

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **ANCIENT HISTORY**

**H407**

For first teaching in 2017

**H407/23 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.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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## Paper 23 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"> <li>• had a secure knowledge of the period studied, and a precise application of the knowledge to the specific question</li> <li>• showed a precise and clear grasp of the chronology, and an approach which places information/sources in the correct context</li> <li>• used specific sources relevant to terms of the question</li> <li>• prioritised the analysis of the issue in the terms of the question, using evidence and knowledge in support, rather than a narrative of knowledge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• misidentified an event in terms of the time frame or the person/group involved</li> <li>• confused the reign of one emperor with another, and the source which is relevant to the emperor</li> <li>• did not focus on the main issue of the question but offered a generalised account of the period</li> <li>• provided a narrative of events, not an analysis</li> <li>• used few or no sources; identified a source by name attached to a piece of information instead of a detail from the source.</li> </ul>

## 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\*

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 good 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

Suetonius considers that "even before he came to power" ~~he~~ <sup>Gaius</sup> 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 ~~the~~ 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



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 ~~off~~ 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 ~~reflexive~~ 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.

In this response 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.

<p>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.</p>	5
<p style="text-align: right;">H.H. Scullard, <i>From the Gracchi to Nero</i> (adapted)</p>	10

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

Scullard's interpretation of Claudius' character and abilities is convincing when it says he is depicted as a "victim" of "exploitation by his ~~et~~ 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 17 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" 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 especially when she became his wife as she wanted her son Nero to be emperor but the sources also suggest she had a part



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~~ <sup>On</sup> 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" Dio 60 ~~however~~ <sup>yet</sup> all of this is missing from Scullard's account.

Overall, Scullard is <sup>quite</sup> 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.

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. ~~Claudius~~ <sup>On</sup> the death of Gaius, Claudius is said to ~~of~~ 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" Dio <sup>60</sup> ~~however~~ <sup>yet</sup> all of this is missing from Scullard's account.

This response 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 on the relationship between the Romans and the Brigantes; most candidates found the extracts accessible; however, the assessment varied in detail and relevance. Questions 5 and 6 asked candidates to assess a specific issue. Most responses focused on the issue in the question. Most responses focused on the issue of effective resistance and had appropriate knowledge to answer Question 5. Question 5 was the more popular option. There was in Question 6, a tendency to focus on the start and end of the period, omitting the years between. The application of material evidence was very good in places. Candidates worked well with lack of literary sources for this period. Some candidates are still presenting blocks of generic information about the reliability of sources at the opening/conclusion of their essays, which is as a result entirely disconnected from their analysis/argument.

### Question 4

#### 4 Read the passages below.

Caratacus himself, vulnerable as those who have failed always are, sought the support of the queen of the Brigantes, Cartimandua, but was thrown into chains and handed over. This was the ninth year of the British war, and Caratacus' reputation, which had spread from the islands through the neighbouring provinces, was also well known in Italy; men were eager to see this man who had mocked the power of Rome for so many years. At Rome too his name commanded respect, and even the Emperor, by making much of his own achievement, brought renown on his vanquished enemy. ...

5

Tacitus, *Annals*, 12.36

After the capture of Caratacus, the one who excelled in military skill was Venutius from the nation of the Brigantes, ... . For a long time he was loyal and enjoyed the protection of Roman arms; but this was while he was married to the queen, Cartimandua, and after a rift between them the war that immediately ensued also threatened us. Initially, however, they only fought among themselves, and Cartimandua with some cunning ruses captured Venutius' brother and relations. The enemy were infuriated at this, and were further provoked by the disgrace of being subjected to female rule; a strong and well-armed force of fighting men invaded her kingdom. We had foreseen this and auxiliaries which were sent to help took part in a fierce fight which began with victory hanging in the balance but ended more happily. ...

5

10

Tacitus, *Annals*, 12.40

How useful are these passages for our understanding of Rome's relationship with the Brigantes?  
[12]

Most, but not all, responses dealt with the two passages in some form or other. A few assessed either passage 1 or passage 2 but not both. These tended to be the less successful responses or in very few cases, candidates who chose to answer Question 4 last and ran out of time.

The majority of responses focused on the reliability of Tacitus' accounts. Less successful responses argued that Tacitus always made governors previous to Agricola look worse than they were. This may apply to the *Agricola*, but not necessarily to the *Annals*. Thus, the capture of Caratacus is meant to reflect badly on Scapula who failed to defeat him. Therefore, Tacitus exaggerates Caratacus's abilities and character deliberately. However, this approach was veering away from the 'relationship of the Romans with the Brigantes'.

