intention. Candidates had knowledge of the prescribed sources and most had detailed examples to apply to their responses. There was a generally good appreciation of the nature and differences in terms of genre and content. Examiners saw a consistent engagement with the sources at all levels. The candidates had engaged with the material in the specification and had understood the issues in both the Period and Depth Study.

It is important for a successful response to integrate the knowledge and evidence into the explanation. This results in a coherent analysis which answers the question. This is not achieved by a piece of information, followed by a reference to a source which appears to confirm the information; this may be followed by a sentence which repeats in some form the terms of the question. A good response provides a well-developed series of judgements that are co-ordinated around the terms of the question. Less successful responses tend to be assertions rather than convincing and substantiated analysis.

The majority of responses did produce developed judgements based around the available evidence. There were examples of generalised knowledge and assertions about authors or texts. Candidates are less successful where assertion replaces argument. A good piece of evidence was followed by 'this shows that...' without an attempt to explain how we get from the evidence to the conclusion. The majority of candidates understood the need to support their statements with clear and detailed examples from their knowledge and prescribed sources. The majority of good responses displayed secure knowledge and understanding of at least part of the Period and the Depth Study. Clearly in the context of an examination with limited time, errors were made and misconceptions arose, more numerous only in the less successful responses.

The majority of good responses used the evidence, literary and material to produce convincing, and at times thorough, explanations in part of the response. The majority of responses had parts where a really thoughtful point was developed, supported and led to a sound conclusion. Candidates are more successful if they try to be consistent throughout most of a response for the highest levels. The vast majority of responses offered good or very good explanations at some point in the response but not consistently.

Candidates did not do well when they provided few or no sources in their response; this is clearly a difficulty in exams where the majority of marks for a question are for the use of sources. Even in the modern interpretation, the discussion of convincing needs to be supported with knowledge, often from the sources.

Less successful responses were characterised by limited sources, generalised factual knowledge, inaccurate chronology, general source references ('Suetonius tells us', 'According to Plutarch' or a name in brackets, e.g. (Tacitus)), confusion between emperors and simple inaccuracies.

Evaluation of the evidence is a very important component of the exam. There are still instances where candidates offered a paragraph on the author or genre, or the background and supposed bias. An example would be 'Suetonius was a senator, and is prone to using gossip, so is unreliable'. There was little or no effort to relate the evaluation to the evidence being used. Some of these paragraphs can take up a page of writing. They often end with a statement about the unreliability of the evidence, which the candidate has just used to support their view or explanation, negating their argument. However, the majority of responses displayed a more complex understanding of the value of the evidence in context; they often assess the evidence by comparing sources where possible. Alternatively, they assessed the credibility of the information by providing knowledge from elsewhere.

Examiners did not see evidence that time was an issue for candidates, with very few partially developed responses. Candidates did not in general display a difference in knowledge between the Period and Depth Studies.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • had a secure knowledge of the period studied, and a precise application of the knowledge to the specific question • showed a precise and clear grasp of the chronology, and an approach which places information/sources in the correct context • used specific sources relevant to terms of the question • prioritised the analysis of the issue in the terms of the question, using evidence and knowledge in support, rather than a narrative of knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • misidentified an event in terms of the time frame or the person/group involved • confused the reign of one emperor with another, and the source which is relevant to the emperor • did not focus on the main issue of the question but offered a generalised account of the period • provided a narrative of events, not an analysis • used few or no sources; identified a source by name attached to a piece of information instead of a detail from the source.

Section A overview

Question 1 and Question 2 seemed to be equally popular. Question 1 focused on evaluation of sources on a specific topic, which clearly caught the interest of very many candidates. There was a good display of evidence from the sources for Question 1, with many candidates using a variety of sources. There were errors over the information on the periods when authors were writing. However, responses provided good detail of the texts, often with quotations, usually attributed to the correct authors. There was confusion between authors – Cassius Dio, Tacitus and Suetonius. Question 2 responses showed understanding of the politics of the Empire. However, the role and responsibilities of the Senate, and individual senators, was less well known.

Question 3 allowed candidates to display a very good range of knowledge concerning Claudius, sometimes at length, to the detriment of other responses. Candidates engaged very well with the extract. They offered very varied judgements on the author's views.

Question 1*

SECTION A: The Julio-Claudian Emperors, 31 BC–AD 68

- 1* 'The sources fail to provide an adequate assessment of the reigns of the emperors Gaius and Nero.'

How far do you agree with this view?

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

The responses varied from those who knew their sources – and a wide range of them as well, to those who had a general idea of what they tell us.

