

**GCSE (9-1)**

**Examiners' report**

# **ANCIENT HISTORY**

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**J198**

For first teaching in 2017

**J198/01 Summer 2023 series**

# Contents

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Introduction .....            | 3  |
| Paper 1 series overview ..... | 4  |
| Section A overview .....      | 5  |
| Question 1 (a) .....          | 5  |
| Question 1 (b) .....          | 5  |
| Question 2 .....              | 5  |
| Question 3 .....              | 6  |
| Question 4 .....              | 6  |
| Question 5* .....             | 7  |
| Section B overview .....      | 8  |
| Question 6 (a) .....          | 8  |
| Question 6 (b) .....          | 8  |
| Question 6 (c) .....          | 8  |
| Question 7 .....              | 8  |
| Question 8 .....              | 9  |
| Question 9 .....              | 9  |
| Question 10* .....            | 9  |
| Section C overview .....      | 10 |
| Question 11 (a) .....         | 10 |
| Question 11 (b) .....         | 10 |
| Question 11 (c) .....         | 10 |
| Question 12 .....             | 11 |
| Question 13 .....             | 11 |
| Question 14 .....             | 12 |
| Question 15* .....            | 12 |
| Section D overview .....      | 13 |
| Question 16 (a) .....         | 13 |
| Question 16 (b) .....         | 13 |
| Question 16 (c) .....         | 13 |
| Question 17 .....             | 13 |
| Question 18 .....             | 14 |
| Question 19 .....             | 14 |
| Question 20* .....            | 14 |

## 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 1 series overview

This is the fourth series for the examination of this specification, and this is the second time that both the Period and Depth studies have been sat in the same paper, without a break. Candidates have continued to demonstrate an excellent level of engagement with the narrative element of the Persia period study. In comparison with previous series, in general, candidates are more confident with the nature of responses for different question types and understand how the assessment objectives are allocated. For the Persia period study, candidates are not expected to make judgements on the accuracy of the ancient sources or the passage on the paper. They are expected to draw on the first piece of stimulus material on the paper to respond to Questions 3 and 4.

The Alexander the Great depth study continues to be the most popular option on the paper, with a range of responses to all the questions.

| Candidates who did well on this paper generally:  | Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knew the key elements of the reigns of the Persian kings</li> <li>• knew what affected a source's accuracy</li> <li>• addressed all elements of a question</li> <li>• made the ancient sources the focus of their response</li> <li>• checked what the short answer questions were asking them to do.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• had not read the question carefully</li> <li>• were not looking at the utility and accuracy of the sources</li> <li>• as part of the depth study, were not confident on the nature of different types of sources.</li> </ul> |

## Section A overview

Candidates continue to really engage with the content of the Persia period study, understanding the nature of the different reigns of the kings. Less successful responses were able to engage with the source material and were able to draw out something from the passage on the paper. In comparison to previous series, there were more responses which were engaging with the questions and making greater links comparing the actions of the kings.

### Question 1 (a)

- 1 (a) Identify **two** parts of Cyrus' building complex at Pasargadae. [2]

Candidates were able to answer this question well although there was some confusion with Persepolis.

### Question 1 (b)

- (b) Name **two** of the kings and queens who Cyrus fought. [2]

Candidates were able to name a variety of kings. There were some responses which mentioned kings from the optional parts of the paper or other Achaemenid kings.

### Question 2

- 2 Outline the main preparations made by Xerxes for his invasion of Greece. [6]

Candidates answered this question well, with very few no responses. The most successful responses included references to the length of time Xerxes took, the approximate numbers of troops and from where, as well as his actions at the Hellespont and in Thrace. Some responses described the preparations through anecdotes or Xerxes' preparations for specific battles during his time in Greece.

#### Assessment for learning



To prepare students for this type of question, convert the points on the specification into the 6-mark format, for example, this question directly relates to this point from the specification: "the invasion of Greece, including Persian preparation". This could be used as a lesson starter for retrieval practice or a consolidation task as part of their revision process.