Most candidates recognised that the first passage has a limited usefulness. They focused on the handing over of Caratacus as a sign of loyalty or trust. The reputation of the leader served to enhance the importance of the action rather than reflect on Scapula.

More successful interpretations also noted the stress on Cartimandua as the prime mover. Her status as a client Queen was usually recognised. Some elaborated on what this might mean, with examples from Cogidubnus and Prasutagus. Very many brought in the inscription which mentions eleven tribes submitted.

The second passage is more complex but was dealt with successfully by many. Candidates identified the status of Venutius as either a client king or at least under Roman protection. This showed that the relationship was mutually beneficial. This was supported by the action the Romans took to help Cartimandua.

More successful responses assessed the passage as showing how it was only the Queen who was loyal to Rome. They interpreted Venutius' change of relationship to show that not all the Brigantes supported the Romans. Supporting information and sources were very well used to show the ways the relationship constantly seemed to change. They referred to the action taken with the Silures by Gallus before the passage which showed the troubles the Romans were having. Very well-informed candidates could point to the continued struggle mentioned by Tacitus at the end of *Annals* 12.40. The later revolt recorded in Tacitus' *Histories* was often included by these candidates. An earlier revolt in *Annals* 12.32 developed the interpretation that there were divisions in the Brigantes over the relationship with Rome.

Many responses had detailed and relevant information in discussing the passages, they had precise knowledge of the period. Where they were less successful, they discussed client kingdom status and Romanisation, or alternatively, they spent time on Caractacus' history.

Some were diverted into a discussion of Tacitus' misogyny; this led to focus on his treatment of women. More successful discussion pointed out that the view he expressed may well mean the passage was unreliable in his view of the motives for the revolt.

### Misconception



Caratacus was stated to be a member or leader of the Brigantes tribe.

The relationship of Tacitus to Agricola varied. He was Agricola's son-in-law.

The Brigantes were stated as being a Southern tribe. They occupied the North of England.

## Question 5\*

5\* How effective were the Britons in resisting the Romans from Claudius' invasion in AD 43 to the capture of Caratacus AD 51?

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

To some extent the question invited a narrative of the period AD 43–51. This approach could be successful where the details were secure. Responses which took this approach often did not provide a coherent line of reasoning on 'effective'. They often added a sentence to the end of a paragraph of narrative without developing the judgement throughout the narrative.

Successful responses focused on the period given and identified the majority of the instances where Romans and Britons clashed. More successful responses supported their knowledge of events with suitable evidence, whether literary or material. The main instances used were the two battles (Rivers Medway and Thames), the Iceni revolt, the revolt of the Brigantes, the conflict with the Silures and Ordovices, with the final battle. Very full responses included the frequent battles Scapula had with the Silures before he died.

A complete and full account is not required for the higher levels, but a focus on effectiveness overall supported by appropriate examples and sources which highlight its extent. Responses which present examples of where there was effective resistance and where there was not succeeded in offering coherent and convincing judgements, with a clear line of well-developed reasoning.

Many pointed out there was no opposition at first according to Cassius Dio. This was due to either bad planning or a misunderstanding. The battle of the River Medway was either very well described or was vague in detail; the only part, which all seemed to be aware of, was the use of the German auxiliaries. Some candidates thought it was a quick easy victory, when Cassius Dio says it took two days. More successful responses included the actions of Vespasian and Geta. Opinions varied on its effectiveness as resistance.

There were also varied views on what happened to Togodumnus. He was often confused with Togidubnus, leading some to say Togodumnus became a client king. The Battle of the River Thames was omitted by many, some moving straight onto the final battle; others mentioned the arrival of Claudius. This was either evidence of ineffective resistance, the capital taken so soon, or effective resistance as Plautius had to stop. Cassius Dio does say he was afraid to advance. More successful responses assessed this, suggesting it was not credible that he would wait unless told to because Claudius wanted the propaganda of being involved personally. Responses were thoughtful in their evaluations here and with Tacitus later.