The important issue in this question is the value of the evidence for the two emperors. A successful response focused on the assessment rather than on how much of the reigns can be included. A less successful response tended to produce examples of the sources and offer a short judgement on whether it was an adequate assessment of the emperor. Good responses integrated the information from the sources with the evaluation. Less successful ones offered an evaluation as a separate paragraph.

Certain features of the reigns were commonly used. Nero's Five Good Years, the Fire of AD 64, the murder of Agrippina, his love of the arts (especially Greek) and chariot racing. Gaius' reign was characterised by his 'madness', his cruelty, his assassination, his divinity and the auction tax reduction (and his horse). More successful responses used a more varied selection. These included Gaius' bridge at Baiae (variously named), his buildings, the expedition to Gaul, including collecting the seashells and treason trials. Nero's reign covered other aspects also, such as the Piso plot and Vindex revolt, his trip to Greece, the other deaths, Seneca for example, and the aftermath of the Fire.

The sources were equally quite varied. The more successful responses were precise and specific, both in terms of the information and who said what. Clearly Suetonius and Tacitus predominated, at least in Nero. For Gaius, candidates offered Josephus, Pliny, Seneca and Cassius Dio. For Nero, in addition, there was some Cassius Dio, and some material evidence – coins and archaeological material. Some candidates were quite extensive in covering the sources, and able to compare accounts in assessing adequacy. A more successful and common response was the account of the Fire of AD 64 in Suetonius, Tacitus and Cassius Dio. Successful responses had the detail correct and attributed the information to the correct author. Less successful ones were confused over who said Nero started the Fire, and which author praised his buildings after the Fire. Many were less secure on what Cassius Dio had to tell us, and some seemed to mention his name without knowing what he had to say.

Many good responses identified that all the sources provide both good and bad aspects of the reigns. In this sort of response, Gaius' first six months were set against Suetonius' 'monster' claim, showing that the sources are not entirely portraying him as 'mad'; equally Nero's early years were given space against the later excesses. Good responses assessed how balanced the accounts were. They also assessed the underlying agenda of the authors. There were some generalisations in this respect. Josephus, being Jewish, hated Gaius, and loved the Flavians, so he made Gaius worse so the Flavians could be seen as better; Tacitus, being senator, and a Republican, simply hated emperors, and women, which doubly damned Nero. Suetonius was inclined to gossip, which he got from the imperial archives. These views are not necessarily without merit. However, they need to be focused on the material, and precise links made if they are to be of value.

Some very thoughtful responses evaluated the assumptions in the sources. For example, Gaius' obsession with divinity was less about being a god and more about developing his position. He did not have the military or political background as Augustus and Tiberius had; he was new to the job; he needed to make a clear statement of his control. Some responses argued his treatment of the Senate was more about stating the Senate's weaknesses. Others questioned the elite opposition to Nero compared with the general popular support he had.

Their deaths were covered by the majority of the candidates. There were claims that Nero was assassinated also; Tacitus was referenced by some for the end of Nero's life (and even for Gaius); most knew of the praetorian involvement; some were aware of Josephus' account of three leaders with various motives; many suggested the ordinary people were upset at Gaius' death when none of the sources suggest this at all. Some used the accounts to indicate how inadequate they were. They criticised the dramatic telling of the deaths, including final last words, all possibly unreliable.

Misconception



Suetonius was often termed a 'senator'. He is said to have a bias against emperors in support of the Senate. He was, in fact, an equestrian.

It was stated that Gaius stated he would make his horse, Incitatus, (rarely named) as a senator. In fact, Dio and Suetonius say he intended to make the horse a consul, and Dio at another point says he would make the horse a priest.

Tacitus was, too often, referenced as a source for Gaius – that portion of the '*Annals*' is lost.

