GCSE

Ancient History

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J151**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **J051**

OCR Report to Centres June 2017

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General Certificate of Secondary Education

Ancient History (J151)

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

A031 The Greeks at War

General Comments:

Examiners were once again very pleased to see some excellent responses to both sections of the paper this year. It was clear that candidates had enjoyed some stimulating lessons, covering a wide range of issues. The single biggest problem remains that too many candidates do not cover all the available Assessment Objectives for a particular question: this is particularly an issue for 3a/3b and 8a/8b, as in the essay at least, the vast majority of candidates, guided perhaps by the bullet points, do try to assess the sources in some detail.

As in previous years, there were a very few candidates who set out their answers in a way that was not clear to examiners. There were of course some candidates who chose to deal with the questions in an order different from that set out on the paper; where the question numbers were clearly entered on the paper, this caused no problems for examiners, though the paper is designed to be worked through in order. However, candidates who omitted question numbers could be more difficult to deal with, especially where their answer to a question was very general, as it was sometimes not very clear what they were doing. Examiners endeavour to award marks appropriately, but this is not always a straightforward matter.

The first questions in each Option, 1 and 6, continue to create some problems for candidates. Some candidates write very brief responses which are hard to credit beyond the bare minimum, and there are still some who choose to write at length, when this is not required. Examiners are simply looking for two separate elements, as set out as two paragraphs; one of these then needs to be developed somewhat further. It is also a good idea to address the question; a number of candidates for Option 2 decided that the taming of Boucephalas was a good story to select but offered no reason why this should be considered good preparation for the expedition against Persia. A very few candidates extended their answers by evaluating sources, something which cannot be credited for this question.

The sub-questions in Question 2/7 were generally answered effectively, and most candidates make good use of the passages. As in previous years, the (c) question was often approached in a very general way without using any of the details from the passage, though there were many excellent answers that commented on selected details very effectively.

Candidates found the passage for Question 3 quite challenging, presumably because of the way Herodotus set out his opinion. The very best answers were able to explain clearly what the significance of the passage was, but a number of responses became confused. Question 8 was perhaps more straightforward, though here many candidates allowed their answer to spread beyond the passage and deal more generally with the battle at the river. It is also worth reinforcing to candidates how the (a) and (b) questions differ from one another: the (a) question is closely focused on the passage on the paper, while the (b) question allows a much broader response, drawing both on the passage and on other sources that have been studied. It is on this question that the issue of AO3 is most acute, as some candidates fail to make any reference to the source at all, particularly in the (a) question; occasionally the (b) question becomes focused entirely on the source, to the omission of relevant factual details from outside it. However there were some excellent answers to both questions.

There were a wide range of responses to the essay questions, and examiners were pleased to note some excellent answers which demonstrated a very good grasp of material studied. However, as in previous years, there is still a significant number of candidates who present their response to the question as if the bullet points were an essay plan; this can weaken the overall answer, especially with regard to AO3, as the discussion of sources becomes rather disconnected from the essay question. The very best answers integrate the discussion of

sources with specific examples, and examiners were pleased to see some well-focused introductions and conclusions.

As has been noted in previous years, some candidates are inclined to repeat elements of their answers in different questions. This is most obviously the case with evaluation of sources, where pre-prepared paragraphs can be found all too often. Where these paragraphs are not structured to address the specific question, they are unlikely to contribute a great deal to the answer, and suggest a mark in, at best, Level 3. Those using a computer were perhaps most likely to offend in this regard; it is worth reminding them that the highest marks are given the answers focused on the question.

The strongest answers were focused on the question throughout. Weaker answers are often characterised by reliance on narrative which can often run on at considerable length. This is unlikely to be rewarded highly. Examiners noted that responses to Question 5 could be sidetracked by an extended description of what happened at the Battle of Marathon itself. The majority of candidates saw clearly that this question was not about Marathon itself, and there were some perceptive answers. Perhaps surprisingly, some answers to Question 9 gave very little detail about Alexander's character, though the majority of candidates were well able to select a wide range of interesting incidents described by the sources which they could use to address the question.