Very good responses could detail Vespasian sweep across the South. Maiden Castle remains supported the ease or not of his advance; occasionally candidates questioned the view that the fort was taken by the Romans after re-examining the archaeological evidence. However, Suetonius (*Vespasian 4*) substantiated the view of an easy conquest. Well-informed responses introduced the Stonea Camp as evidence of the defeat of the Iceni to support Tacitus. The use of allied forces suggested again ineffective resistance. Most responses made a brief reference to guerrilla (or gorilla) tactics used by the Silures and Ordovices but gave few details. The accounts of Caratacus' last stand were confused in a number of responses.

The detail of the battle became mixed with other battle (River Medway or the battle of Watling Street). A few continued into AD 52 with details of the problems the Romans continued to have with the Silures. They noted Scapula's idea of eliminating the tribe as evidence that there was some effective resistance.

There was much detailed knowledge on display in many of the responses. However, it was not always supported by evidence. Where it was used, much of the evidence was treated as fact where it might be questioned. Tacitus' preconceived view of Agricola and his relationship with him was mentioned often as a sign of Tacitus' lack of reliability. However, the evidence for much of this is from the *Annals*. Most did not seem to know that the history was written after the *Agricola*. The events here predate Agricola's arrival in Britain in AD 60/61. He was born in AD 40. It becomes less easy to suggest that Tacitus had accurate information on this period from him or that he purposely doctored it to please or enhance Agricola's reputation. In addition, a good number thought Tacitus had an account of the invasion, leading to confused sources on AD 43 events. The evaluation of Cassius Dio tended to be general based on his non-contemporary status and lack of knowledge of Britain. He was said to have access to imperial records as a senator.

Less successful responses ignored the period and spent time on the Boudicca revolt. Either they were unaware of the chronology or thought it had some relevance. It would, if mentioned briefly, suggest resistance continued to be ineffective.

Some use was made of the evidence that eleven tribes submitted. Cogidubnus (or Togodumnus) was named as one, Cartimandua another (with evidence from Tacitus *Annals* 12.36). A number saw evidence of limited resistance in the fact that Verica had invited Claudius in the first place. They often used his coin as evidence of Romanisation already taking place. This led to the argument that the tribes were not united and likely to fail as a result. Another aspect many referred to was the difference in armour, weapons, tactics and training. Only those who had some details of what this meant could make effective use of it. The weaker responses simply stated it as fact.

Many responses performed well on this question with a good knowledge of the early period and a sound grasp of the evidence.

### Misconception



Tacitus does not give an account of the invasion in AD 43. This section is lost. Neither does Suetonius whose account of it is very brief.

## Exemplar 3

~~The~~ In the first stage of the invasion in 43 AD, the main battles of the Medway and Thames could seem to suggest that the Britons were not overly effective at resisting the Romans. Firstly, ~~there~~ there was much disunity amongst the British tribes and as they had heard rumours of a mutiny ~~the~~ amongst the Roman forces, they were largely unprepared to face the invading force. During the battle of the Medway, the Britons were ~~at~~ positioned on the other side of the river believing themselves to be safe, however accounts by written sources such as Dio describe how auxiliary troops were able to swim across the river and attack British chariots. Additionally

the Romans were far better equipped than the British troops. Roman troops were heavily armed in contrast to the Britons who were unarmed and had lesser weapons and training. This description of the battle by Dio is corroborated by other descriptions by Tacitus which suggests that it is largely accurate. Additionally, it is consistent with accounts of Roman equipment and tactics, further enforcing its reliability. It should also be noted that the same mistake was made at the battle of the Thames which could ~~also~~ further enforce the idea that the Britons were not very effective at resisting the Romans during the initial stages of the invasion around 43 AD.

Exemplar 3 begins by making a statement concerning effective resistance at the two battles; it continues to support this judgement with a view that the tribes were disunited, because they were unprepared, having heard a rumour of mutiny. The statements do not present a clear line of reasoning. The response continues with a brief account of the Battle of the River Medway, and the action of the auxiliaries.

Firstly, the precise nature of the troops and what they do is not clarified, especially as the auxiliaries demonstrate a very specific skill. The reference to Dio is vague, 'sources such as Dio' implies there are other unnamed sources for the battle. The use of a source is no more than factual content.

The point about difference in armour is again unspecific, and not tied to the account as such, in the sense of how it made a difference to the effectiveness of the British resistance. The claim of Tacitus' account is clearly wrong, the attempt to evaluate is based on inadequate knowledge. It undermines the point being made. Without the detail of weapons and tactics, the further attempt to assess reliability is weakened. Sources need to be detailed for them to be effective in the assessment. The point about the Battle of the River Thames is valid but unsupported by any information, other than a general statement. It remains unclear precisely what the 'same thing' was, that happened at both battles. The concluding judgement has not been fully prepared for, it is not clear exactly what had been ineffective, other than the Britons lost.