Exemplar 1

		<p>Suetonius considers that "even before he came to power" ^{Gaius} he was corrupt, and "turned viciousness into a fine art". This could be entirely possible, as many sources attribute Gaius' unstable mental state to his upbringing. Not only was his family prosecuted by the Tiberius, but he then stayed on Capri with the emperor for several years, which can be proven by the inscription 'Gaius' on the side of a house on the island. All accounts of Tiberius show him to be an overwhelmingly cruel and mentally unwell man, and Suetonius accounts his indulgence in immoral sexual pleasures as well as tortures whilst on Capri Capri. Caligula was encouraged to watch and take part, which could have indeed made him corrupt and a vicious. However, Suetonius was of senatorial class during the reign of Domitian, and his experience first hand of the treason trials perhaps influenced his perspective on Tiberius negatively, as he also allowed treason trials. In addition to this, Suetonius gathers much of</p>
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1	<p>his source material from Antonia the elder, mother of Germanicus and her accounts, leaving a very negatively biased view on Tiberius. This means that Suetonius as a source of for for Gaius is unnecessarily negative. This is obvious from his accounts of Gaius' personality which seem unnecessarily harsh. He accounts Gaius commenting that the facet of his character "he was most proud of was his inflexible flexibility by which he must have meant brazen impudence". These factors make the extensive accounts of Suetonius unreliable, and it is better to read from Cassius Dio, who offers a slightly more neutral account. However, due to Dio writing over a century after Gaius reigned, his account relied on senatorial accounts and previous historians' works, meaning his work also has a bias that means it fails to provide an adequate assessment of Gaius' reign.</p>
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In Exemplar 1 the candidate is addressing the issue of the adequacy of Suetonius' account of Gaius. It begins with a quote which is attributed to Suetonius, from Josephus (JA 19.201f). However, this presents a view which the candidate indicates is possible. The candidate suggests 'many sources' support this view. Unfortunately, since it is not Suetonius, the point is undermined. However, it allows the candidate to divert onto Tiberius. The connection with Gaius is that Tiberius' behaviour influenced Gaius. This is designed to evaluate a reference (which is not Suetonius) from the author by selecting information from Suetonius. Clearly the misattribution (or insecure knowledge) has made the argument much weaker.

There follows a section on Suetonius: Suetonius was not a senator, although he associated with them (especially Pliny). He was certainly not a senator under Domitian. In fact he was only about 20 (c. AD 90) when in Rome as a student. Whether he experienced the trials is debatable. However, the candidate is using this information to discuss Tiberius, not Gaius. They claim he got information from Antonia the Elder. However, the mother of Germanicus was Antonia Minor, who committed suicide during Gaius' reign. There is no evidence that he used accounts from either Antonia as such. In any case the candidate seems to have lost sight of the question, which is about Gaius, in an effort to display knowledge of the background of Suetonius.

The candidate tries to link it to Gaius by suggesting Suetonius is negative, claiming it is obvious from his accounts of his personality. In support of this he quotes from *Gaius* 29 (slightly misquoted - inflexibility, not flexibility). There is no discussion of this quote but an assertion that Suetonius is unreliable, and less trustworthy than Cassius Dio (with no evidence). Cassius Dio, however, is dismissed as writing later, based on senatorial accounts and other works (who?) and for being biased. The conclusion seems to be that both are inadequate.

The candidate has not put together a coherent analysis but a series of pieces of information from the sources. These are treated as facts rather than opinions. The general evaluation of Suetonius adds little to our understanding of his reliability and undermines the conclusion on the issue in the question.

Question 2*

2* To what extent do you agree that the Senate and senators had only themselves to blame for the decline in their status and power under the principate?

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

It is important to read the question carefully. However, some candidates did not notice that the question concerned the Senate and senators 'under the principate' not in the Republic. A very short explanation of the roles and responsibilities of the Senate and senators before the reign of Augustus would set the scene determining what power and status they declined from. However, lengthy description of the Senate's position under Cicero was not relevant; nor were quotes from Cicero. Fortunately, these responses were rare. However, references to the Republican system were still noticeable at times.

The more successful responses were able to identify the roles that the Senate and individual senators took in the Empire. The majority treated them as a unified group. Very few mentioned individual senators. They continued to provide the personnel for most of the state offices, the governors of provinces, roles in the army, specific commissions and boards of various services for food supply, water, security and amenities.

The responses naturally concentrated on the relationship with the emperor of the day. The majority argued, as is apparent, that each emperor saw a continuing decline, and the state of the Senate grew worse as the period progressed.

Most responses tended to take a chronological approach to answering the question, emperor by emperor. This is often the case with questions in the Period Study. It has been noted in previous sessions that this is not always the most successful way to deal with questions which cover the period. They lead to narratives rather than analysis, and in the less successful responses, list of events or actions, with limited judgements.

The more successful responses looked thematically at the issue. They picked out moments or events where the Senate/senators could have taken more control or power and those where they clearly lost out to the power of the princeps. More analytical responses assessed the decline as not a straight line down but going up and down. The Senate appeared to gain at the start of some reigns, only to decline as the reigns progressed. Some saw this as a false dawn, with the underlying power of the princeps remaining the same.

All responses discussed Augustus and his reforms; it was pleasing to see that some had the Settlements perfectly recorded and knew which source referenced them. Many were quite vague about what happened and in which year. They often confused the two Settlements and did not know the source for them. The majority were aware of the implications of the arrangements, essentially the control of the army and the political system in Rome. More successful responses could quote Tacitus on the *tribunician potestas*; Cassius Dio was also a source for the details. Many claimed Suetonius gave us the details, more possibly thought they were in the *Res Gestae*. Most responses mentioned Augustus' claim to have transferred power (RG 34).