General presentation remains an issue for a very few candidates. It is helpful to examiners if candidates can present their work legibly. It is worth remembering that the scanning of scripts can make some types of pen problematic where there is bleed-through from one side of paper to the other. Some candidates could usefully double space their work so that it is easier to read: this can be an issue for those with large writing that fills the line, and is also well worth considering for those using a computer, as some printed papers present a dense mass of text which is quite hard for examiners to read on screen. Where an alternative method of presentation is used, it is important to make sure that the SPaG grid is filled out. Relatively few candidates failed to secure a decent mark for SPaG, but there certainly were some that were challenging to read on-screen. Very small writing can be a particular problem.

One issue has resurfaced which should be drawn to the attention of candidates studying Alexander: examiners felt that this year there was a small (but significant) number of candidates who set out to answer the Herodotus section but then later turned to the Alexander option. There did not seem to be a particular reason for this, and in some cases candidates wasted a considerable amount of time which would better have been spent focused on the correct questions.

Once again, the range and quality of work produced by candidates in exam conditions continues to impress examiners, and it is heartening to see how effectively candidates responded to the challenges posed in this examination.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No. 1
This question generally worked well. Most candidates were able to select two different things about Themistocles. Most popular were his involvement with the development of the navy in Athens, and his role at Salamis.

Question No. 2a
The majority of candidates were able to select relevant details from the passage.

Question No. 2b
Most answers were able to make effective use of Pheidippides and the reasons for his journey to Sparta, and there were also some good discussions of Eretria. A few candidates tried, rather less successfully, to use the god Pan.

Question No. 2c
As in previous years, some candidates responded to this with a very general answer which was hard to credit beyond Level 3. However there were some good discussions of Herodotus's use of the supernatural.

Question No. 3a
This proved to be quite a challenging question. The best candidates were able to show that they understood exactly what Herodotus was saying in this passage, and there were some interesting discussions of his point of view. Many candidates took the passage as evidence for Herodotus' bias, though this was by no means a universal view. Weaker responses were confused over the roles of the Athenians and Spartans, and also the relationship between Sparta and her allies. A few appeared to think that Sparta and Persia were working together. In some cases it was difficult to follow what candidates thought Herodotus was saying at this point. As in previous years, there were far too many candidates who did not address AO3 explicitly in their answer.

Question No. 3b
Many candidates were able to give a very good account of Xerxes' failure, and there were some interesting criticisms of his strategy for the expedition. A very few candidates seemed to confuse Xerxes with Darius, in some cases apparently because of Passage 1A: it may be worth reminding candidates that there is no necessary connection between Passage 1A and Passage 1B. Many candidates noted the importance of freedom to the Greek states who fought against Xerxes, though it is worth noting that rather more states had no choice but to *medise*.

Question No. 4
This proved the less popular of the two essay questions. Most candidates were much happier discussing Salamis, and relatively few had a confident grasp of what happened at Artemisium. The question asked candidates to focus on weaknesses; examiners were happy to reward understanding of the strengths of the Greek navy, but the best answers covered issues such as the number of Greek ships, the problems caused by the different contingents and the nature of the Greek ships themselves. As in previous years, candidates tended to accept uncritically the stories in Herodotus about events before the Battle of Salamis.

Question No. 5
This was the more popular of the essay questions. Some candidates overresponded to the trigger word 'Marathon' and offered an extended narrative of the battle itself, in some cases leading to a complete omission of any preparations for the Persian attack of 480 BC. However, stronger answers demonstrated a very clear understanding of the purpose of the question, and were carefully organised to cover both Greek and Persian preparations. The coverage of these preparations was not always even-handed and examiners were prepared to award credit for what was there.

Question No. 6
This question was generally well done. There were a very few overlong answers, but in general most candidates were able to select to relevant examples, even if in some cases it was not very clearly explained why the example was relevant. For example, the taming of Boucephalas was a popular choice though candidates did not often make clear how they thought this prepared Alexander for his expedition against Persia. Other popular choices were his early military experience and his meeting with Persian ambassadors while his father was away.

Question No. 7a
This was generally answered very effectively, though there were some candidates who tried to address AO2 (and even AO3) for which no marks were available.

Question No. 7b
The majority of candidates showed a good understanding of the relationship between Alexander and his commanders and also use the passage as evidence for the devotion of his Macedonian troops.

Question No. 7c
There were some very general replies, often showing a good understanding of Plutarch's approach to biography. Stronger answers make good use of the details of the passage.

