



General Certificate of Education

Classical Civilisation

CIV4B Alexander

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – June series

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CIV4B: Alexander**General Comment**

CIV4 has proved successful in attracting a diverse range of centres with different interests. CIV4B (Alexander), a former coursework topic, attracted a pleasing number of entries in this, the first year of the examination. On the whole, candidates showed appropriate skills of analysis, application of knowledge, evaluation and organisation of ideas, covering the whole range of mark levels. More care, however, should be taken by a minority, but a significant one, of candidates to read the rubric of the questions and to answer in a relevant way. Many good answers were received in response to the 40-mark synoptic questions, and in the best of these candidates showed an impressive grasp of wider issues.

Option A

Most candidates showed adequate knowledge in response to the factual questions, Questions 01 and 02. In response to Question 03 most candidates proved themselves capable of highlighting basic differences between the two accounts, but relatively few produced detailed discussion of the siege, for example the use of moles and towers and the counter-attempts to destroy them through fire and other means, amply described by Arrian. Many good answers to Question 04 were received, especially from those who brought in a range of other factors such as the composition of the Macedonian army and Alexander's growing mystique.

Option B

Of the questions requiring factual recall, Questions 05, 06, and 07 were better done than the equivalent questions in Option A. In Question 08, the majority of candidates apportioned more or less equal blame to Cleitus (or his 'evil genius', if they understood the term) and to Alexander but above all drunkenness was seen as the most important factor in the events leading up to Cleitus' death. Question 09 was also well done on the whole, with most candidates taking a balanced view of Alexander's achievements in managing his men and officers.

Option C

A number of candidates misread Question 10 as requiring them to discuss battle strategy and tactics. A careful perusal of the specification shows that candidates should study 'arrangements for administering his various conquests'. On the other hand, plenty of well informed and tightly constructed essays were also seen.

Option D

Many good answers were also seen to Question 11, the best showing assured understanding of Alexander's motivation as recorded by both Arrian and Plutarch.