The accession of Tiberius was commonly used to show how the Senate lost a chance to recover power/status; only the more successful ones noted that the sources see Tiberius reluctance as a sham. They proceeded to evaluate the sources' view well. Equally, more successful responses noted that many of the trials were initiated by fellow senators not Tiberius; the numbers quoted of trials and deaths varied considerably. Thousands, however, seemed excessive. More successful assessments were around 52. The senators welcoming of Gaius was again seen as the senators being to blame, it was argued they could have refused. It was also argued well that by AD 37, the principate was too well established. Tacitus was quoted appropriately when he said no one remembered the Republic. Much was made of the Senate's missed opportunity at the accession of Claudius; more thoughtful responses argued that the Senate's problem was they had no army (as Augustus had seen to that). Good use was made of Josephus who pointed out that the people did not want the corrupt Senate to rule. There was good discussion of Claudius' freedmen, and Agrippina's orchestration of Nero's accession as reason not to blame the senators. Some responses did deal with the revolt of Vindex and the Senate's role. Those who did argued they had little contribution other than to declare Nero an enemy of the state once the revolt had started. This emphasised their real loss of power and status.

Many good responses could support their analysis with sound and accurate sources. They showed a very good knowledge of the period. Less successful ones tended towards narrative.

Misconception



The *Res Gestae* contains details of the Settlements of 27 BC and 23 BC.

The Settlement of 27 BC gave Augustus *maius imperium proconsulare*; he had control of provinces Syria, Gaul, Spain and Egypt in 27 BC; 23 BC gave him the *imperium*.

Question 3

3 Read the interpretation below.

Claudius wanted to rule well, and in many respects he achieved his desire. Yet the main trend of the surviving literary tradition about his rule is contemptuous when it is not hostile, and depicts him as the victim of unscrupulous exploitation by his ambitious freedmen and scheming wives, ... But luckily sufficient imperial enactments survive in inscriptions and papyri to reveal the thought of Claudius himself and these...show that he possessed great administrative common sense. He not only showed skill in his choice of efficient freedmen-servants and outstanding generals (as Corbulo, Vespasian, Hosidius Geta and Suetonius Paulinus), but he also impressed his own mind and policy upon public affairs. In the last few years of his reign, however, his powers began to fail and the traditional view of him as a pawn in the hands of more determined men and women approximates more closely to the truth. 5 10

H.H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero* (adapted)

How convincing do you find Scullard's interpretation of Claudius' character and abilities?

You must use your knowledge of the historical period and the ancient sources you have studied to analyse and evaluate Scullard's interpretation. [20]

Scullard's interpretation of Claudius provided candidates with a number of areas to discuss. Candidates responded very well to the stimulus. The vast majority had knowledge of his reign and the sources we have for him. Examiners were pleased to see that candidates have developed good techniques and skills in dealing with this question.

It must be emphasised that candidates are asked to assess the content of the extract. Candidates still discuss what is not in the extract. They argue that it is not convincing because of what it omits. However, the question is asking whether what is said is convincing on the basis of the evidence we have. For example, some stated that it was not convincing because he did not mention the invasion of Britain. However, many assessed his role in public administration by using Britain as an example of his ability, good or not. These extracts will be a summary of some aspect of one of the three debates; they will provide an opinion or view on an issue. That should be the focus of the response.

Scullard begins by making it clear that there is a mismatch between his achievements and the portrayal in the sources. Most candidates agreed that the sources were 'hostile' and offered accurate examples. They did not always see that Scullard implies that he thinks the sources are being unfair. The responses often repeated the source comments without assessment. A number moved onto a narrative of his wives, Messalina and Agrippina as examples to prove that the sources were hostile. In addition, responses often moved on to the last sentence, where Scullard agrees that the sources may be accurate. In the process they omitted much of the centre of the extract. As a result, the responses did not focus on the interpretation, rather a narrative of their knowledge.

The vast majority of responses had examples and sources for his 'administrative common sense', his aqueducts (usually named), Ostia, Fucine Lake, concern for the corn supply. These were supported using Seneca (the number of days of shortage varied), Pliny on buildings, and Suetonius and/or Tacitus. All the examples were used for and against the view in the extract. His activities in court were applied to his role in public affairs. Very many assessed the interpretation on these areas very well, with focused and succinct judgements.

His choices of freedmen and generals were less successfully discussed. Candidates were either vague offering nothing concrete or provided a long description of the actions of freedmen and generals, usually in Britain. Most identified Vespasian or Paulinus. The latter was confused with Aulus Plautius, putting Paulinus at the invasion. Responses did tend to disagree with Scullard over freedmen, reciting examples of their exploitation of Claudius (linked to the final sentence).