Question No. 8a
Most candidates found a great deal to say and made excellent use of the passage. Weaker answers were often undermined by uncertainty over the situation described; a very few good candidates allowed themselves to be drawn into a more extended discussion of the battle beyond the bounds of this passage. Quite a few candidates failed to address AO3, as has happened in previous years.

Question No. 8b
Although this question was often very effectively answered, there were a significant number of responses focused entirely on Passage 2B. Examiners could certainly credit relevant issues drawn out of Passage 2B, but stronger answers drew on a wider range of material. Candidates suggested a number of reasons for Alexander's success in battle: popular choices include the well-trained army inherited from his father, his own flamboyant courage demonstrated in battle and his tactical awareness. There were some effective discussions of Arrian's approach to writing history. A very few answers offered a generalised account of the sources with very limited supporting material.

Question No. 9
This proved the more popular question. Some weaker responses recounted versions of events from the sources with very little attempt to connect them to Alexander's character. However the vast majority of responses included a good range of material, suitably analysed to show different aspects of Alexander's character from his childhood through to his early death. Popular examples included the taming of Boucephalas and the final argument with Cleitus. It is worth reminding candidates that the sources specified for this examination are extracts from longer works, and so the omission of particular incidents in Plutarch's account should not necessarily be taken as deliberate on his part. Most candidates saw that it was helpful to compare Plutarch with Arrian here when considering how convincing Plutarch's version was, and there were some interesting discussions.

Question No. 10
This proved significantly less popular. Some responses to this question struggled to identify conspiracies to discuss, though by and large candidates were able to point to the 'conspiracy of the Pages' and the events involving Philotas and his father Parmenio. Relatively few candidates used the mutinies at Hyphasis or at Opis; there were some good discussions of Alexander's relationship with his companions, focusing particularly on the death of Cleitus. This led in some cases to discussions of the significance of alcohol in the final years of Alexander's life.

A032 The Rise of Rome

General Comments:

Many of the general comments bear similarity to last year. Although the majority of centres still choose the Hannibal option it seems that the difference between the two different entries has narrowed slightly from previous years. Again, there were some truly outstanding scripts and the performance across the paper was very good.

When appraising the AO3 aspect of the assessment it is still important to stress the importance of relating discussion of sources and evidence to details that have been referred to in the given passages: there is still a tendency for generalised generic description tagged on at the end of answers. There are still some fairly common misconceptions about the sources: most candidates realise that Polybius may have interviewed Zama veterans but wasn't alive to witness the battle. A number of candidates still believe that Augustus paid Virgil and Livy to write. There were some pleasingly sophisticated evaluations of Plutarch in this year's scripts.

As noted last year with regard to questions 3a)/3b) and 8a)/8b) many candidates are now dealing with the challenges presented in a more assured fashion. However, there are still too many scripts that give excellent answers with regard to AO1 and AO2 but then fail to evaluate the evidence provided by the different authors. Further to this, answers that scored best on AO3 here (and on the essay questions) tended to follow a particular structure: these evaluated how useful the relevant sources were at every point in their argument (and so tied in the source evaluation with the factual details being discussed); by contrast, those with a generic paragraph evaluating the sources at the end of their answer often found it difficult to access the highest mark bands.

It is gratifying to see a diminishing use of the word 'gotten' in scripts.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No. – OPTION 1

1) Generally some very good answers but some candidates did confuse Tullus Hostilius with other kings.

2a) and 2b) Similarly to last year there were some very good answers with responses making discrete and relevant points about the image and the Livy passage. But some candidates only dealt with the image or the text whilst other candidates should be reminded that this is a comprehension exercise and of the importance of focusing on the passage given for these questions.

2c) Again there is similarity to previous years here: despite some excellent answers many candidates are attaining lower mark levels only by giving general information about Livy without tying their responses to details in the passage. This was a real shame, especially when there was some extremely detailed general knowledge about Livy on show. There were some very thoughtful observations about the statue.

3a) Most candidates did very well in drawing details about the reasons for the beginning and ending of the war with the Sabines from the Livy passage and then explaining the significance of these – ie. AO1 and AO2. Some candidates did not appear to realise that evaluation of the source passage was required, despite the explicit guidance of the question, and duly lost marks

Better answers evaluated details in the passage as progress through the question/ answer was made.