The exemplar shows how the lack of good detail and a simple mistake over a source can affect the quality of the analysis. The candidate had ideas and the material to make a good argument and come to a substantiated judgement but lacks the precise knowledge to make it effective.



## Question 6\*

6\* How and why, in the period from the start of Agricola's governorship to the construction of Hadrian's Wall, did the Romans move the northern frontier of Britain so often?

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

A good understanding of the chronology of the period from AD 77/8 to AD 122 was essential for a successful response. The period is clearly identified in the question. The majority of candidates kept to the period and focused on the movement of the frontier. However, some candidates started as early as AD 43, or AD 60. Some recounted the difficulties in Wales in the 50s and 60s before the Silures and Brigantes were subdued by Cerialis and Frontinus in the 70s. This all takes place before Agricola's governorship. The suggestion was that the 'northern frontier' was moved due to the disturbances of the largely Southern tribes. The candidates seemed to view the Northern Frontier as the line below which the tribes were conquered or pacified. These responses tended to have limited knowledge of the events in the period specified.

Most responses began with the battle of Mons Graupius, ignoring much of Agricola's gradual move north. The Stanegate, as a creation of Agricola, was generally not mentioned at this point but later after his governorship. Responses relied on Tacitus' account of the battle and success. The evaluation varied with more successful responses questioned the numbers (accurately) and the portrait of Calgacus, as well as the location of the battle. Most felt Tacitus gave the motive for the move north as the desire for expansion, as he saw this as a good thing. Some felt it was more about glory and personal desire.

Almost all recognised Domitian's quick retreat, the nails at Inchtuthil being popular as evidence of a staged withdrawal rather than a forced one. Evidence of the forts at Dalwinton and Newstead were frequent in more detailed responses. They were usually treated briefly, with only a few giving details. The responses generally were aware of Domitian's financial problems and the issue on the Danube with Dacia. There was a need to move troops and save money. The lack of resources to be exploited in Caledonia was another reason given. Good use was made of Suetonius to support the views. Tacitus' view that it was Domitian's jealousy was assessed as unreliable and prejudiced by most.

The difficulties with the evidence for the period from AD84-AD122 were understood by most candidates. More successful responses had some evidence to use. The Vindolanda tablets on the troop numbers and the birthday party suggested generally peaceful existence. The Stanegate was normally introduced at this point to support the idea that this was the frontier. Good responses made as much of the sparse evidence as they could, offering some judgements on the reasons for the move back to that line. Further evidence of growing settlements was added to support the idea that there was a peaceful period.

Thoughtful responses supported this further with evidence of the increasing Romanisation of the Southern tribes. Tacitus *Agricola* 21 supported the suggestion that this encouraged the Tyne – Solway frontier.

Some responses made use of the material evidence from this period. Sabinus' tombstone was argued to suggest military problems in Britain. The inscription of Trajan at York indicated rebuilding of forts, suggesting a policy of consolidation. Successful responses managed to put together a coherent analysis of the fragmentary information to make judgements on the reason. Trajan was occupied in Dacia and was not prepared to make war on two fronts. Responses argued this was a policy of holding onto what was acquired. Candidates did very well in putting together sensible judgements on this period. It was interesting and pleasing to see some using non-prescribed material such as Pliny on the Caledonian forest or Fronto on the problems with the Britons

Responses were reasonably knowledgeable about Hadrian's Wall in terms of its purpose and the reasons for its establishment. The detail of the structure varies, more successful responses had precise examples of Milecastle 38 or Halton Chesters on the building and organisation. Nearly all responses used SHA to some degree as evidence of his aim of consolidation and secure frontiers. It also suggested a lack of control of the Britons and the need to separate tribes. Further evidence of other works in Germany were noted in some responses as support for his policy. There was no need to go further but some responses mentioned that the frontier was moved again briefly under Antoninus.

The governorship of Agricola (in part) and the purpose of Hadrian's Wall were well represented and generally sound. Other parts of this period were less successfully documented and developed.

### Misconception



Domitian withdrew the II Adiutrix from Britain, stationed at Chester; Valeria Victrix occupied Inchtuthil until being moved to Chester.

The IX Hispana legion was last recorded at York under Trajan; there is possible evidence that it was moved to Germany.



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