The reference to existing evidence of his enactments was rarely developed. The inscription at Ostia was used as evidence of his administration, but not to support his point. A few responses referred to the Letter to the Alexandrians, even fewer to the introduction of the Gauls into the Senate.

The interpretation that the traditional view of him is more accurate later in the reign was universally assessed. Some took issue with the idea of the 'end of reign'. They pointed to Messalina early in the reign. Her plot against Claudius was accurately reported as were other examples of her action, as in the sources. Agrippina's exploitation was used in the vast majority of the responses. The adoption of her son was argued as the prime example proving the interpretation convincing. Most continued with the claim that she murdered Claudius. It was not clear how this showed his powers were beginning to fail. The more successful responses questioned the validity of the view in the sources. They quoted Tacitus' comment that Claudius was thinking of supporting his own son, which impelled Agrippina to act.

Most candidates found some aspects of the interpretation to discuss. They had the knowledge to support their views, often with support from sources. Very few offered a generalised view of Claudius' reign.

Misconception



Tacitus does not give an account of the invasion of Britain in the '*Annals*'.

Suetonius Paulinus is not appointed as Governor of Britain by Claudius; he was appointed to Mauretania earlier in his reign.

Messalina was not his first wife, nor Agrippina his second; they were the third and fourth respectively.

Exemplar 2

3	<p>Scullard's interpretation of Claudius' character and abilities is convincing when it says he is depicted as a "victim" of "exploitation by his at ambitious freedmen and scheming wives". This is highly convincing as the sources suggest that "everything Claudius did was dictated by his wives and freedmen" Suet 25. Suetonius is highly reliable as he is writing a biography and would therefore be the obvious choice of source for Scullard who is also writing about Claudius' character. Scullard is also quite convincing when he says "Claudius wanted to rule well." This is convincing as we know he wanted to rule in the same successful way that Augustus had done. "Outstanding generals" is also convincing as Claudius was highly successful in Britain which had "never been attempted by anyone since Julius Caesar" Suet 17 however Suetonius 12 also says it is "no great importance". Britain was important for Claudius as he came to the "empire by a very surprising turn of fortune" to with no real military success but also needed a way to prove his right to rule. When Scullard talks about the end of Claudius' rule and how his "power began to fail" he is the most convincing when he says "more closely to the truth." This is highly convincing as Agrippina was highly influential in the later part of his reign as especially when she became his wife as she wanted her son Nero to be emperor but the sources also suggest she had a part</p>
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		<p>to play in his death. Scullard is less convincing when as he doesn't fully mention Britain and its in importance but also the Praetorians role in making Claudius emperor. Clodio On the death of Gaius, Claudius is said to to have been hiding behind a curtain and was found by the Praetorians who made him emperor. This is extremely valuable especially when talking about Claudius' character as well as his abilities as it shows none of it was possible without the Praetorians as the Senators had an "eagerness for democracy" Diabo ^{yet} however all of this is missing from Scullard's account.</p>
		<p>Overall, Scullard is ^{quite} convincing for Claudius' character and abilities as he mirrors our reliable ancient sources however he misses out Claudius' accession and the role of the Praetorians as well as Claudius' suggested disability.</p>

Exemplar 2 addresses the points in the interpretation in some detail and covers the text well.

It deals with the second point Scullard raises concerning the, possibly, unfair depiction of Claudius in the sources with a useful quote from Suetonius. The short evaluation of Suetonius adds little to the point that Scullard seems to be right. The quote repeats what Scullard says and little more. Scullard is making a point about the unfairness of the depiction, which is not developed here, in fact the candidate seems to think Scullard and the sourced agree at the end.

The response then quotes from the interpretation about Claudius wanting to rule well, again some information is used to suggest this is true but not an analysis as to how it proves Scullard's point.

The candidate picks up the point about 'generals' and moves onto Claudius' success in Britain, and his motive for or benefit from the invasion. We do not get a named general, nor an assessment of their worth which might support the point in the interpretation.

The response moves onto the issue at the end of his reign, as the most convincing. Agrippina's behaviour is used to support the candidate's opinion.

The response now says that the interpretation is no longer convincing because it omits reference to Britain and the Praetorians' role in the accession. The candidate argues they were vital to Claudius' character and abilities (and successes presumably). What the extract might omit is not relevant unless it is serving to support or contradict what the extract does say. The candidate did precisely this by using Britain as an example of a success of a general chosen by Claudius.

Candidates must deal with what is said and assess the information or opinion on the basis of their knowledge and evidence.