3b) There were some very good answers here and it was apparent that students have excellent knowledge about the early kings of Rome so AO1 often scored highly. However, there were more difficulties with AO2 and AO3. With regard to understanding candidates were often just looking at strong leaders or good deeds, so answers were missing the nuance of the question – definitions as to what constituted a strong city and how policies contributed to this. With regard to evaluation candidates need to bear in mind that the AO3 mark is out of 8 here (not 5, as with part a) - consequently, more evaluation is necessary and a very brief evaluation of the source material at the end will not gain much reward.

4) This essay title was answered rarely but where it was attempted it was often done very well. Students were generally very knowledgeable about both Hercules and Aeneas so were able to score well on AO1. With regard to AO2, engagement with the implications of "poets' stories" was vital to score highly and this was often done very well: the best answers were able to analyse thoughtfully the different merits of both Livy and Virgil in articulating the foundation myths of Rome within the context of the Augustan regime and its political strictures. There is a common misunderstanding that both Livy and Virgil were commissioned by Augustus to write: more sophisticated answers were able to discern the difference between direct and indirect influence in their discussion AND the significance of Maecenas.

5) This was a very popular question and attracted an extremely broad range of responses, ranging from some candidates who had only the vaguest possible recollection of what the Tarquins did to some impressively detailed and nuanced responses. The very best answers (particularly with regard to AO2) prioritised factors, argued (with evidence) for some factors being more significant than others, showed a sophisticated understanding of long-term causes versus short-term trigger factors. The stronger answers made a persuasive case for Livy manipulating the history of these kings in order to embellish the characteristics of the earlier kings and to emphasise the Roman values required in a foundation story linking to the Augustan context.

Question No. – OPTION 2

6) Very well done with some knowledgeable answers – most focusing on economic / strategic factors (conflict over Spain / Sicily and Western Mediterranean generally) and political / personal factors (consequences of first war / Hannibal's oath) but a wide range of responses was perfectly permissible.

The accurate spelling of the term Mediterranean proved to be very challenging for many candidates.

7a) and 7b) Most responses were able to identify very clearly the tactics that Fabius Maximus used and how this made him a skilful general: this allowed candidates to score highly. However there were a number of responses that wasted much time going into unnecessary detail: again it is important to emphasise that this is a comprehension exercise and what is needed are details from the passage with some explanation (particularly for AO2).

'Common people' was surprisingly often – and incorrectly – interpreted as soldiers rather than the Roman public at large.

7c) Similarly to the comment for 2c) many answers described with knowledge the merits of Plutarch as a source and particularly the issues with him being a biographer but there were still too many that failed to illustrate this with details taken from the passage. Those that did – with some discussion of Plutarch more generally – scored highly.

8a) Again a question that was done very well with answers that focused on extracting the germane aspects of the Poybius quote and addressing the issue of the consequences of Trasimene very effectively - so some high scores for AO1 and AO2. There was also some good evaluation (AO3). There were a few candidates who did not realise that evaluation of the source passage was required.

8b) Many students were able to display their knowledge of Cannae and so often scored highly on AO1. But there were some issues with other parts of this question: for AO2 the best answers were able to analyse the word 'success' and then direct the argument accordingly – short-term success exemplified by Cannae but then longer-term failure / stalemate because of the resumption of Fabian tactics .For AO3 some candidates interpreted "How fully do the sources help us to understand" as asking for a general evaluation of the merits of Livy / Polybius / Plutarch, without actually describing what happened factually / explaining why Hannibal succeeded after Trasimene.

9) This was the most popular question for this option and the strength of answers varied, although most candidates remembered a good range of factual details. The standard on this question was generally good although there were some problems – students quite often included irrelevant details from earlier in Hannibal's campaign (e.g. crossing the Alps) and sometimes the historical details were most often confused (e.g. Fabius was the Roman general at Zama and used his tactics there). Again, prioritisation / connection between factors marked out particularly impressive answers

10) The less popular question for this option, but still frequent. Candidates who actually answered the question (focusing on the relationships between military commanders and their governments) scored highly here, although other factors were still relevant and rewarded. Particularly good responses were nuanced, showing awareness of changes over time in the relationships between Hannibal and Carthage / Rome and its various generals. This depth of knowledge led to very high scores for both AO1 and AO2.

A033 Women in Ancient Politics

General Comments:

Option 1: Cleopatra and her impact on Roman politics, 69–30 BC continues to be the far more popular option than Option 2: Agrippina the Younger and her influence on Roman politics, AD 41–59.

