



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

Classical Civilisation 2020

**CIV3D: Augustus and the Foundation of
the Principate**

Report on the Examination

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CIV3D Augustus and the Foundation of the Principate

General Comments

The examiners were pleased, once again, to see a substantial number of candidates for this unit in its second year. The standard of the best work was again gratifyingly high, and there were some scripts of excellent quality. Many candidates had well-developed analytical skills which they demonstrated in their answers to the 10 and 20-mark questions. As last year, there was less evidence than in the previous specification of difficulty in time-management, though a few candidates still devoted too much time to the 20-mark essay at the evident expense of the 40-mark synoptic question. There was encouraging evidence of sophisticated judgement, sensitivity and perception in responses to both textual and visual material and of some excellent and committed teaching, though it is clear that the visual material is either less popular or perceived as less crucial to our understanding of Augustus as a political animal. Once again, the examiners noted some candidates with extremely poor writing and spelling skills. There is still a visible tendency for a few less sophisticated candidates to provide narrative rather than analytical answers, or to use everything they remember about a particular topic, whether appropriate to the question or not.

Section One

Option A

Option A allowed a majority of candidates to comment on the effects of the battle of Actium on Augustus' career. Most answers to Questions 01 and 02 identified Antony and Cleopatra as his opponents in the battle, and attributed his success to a better-trained and more mobile fleet, better-trained and fitter troops, desertion and withdrawal by his opponents and, occasionally, betrayed knowledge of Antony's battle-plan. Very few answers to Question 03 could pinpoint the significance of the quoted oath to Augustus as the mandate to attack Antony and Cleopatra, made to him as an individual, and a facilitator of his own drive to present himself as a civilised agent of the Roman west versus the corruption and barbarism of the east. Answers to Question 04, however, expanded on the effect of Actium on Augustus' power and security as the victory which facilitated the *Pax Romana*, lost him any credible rivals, and secured Egypt as a private source of wealth and resources. Successful answers to Question 05 followed this by exploring the history of Augustus' relationships, formal and otherwise, with the other major power-brokers of the period and their implications for his military and provincial management and success.

Option B

Option B was less popular as noted above, but generally well-answered by the candidates who chose it. Most answers to Question 06 identified the processional section of the Ara Pacis frieze and pointed to the presence of Augustus, Agrippa, priests, senators and the imperial family. Answers to Question 07 were less focused than they might have been on Augustus' own commentary in the *Res Gestae* on the date and commissioning of the altar and the reasons for its installation in the particular place in which it appeared. They tended instead to merge their content with the material needed for Question 08, and then to elaborate further on this in Question 08 in a comparative exploration of the imagery alongside that of the Prima Porta statue. Here it was generally recognised that the Ara Pacis focuses on peace, prosperity, tradition and myth; the Prima Porta statue focuses on military success as a precondition of peace with some of the same imagery as its tools.

Section Two

Option C

Question 09 was marginally the less popular of the synoptic questions. Some extremely good answers explored Augustus' use of his wealth – loans, inheritance, provincial revenue or loot – to benefit a wide range of subjects including veterans, plebeians, and some senatorial classes. Most noted his expenditure on colonies, donatives, water and corn supplies, provision and improvement of amenities and hygiene, road building, and his formal building programme.

Option D

The large number of candidates who opted for Question 10 were able to expand on the famous aphorism about finding Rome brick and leaving it marble by discussing the propaganda value of the prescribed monuments and their imagery. Fewer made a connection with Augustus' own intentions as explored in the *Res Gestae*, or formed a view as to his priorities in undertaking such a substantial and long-term project.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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