Section B overview

Question 4 required candidates to assess and evaluate the extract with a view to the reasons for Caesar's motives for his action in starting the civil war. Most candidates had sufficient knowledge to support their assessments; however, it varied in detail and relevance. Questions 5 and 6 asked candidates to assess the extent of a specific issue within Republican politics. Most responses focused on the issue in the question. There was some attempt to deal briefly with the focus of the question and then move on to 'other factors'. Question 5 was the more popular option. There was in Question 5, a tendency to narrate the period, either in part or from 88 BC to 31 BC, leaving little space for analysis. Question 6 focused on a particular statement by Cicero; many seemed not to know the events and context which led him to express his view.

Question 4

SECTION B: The Breakdown of the Late Republic, 88–31 BC

4 Read the passage below.

But after the Senate's refusal to intervene on his behalf, and his opponents' declaration that compromise was unacceptable in a matter of such national importance, Caesar crossed into Cisalpine Gaul. He held his regular assizes there, and halted at Ravenna determined on war if the Senate took drastic action against the tribunes of the people who had used their vetoes on his behalf.

5

And this indeed became the pretext for civil war, though other motives are suspected. Pompey used to say that Caesar desired general turmoil and confusion because he lacked the means to complete the schemes he had planned, or give the people what they expected on his return. Others say that he feared the necessity of accounting for his actions, in which he had disregarded the laws, the auspices, and all vetoes, during his first consulship. Certainly, Marcus Porcius Cato had often pledged to impeach him, the moment his army was disbanded. And it was repeated, openly, that if he was out of office on his return, he would be tried in a court ringed with armed men, as Milo had been.

10

...
Some claim that the constant exercise of power made him enamoured of it; and that, having weighed his enemies' strength against his own, he grasped this chance of seizing dictatorship, and fulfilling the dreams of his youth.

15

Suetonius, *Deified Julius* 30

How useful is this passage in explaining the reasons for Caesar's actions in 49 BC?

[12]

Very few candidates did not cover both paragraphs as was needed. Some responses, instead of dealing with what the source says and its usefulness, spent time on what it does not say. Some also spent much time on the background of Caesar without getting to the passages.

Most were able to identify the key points: the Senate's lack of compromise; its potential action against the tribunes; Pompey's claims; his accounting for his actions and the possible trial; his characterisation as desiring the dictatorship. Candidates selected what seemed most relevant to them. A good selection with support was sufficient to reach higher levels.

Most candidates supplied supporting knowledge on all these points with varying degrees of accuracy. The more successful responses identified what Caesar had offered and the Senate refused. These responses included that it was not the whole Senate but a minority. The tribune issue was less successfully supported. The more successful responses referenced Caesar's *Civil War* as support and noted that Suetonius sees it as a pretext. However, this was not developed in most cases, especially as a point of evaluation.

Pompey's claims were treated less well in some responses, simply using them as fact. More successful responses evaluated them as a report by Suetonius with no comment. They tried to suggest what Pompey might have meant and suggest that they lacked substance.

The issue of the potential trial and Cato's hostility had some good treatment with reference to his actions in 59 BC. Most understood the issue of gaining a post '*in absentia*' as protection. More successful responses could put detail into the charges against Caesar.

The second paragraph was less well evaluated. More successful responses noted at once that it began 'Some claim', and argued it was just gossip as one would expect from Suetonius. Others noted in Plutarch Caesar's desire to emulate Alexander. The idea that Caesar dreamt in his youth of being a dictator was treated as unlikely.

Evaluation of the passage as reliable evidence was sometimes a general passage on Suetonius' background as a biographer, secretary to Hadrian and that he had access to evidence; some noted the influence of the genre of biography rather than history. The key issue was to link the comments to the specific points in the passage (e.g. whether the 'motives' suggested had any basis in fact). More successful responses focused on Suetonius' claim that the tribune issue was a 'pretext'. They discussed whether Suetonius was correct; identified the language – 'Some say', 'Pompey used to say', 'Others say' – to suggest that Suetonius was repeating rumour not fact. They suggested that the passage was not very useful in the end.

Some responses detailed what the source omitted (for example the sole consulship of Pompey, violence of Clodius and Milo, Caesar's bribery of various politicians etc). The source is limited in information so that a brief reference to other evidence might be useful but a lengthy paragraph on the historical background is not dealing with the extract.

Misconception



The reference to 'accounting for his actions' was taken to mean in Gaul. The passage specifically mentions his consulship of 59 BC.

Milo was not executed; he was exiled.