Please could centres re-iterate the importance of clear handwriting and taking care over the spelling of proper nouns. There continues to be confusion about the names of historical figures and source writers in both options and candidates are frequently dropping SPAG marks for writing 'would of' and 'could of'. Assistant Examiners raised that candidates were not reading the questions and therefore could not access marks.

It was pleasing to see that candidates in both options had a good grasp of the chronology of both women's lives, however this year it was noted that candidates were engaging less with the source writers. For the essay questions, 3a and 3b, 8a and 8b, candidates must discuss the source writers as well as showing knowledge of the content of the passages in order to access the higher levels on the mark scheme.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No.

Q 1   Candidates here struggled with giving details of Cleopatra's actions 'immediately' after the defeat of Mark Antony. Responses frequently focussed on the events surrounding Cleopatra's death, which occurred much later.

Q 2(a)   Some candidates confused Caesarion and Cleopatra in this image and she was also described as naked, however it was pleasing to see that candidates were able to identify the crowns and the positioning of Cleopatra in relation to Caesarion. This demonstrated that they had really engaged with the material evidence.

Q 2(b)   It was pleasing to see that candidates understood Cleopatra's Macedonian heritage and how that effected how she wanted to be seen by the people of Egypt. There were also excellent responses regarding the importance of Caesarion and how it is a way of promoting him as both pharaoh and a link with Rome as the son of Julius Caesar.

Q 2(c)   Candidates were able to identify this as a contemporary source and the best responses were able to not only compare this with both numismatic and literary evidence, but also evaluated it on the basis that it was how Cleopatra herself wanted to be perceived.

Q 3(a)   Candidates were much more comfortable with discussing the first paragraph on the passage and showed a good understanding of how points related to the question. Candidates were less inclined to discuss the second paragraph, however there were some excellent responses regarding Plutarch's status as a priest at Delphi, and that he may have put more credence in the omens than perhaps other writers would have.

Q 3(b)   There were a disappointing number of candidates who did not address the passage on the paper nor mentioned any sources, but instead gave a from their own knowledge response, this prevented them from accessing Levels 4 and 5 on the mark scheme. Some of these candidates showed an excellent level of understanding of events, and it was disappointing that they made no reference to sources.

Q 4   It was pleasing to see some outstanding responses to this question, candidates in all levels clearly understood the basics of the relationship between Cleopatra and Caesar and were able to timeline the key points in their relationship. Some candidates made excellent observations regarding whether Cleopatra needed Caesar at all, and there were good discussions regarding the further relationship between her and Mark Antony and that she also attempted to establish a power based relationship with Octavian. There were disappointingly few candidates who were using Suetonius as a source, and were either relying on Plutarch or trying to use the Augustan poets as evidence.

Q 5   The strongest responses to this question made a comparison of Cleopatra to the Roman women which they had encountered in Fulvia and Octavia. There were some very interesting responses about Cleopatra's role as a mother and why that was normal for the period. Candidates were able to evidence their answers with reference to sources here, there were lots of reference to Horace's line 'a doomed and destructive monster', not always within a context.

Q 6   Candidates on the whole were able to tackle this question well and were able to identify two details here. There was some confusion from a noticeable number of candidates regarding the enema method and confusion with the use of soup.

Q 7(a)   Candidates were able to give reasons from across the passage, although there was confusion from a number of candidates that Agrippina the Younger had been involved in the death of Messalina.

Q 7(b)   There were some excellent responses to this with real engagement with who Germanicus was and why that was important, however it was clear that many candidates were unable to make coherent responses because they didn't know who he was or his significance.

Q 7(c)   It was pleasing to see that candidates were responding to the passage itself and questioning how Tacitus would know this information. The best responses did that and also placed Tacitus within a context and explained who he was. There were a few candidates who gave outstanding responses comparing this to the cameo with Agrippina the Elder, Germanicus, Agrippina the Younger and Claudius.

Q 8(a)   Most candidates were able to pick out details from across the passage, although there was not so much discussion of the final point regarding Antium. It was disappointing that very few candidates recognised that both Suetonius and Tacitus refer to the password being 'The Best of Mothers' in 13.2, and what this might show about reliability.

Q 8(b)   As with Q3b, there were many responses where candidates made no references to sources, however it was pleasing to see that when they did, they demonstrated excellent understanding of the reasons for the change in the relationship.