## Question 3

- 3 Using details from **Passage A** and your own knowledge, what can we learn about the reasons why Darius won the power struggle at the start of his reign? [10]

More successful responses included direct quotation from the passage and a direct comparison with another action that Darius made. The most successful directly addressed Darius' actions relating to Gaumata and chose examples from the beginning, middle and end of the passage in order to meet the level of descriptor of a 'wide range'. Less successful responses quoted from the passage and explained Darius' success without additional knowledge. Responses are not credited for discussing the reliability of the passage as an historical source.

## Question 4

- 4 Using details from **Passage A** and your own knowledge, explain why Darius was a more successful king than Cambyses. [15]

The most successful responses to this question covered the beginning, middle and end of the passage, making a direct comparison with an action by Cambyses, and an evaluation of that point in turn. The less successful responses made brief or no mention of the passage.

## Exemplar 1

We can see that Darius was more ~~successful~~ allowing of foreign religion than Cambyses. In the ~~BAA~~ Bisitun Inscription, Darius claims that "the temples which Gaumata had destroyed, I restored to the people." This shows that Darius valued religion and he wanted safe worship for his subjects. In return, this made Darius popular. Cambyses was far less respectful towards religions of his subjects. Cambyses killed the Apis bull, a manifestation of the Egyptian god Apis. This made ~~Egyptians~~ Cambyses far less popular with Egyptians as he had shown he did not care about their religion.

In this example, this extract from the response demonstrates all the assessment objectives. Assessment Objective 3 – direct quotation from the passage; Assessment Objective 1 – own knowledge, benefit of doubt was given to the manifestation of the Egyptian god Apis; Assessment Objective 2 – a direct comparison and evaluation of the two kings.

### Misconception



Cambyses' success in Egypt was important to Persia and it was a major victory due to the long-standing nature of the Pharaohs and the economic importance of the Nile. Candidates were frequently stating 'he only conquered Egypt'.

### Question 5\*

5\* 'The Persian Empire's strength was all due to the work of Cyrus.'

To what extent do you agree with this view?

[20]

( ) Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology [5]

The most successful responses defined the meaning of 'strength' and made direct comparisons between Cyrus and one or two other kings; responses did not have to cover all kings in order to be given Level 5. Less successful responses focused on the story of Cyrus' life and were not including the elements needed to be credited under the second assessment objective, which limited the levels that they could be given. A few responses evaluated the nature of the evidence, this was credited under the first assessment objective, candidates do not need to know about the nature of the sources for the period study section of this exam.

## Section B overview

This was the least popular option, and there was a clear division between very successful responses, and those who found it challenging.

### Question 6 (a)

6 (a) Identify how many years an ostracism lasted for. [1]

Responses were credited in numerical or word form.

#### Assessment for learning



Retrieval practice at the start of the lesson via low stakes quizzing would be useful to drill these quick 1-mark low tariff questions.

### Question 6 (b)

(b) Give **two** examples of the reforms of Cleisthenes. [2]

The most successful responses included specific details and were credited for their knowledge.

### Question 6 (c)

(c) Identify **two** reasons why the Athenian navy expanded after 483 BC. [2]

Responses demonstrated knowledge of a range of reasons.

### Question 7

7 What can we learn from **Passage B** about why the Athenians were proud of their democracy? [5]

The most successful responses covered at least three points from across the passage, explaining the quotation or very clear paraphrase.



## Question 8

- 8 Using details from **Passage B**, how accurate do you think Thucydides' description of Athenian democracy is? [5]

Responses were credited for their knowledge of who Thucydides was, less successful responses were unable to explain the nature of the source and how that might affect its accuracy. The most successful responses placed the passage within a context and were able to draw on specific points in the text which may or may not have impacted the accuracy.

### Misconception



Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.37 is part of a 'constructed' oration given by Pericles. Some responses were placing this in the context of Thucydides' own ideas rather than understanding that it is 'quotation', although it was an amalgam of ideas.

## Question 9

- 9 Explain how life in Athens changed under the rule of Peisistratus. [10]

Responses were able to give a broad range of changes that Peisistratus had brought in; the most successful were able to explain the change and then its impact on the daily life of the Athenians.