Question 5*

5* How far was decision making controlled by individual politicians during the period 88–31 BC?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as your own knowledge to support your answer. **[36]**

This question required that candidates assessed the extent of individual control over decision making. However, candidates interpreted this to mean 'how much power individuals had'. In this way the analysis was slightly unfocused and the knowledge used sometimes did not appear as relevant as it could have been. Many candidates constructed the response around the narratives of a series of individuals; Sulla, Pompey, Caesar and, sometimes, Octavian. There were some who examined Cicero, Clodius (in the 50s) and Cato (or the *optimates* in general) at specific times. The focus on powerful individuals who tended to get their own way led candidates to argue individuals had control most of the time. As a result, there was a lack of balance in discussing 'how far'.

In general, the responses were either good or very good. They displayed a good knowledge of the period and events and were often detailed and thorough with the selection they used. They were supported by source evidence, most often this was quite detailed and relevant. Typically, a response would identify the event or 'decision' an individual was involved in and give detail and sources on the decisions. The response would then conclude that this individual controlled the process. This would be repeated with further individuals. The judgements, however, were not consistently developed in this approach. It leads to a narrative structure rather than analytical one. Very good responses looked at how the decisions were made and analysed the role of not only the individual, but also the Senate, the magistrates and assemblies. They would often include the means of control outside the formal constitutional methods. In this way they dealt with the issue of 'how far' in the period as a whole.

Sulla was popular, and his dictatorship a clear example of control; his use of force (the army) was emphasised. Candidates varied on their knowledge of Sulla's actions, apart from the proscriptions. Plutarch was the staple source but very few quotes were seen related to decision making. They generally focused on his cruelty or 'butchery'.

Responses often moved onto Pompey's use of the army to control decision making. Responses usually noted his threat to Sulla to get a triumph. The Letter he sent from Spain to force the Senate to provide resources was almost universally referenced. Candidates could not always state the source of the letter (Sallust or Plutarch); not all candidates knew when it was sent, placing it in 60s after Mithridates (or concerning Mithridates). Responses moved the narrative on to the commands in the 60s, although some confused the order and nature. The more successful response explained how this showed Pompey was in control, by bribing or encouraging with promises the tribunes to work for him. Many simply accepted he controlled the events.

Most responses dealt with the triumvirate and 59 BC well, usually substantiated by Plutarch or Suetonius. A popular incident was the throwing of dung (or similar substances) over Bibulus (often named Biblius) as a means for Caesar to control the decisions of 59 BC. Less successful responses did not identify what decision or thought the *Lex Campania* gave Caesar the province of Gaul. Further examples might include the use of gangs by Clodius, the dictatorship of Caesar and the acts of the assassins, and finally the 2nd Triumvirate. This would often return the response to the idea of proscriptions. The majority of responses stopped around 59 BC or late 50s.

In contrast to the view that all decisions seemed to be controlled by individuals, more successful responses offered some balance by reference to the Catiline Conspiracy. Here a single individual did not control the decisions, although Cicero is noted as being the prime mover; the debate in Sallust was used well, especially in contrast with Cicero's speech. Some responses did suggest that even here individuals led the decision making. More successful responses also debated how far Pompey controlled decisions in the immediate period after return from the East. The aftermath of Caesar's death was also well used by some to show the chaos where no one seemed to control the situation.

Overall, sources were used well and accurately. There was less success in using Cicero's letters, where the references tended to be unspecific. Plutarch, Appian and Suetonius were sometimes confused. The evaluation still becomes, in some responses, a long paragraph on background rather than a specific examination of the source being used in the response. Many references were simply factual so that knowing Suetonius uses gossip did not help evaluate the specific example, unless it is clearly questionable.

Exemplar 3

	One reason why decision making was not mostly mostly controlled by individuals is because of Sulla's actions. In 81, Sulla was granted a dictatorship. He made a series of significant reforms during this time, such as introducing the Lex Villia Annalis. This enforced a minimum age for consuls. Another significant reform was the reduction of powers the tribunes had, and he essentially made it a dead-end career. The aim behind this is these reforms was to reduce threats (the populares) and strengthen the senate. Plutarch corroborates this view, and also talks about Sulla's proscriptions. He says Sulla resorted to butchery to eliminate opponents and take their wealth. Plutarch is a reliable source as his 'Parallel lives' contain a
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		variety of sources, which he often names. However he is not contemporary and is mainly a biographer, so can sometimes ideas be too focused on character. Plutarch's writings and the actions of Sulla show that decision making was mostly in the hands of individuals.
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This response first focuses on Sulla as an example of an individual controlling decision making. The response lists some of the actions Sulla took. It mentions his dictatorship and reforms. These are the *Lex Villia Annalis*, which are correctly explained, if only partly, and not in detail. The tribune powers are mentioned as reduced but not what those powers were. The candidate has been partially detailed and partially accurate. We are to assume that these are Sulla's decisions. The response offers a reason for Sulla's action; to strengthen the Senate.