Q 9   Candidates were able to give a range of examples of the ways that Agrippina attempted to control Claudius, and did understand why Agrippina was unable to move in political circles. There were some excellent responses regarding how the material culture references her status and the role of freedmen, and how her actions compared to them.

Q 10   There were a disappointing number of candidates who recounted the events of Agrippina's murder rather than addressing the question. There were conversely outstanding responses which looked at the roles of Acte and Poppaea, fully referenced, and understood their influence on him.

A034 Controlled Assessment

A034 – Principal Moderator's Report

General

Many centres included clear and effective evidence of how they had awarded the marks with detailed comments on the cover sheets and annotations throughout the work. This is most helpful to the moderating team. It would, however, be beneficial if the comments on the front covers could include a little more detail as a simple repetition of the key words in the marking grid – for example 'thorough knowledge', and then a mark reflecting this, provides the moderator with very little explanation as to why the particular marks have been awarded. When moderators can see why decisions have been made it much easier to stand by those decisions than when they are opaque and lacking justification. There was a noticeable trend of poor proofreading, with a proliferation of errors in English, most notably in spelling. Many of these were probably 'typos', but they, nevertheless, detract from the quality of the work, and need to be considered when awarding marks under AO1.

Where candidates have appended a set of sources, it would be good if these could be clearly referenced, so that they can be effectively tied into the argument.

Candidates should also be reminded of the importance of a full and suitably detailed bibliography. On occasion, candidates have given references to works, but in such a vague way as to make the references almost redundant.

A further general theme which became apparent in reading work on a range of topics was the importance of background knowledge and context in ensuring that the sources were effectively evaluated. For example, candidates seem not to have considered the relationship of some key authors – such as Homer and Caesar – to the events or people which they were describing. In a number of cases, such evaluation is challenging, because the exact details of a source's provenance are not known. Nevertheless, for a thorough answer, such questions would be raised, and the inconclusive nature of the discussion used to help support the conclusions drawn or at least bring them into question in an appropriate manner, given that many of the questions start with 'how far'.

There was also a notable tendency in many topics to refer to sources, and sometimes offer detailed evaluation, without giving clear reference to the detail. It might, for example, be suggested that a particular author was not reliable because of his travel habits or experience, but then the specific quotation or detail on which he might be unreliable was not quoted. The work, therefore, left the general impression that things were not reliable, but without explaining how this related to the particular issue at hand. There was also a tendency to over-use Wikipedia: much valuable information can be gained from this website, but candidates should be wary of using it solely.

There was a tendency to award thorough marks for AO3 when little evaluation of the sources on a consistent basis was being done. Marks were awarded for personal responses but there should be clear evaluation of the sources. Word count was also an issue with many candidates not writing their word counts: they were clearly over, but were being awarded top marks for AO1 which is very unfair for students who are staying within the word count.

Those centres that showed evidence of internal standardisation were also centres whose marks held up better. There were more centres this year whose marking was erratic. Possibly they were new to the course and its demands however some centres need to look much more closely

at what constitutes the sound and thorough gradings as work that should have been in the "some" category was consistently being awarded thorough.

Question 1

Answers to this question included some excellent use of a range of source material. Particular care was needed with the idea of covering both character and abilities. Candidates seemed to draw some good conclusions from the sources – in particular, visual representations of their chosen Pharaoh. In the case of such arguments, though, it was rare to see a reasoned evaluation of the sources based on their date and details of their excavation. It would also be very helpful if candidates could include an image of such a source so that their discussion and the conclusions drawn are more meaningful. In particular, candidates should be careful of asserting that a source shows a particular idea or point – it may well do, but how can they be certain, for example, that a relief shows Lebanese cedar trees? In a question like this, it is important that candidates remember to avoid a simple narrative (as detailed and strong as that might be), and use and evaluate the sources to build up that narrative.

Question 2

There were not sufficient responses to this question to comment on this question in a meaningful way.

Question 3

There were not sufficient responses to this question to comment on this question in a meaningful way.

Question 4

There were not sufficient responses to this question to comment on this question in a meaningful way.

Question 5

Responses to this question showed considerable knowledge of relevant archaeology. However, greater care in evaluating and discussing this evidence would have been useful. The particular difficulty with this question was the question of the importance of religion within Mycenaean society – a number of scripts gave an excellent account of religion (although sometimes limited to considering the aspects which related to burial), but failed to then look at how this was important within society. A number of answers were keen to point out and discuss parallels or links with Minoan religion. Again, the question of relevance to the title is important here. There was also a general sense that candidates were not always aware of the wider 'Mycenaean' framework, and the relationship between the Mycenaean world and the Homeric poems. They would not be expected to have a detailed knowledge of this, but some sense of the issues surrounding this question would have been helpful, as would a sense of the differences between Mycenae and Pylos as archaeological sites.

Question 6

Troy itself and Mycenae were the most commonly chosen settlements. This question had a tendency to stray significantly outside of the specified time period and in all too many cases, became a narrative outlining the various excavations by Schliemann and others. In such cases, detail about the relevant archaeological remains was lacking and images were used more by way of illustration rather than to help demonstrate, analyse and evaluate.

Question 7

This question was well answered by those who chose it. There was evidence for a good range of sources, from both the Greek world and the Persian. Candidates might have profited from using less obvious sources, such as Aristophanes, to help support their arguments. In particular, though, there was a tendency to describe the organisation of the Empire without reference to either the chronology and development of the systems under different emperors or effective evaluation of those sources. It is important to hold in mind the idea that the evidence is being used to construct a picture or response to a particular issue, and the issue of reliability needs to be addressed in relation to that issue. In this case, there is a question about the reliability of Greek sources in dealing with the Persian system: the background of Herodotus, for example, would be a useful element to consider, as would the differing ideologies of the Greek and Persian Worlds, and how these might affect the reliability of the sources which we now have. Care is also needed with chronology. Some candidates selected material from across the period, and produced strong evaluations of that material, but then failed to look at the different times at which the material was produced, thereby conflating ideas from the beginning and end of the period. Whilst such conclusions might have been valid, it is important that the different time periods should be acknowledged in the development of conclusions.

Question 8

This question led to some impressive use of non-Greek sources, in particular Persian inscriptions, which it was heartening to see. Candidates also made effective use of a range of Greek sources including Herodotus, Xenophon and Plato. This led to some interesting reflections on both the nature of kingship and the accuracy of these sources in describing the role of the king in the Persian system. It was also good to see candidates draw conclusions directly from these sources, which was a marked feature of some of the responses to this question. In places the discussion was a little theoretical – it would have been good to have a greater range of detail from some of the Persian campaigns (for example, Cambyses in Egypt as recounted by Herodotus) to give a point of comparison between the theoretical descriptions of the role of the king and the depiction of his role in action in a campaign. The best answers did this. There was also a tendency to assume that because Herodotus was Greek, he was biased against the Persians.

Question 9

Responses to this question made good use of a wide range of evidence. The challenge for some candidates seemed to be keeping the issues in the question central to their arguments. There were some excellent accounts of what is said to have happened in this period, supported and complemented by lengthy discussion of the reliability of the sources, but the issue of leadership was not clearly addressed. The best answers managed to do this successfully, and assess a wide range of evidence which support their conclusions. Particularly impressive was the use of not only literary sources, but also epigraphical and numismatic evidence, from the Greek world and beyond. The conclusions drawn from these by some candidates were notably strong, as was the evident use of some excellent modern scholarship.

Question 10

The majority of the candidates wrote about Alexandria. The responses showed an excellent understanding of the layout and structure of the city. The 'how far' element of the question was not always effectively addressed. Many were, however, aware that there were elements of life about which little is known, such as toilets. There was excellent treatment of the idea of fusion of culture, and some effective use of Theocritus as well as some excellent use of Strabo et al. The cross referencing of Theocritus with a grave stele demonstrated an excellent understanding of the use of sources.

Question 11

Some candidates' arguments were hampered by the failure clearly to identify which Celtic society was under discussion. In responding to this question, candidates were not giving details of sources. They tended to describe things all too briefly, but did not give enough information or background about the sources to develop a meaningful argument. There was also some confusion about the preservation of sources and their reliability. Some candidates had a tendency to quote secondary sources.

Question 12

There were some strong responses to this question. Care was needed, however, with clarity about which Celtic society was being chosen, as, on occasion, candidates seemed to slip between different groups of Celts, and just talk more generally about the nature of Romanisation. The other challenge which was apparent from a number of responses was the need to identify the strengths and limitations of the sources, especially where these were Roman sources. There were also some candidates who did not seem to understand the difference between primary and secondary evidence.

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