Plutarch is used as supporting source. Plutarch did not detail the reforms (if that is what the candidate means). It may refer to his motive or his dictatorship. However, it appears put in to offer a source regardless of its relevance.

The proscriptions are mentioned with the quote on butchery. This reference does not relate to decision making although it might indicate Sulla's control of the Republic. However, the candidate does not elaborate.

There follows a paragraph on Plutarch as reliable in general, factual information on his non-contemporary status (although not when exactly he lived), and his status as a biographer, and is too focused on character. It is not clear how this relates to the issue in the question. The evidence given from Plutarch has been general mostly and has not been focused on the control of decision as such. It appears to be there to fulfil a requirement without being targeted to the issues.

The conclusion on Sulla is that it shows 'decision making was mostly in the hands of individuals'. This is based on one individual and some decisions. The paragraph on Sulla might have been used to show control by one man but it is not proof of 'mostly' at this stage.

The response displays some partially detailed knowledge of a limited nature, knowledge of a relevant source, but fails to use it well. It makes an assertion rather than a judgement based on evidence and knowledge.

Misconception



It was stated that the Senate awarded Pompey the commands against the pirates and Mithridates, when they were awarded through *Leges Gabinia* and *Manilia* through the assemblies. Candidates did mention the laws but seemed unaware of the process.

Sulla's reforms are not listed in Plutarch, as was often stated.

Question 6*

6* How far do the sources support Cicero's view that, by 59 BC, 'the Republic was finished'?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as your own knowledge to support your answer. **[36]**

Candidates were asked to assess the view of Cicero on the state of the Republic, in relation to other sources on this subject. It was important in this question that candidates used the sources in their assessment of Cicero's view. It was also important that they provided a conclusion on the views of other sources in relation to Cicero's own. Concluding whether they agreed with Cicero did not fully answer the question.

Responses produced many views on when the Republic was finished; many were thoughtful and displayed good knowledge of the whole period. Candidates took different views on what it meant to say the Republic was finished. Some felt it was Cicero's reaction to the failure of his '*concordia*' after defeating Catiline and the end of stable government. Others thought it meant that his group, the optimates, no longer had control with the triumvirate dominating politics in 59 BC. Some recalled Plutarch's statement from Cato. He said it was the friendship of the three men which destroyed the Republic not the breakdown of the relationship. This placed it, like Cicero, in 59 BC. More commonly it was taken to mean the Republic no longer functioned as its constitution demanded.

Responses examined the immediate cause of Cicero's statement, the triumvirate and Caesar's consulship of 59 BC. The majority of candidates had a good knowledge of the events of 59 BC, the demands of the three men, the dominance of Caesar over Bibulus, their successes, and the means by which they were achieved. Responses had the relevant source material to support the events of 59 BC. These included Plutarch on Pompey's use of veterans, Suetonius' view that Caesar's was effectively a sole consulship, Cicero on the mob violence of their supporters such as Clodius. While these covered the events, only the more successful responses related the sources to the issue of the end of the Republic.

The content of the letter (*ad Att. 2.21*), from which the quote is taken, was sometimes detailed. It describes the nature of the triumvirate, the anger against Cato, Pompey's failure, and elaborates on the basic view about the constitution.

Responses largely approached the question by detailing a series of challenges to the Republic- Pompey's illegal demands from Sulla onwards, the Catiline Conspiracy, the violence of Milo and Clodius, and the struggle between Pompey and Caesar. Responses argued that the Republic ended even as far back as Sulla, or with the sole consulship of Pompey in 52 BC or with Caesar's dictatorship.

More successful responses, while dealing with events, looked at the issues facing the constitution. They examined its faults and failings. They assessed the corruption in the courts using *In Verrem* very effectively to show the Republic was damaged. The *Bona Dea* trial was often referenced in this context quite effectively, again deploying sources to show they agree or not with Cicero. The issue of violence, usually documented by Cicero letters, also developed the idea of the failure of the system. Pompey's use of the tribune and assembly to circumvent the law and practice in 70 BC and again in the 60s was another topic that was successfully used. The sources highlighted the undermining of the constitution by Pompey; some noted that Cicero spoke in favour of his commands against his own principles with the argument 'needs must'.

Evaluating the sources was an important element in this question given that it was about how sources interpreted the events. Less successful responses were limited by the use of the paragraph of background. More successful ones examined the information in context considering the agenda and perspective of the author in terms of the specific quote or reference. This was especially true of the quote in the question.

In general, the responses to this question produced thoughtful, considered and often well supported judgements.

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