## Question 10\*

- 10\* 'The assassination of tyrants in both Athens and Samos shows that tyranny was not a popular form of government.'  
To what extent do you agree with this view?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as supporting your answer with your own knowledge. [20]

The most successful responses to this question addressed the nature of the assassinations themselves. Specifically placing the actions of the Tyrannicides in context of a love affair as well as comparing the accounts from the prescribed sources, and the removal of Polycrates through external plots. The inclusion of the Tyrannicides sculpture and its retrofitting onto the later concepts through democracy was credited, as was relevant discussion of the role of tyrants in Corinth. Less successful responses focused on the narrative elements and sources were named, without evaluation of their utility.

## Section C overview

Candidates for this option were confident on the role of women in Athens. The most successful responses were clear about how Pericles operated within this time period.

### Question 11 (a)

11 (a) Outline **three** features of the Parthenon.

[3]

Responses identified a range of features of the temple.

#### Misconception



The Parthenon and the Athenian Acropolis are not the same, the Parthenon is a temple on the Acropolis.

### Question 11 (b)

(b) Name the large class of slaves in Sparta.

[1]

Responses were clear here.

### Question 11 (c)

(c) Name the close friend of Pericles who was accused of stealing gold in 437 BC.

[1]

Most candidates did not correctly identify Pheidias.

#### Assessment for learning



A 'who's who' list or family tree for the 'characters' of Pericles' life to visualise their links with him, which can be used for 'quizzing' practice throughout the topic for the short answer questions is useful here.

## Question 12

12 What can we learn from **Passage C** about the Delian League?

[5]

As for Question 7, the most successful responses covered at least three points from across the passage, explaining the quotation or very clear paraphrase.

### Misconception



The Hellenic League, under Spartan hegemony, is not the same as the Delian League.

## Question 13

13 Using details from **Passage C**, how accurate do you think Thucydides' account of the Delian League is?

[5]

The more successful responses chose specific elements of the passage and highlighted their accuracy, with specific reference to Thucydides' own experience, specifically identifying him as a contemporary source and comparison with archaeological remains which support his claims, such as the tribute lists.

## Exemplar 2

Thucydides' account of the the Delian League would be quite accurate. Thucydides was an Athenian himself, despite being ostracised, and was a ~~cont~~ contemporary source. He also specialised in his writing about the Peloponnesian War, and its history, which would include the origins of the Delian League. There are also other sources that also reiterate what Thucydides writes about.

This response demonstrates an understanding of the relevant detail regarding Thucydides' general historical accuracy. This was given Level 2. In order to be given Level 3, a specific quotation from the source and comment on that in particular, for example, the response demonstrates a knowledge that there are other sources, if this has been directly linked to a quotation from the passage, for example the payment of tribute and the archaeological evidence of the tribute lists.

### Assessment for learning



When annotating the prescribed sources booklets, encourage students to write exactly where there is a comparison point to support or refute a claim made, and a link to the page reference in the sources booklet for their own notes as well.

## Question 14

14 Explain the significance of religion in Athenian life.

[10]

Responses approached this question predominantly in one of two ways, either focussing entirely on one aspect, e.g., the Panathenaia or thematically with the impact on religion in the city, both approaches were credited equally. The most successful gave a specific example and then explained it.

## Question 15\*

15\* 'The role of women in Athens was simply to be a wife and mother.'  
How far do you agree with this view?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as supporting your answer with your own knowledge.

[20]

The most successful responses addressed the lives of women beyond being a wife and mother. The discussion of the role of Aspasia produced very successful responses, especially demonstrating an understanding between an Athenian citizen and metic and the implications for their roles, as well as between hetaira and citizen. Less successful responses were focused on one particular element of the question, e.g., 'a wife'.

### Misconception



*Medea* by Euripides is a tragedy. *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes is a comedy. Xenophon is a philosopher and historian.

Pericles and Aspasia were not married.

## Section D overview

This continues to be the most popular option with approximately three quarters of candidates entering for this option. The essay question was tackled in a variety of ways, and marks were given for any appropriate interpretation of the wording. There was confusion between which battle was which, and candidates should be encouraged to understand the timeline of Alexander's progress through Persia.

### Question 16 (a)

16 (a) Name Alexander's father.

[1]

Responses which correctly identified Philip or Philip II/2<sup>nd</sup> were given the mark here.

### Question 16 (b)

(b) List **two** places Alexander's army captured after a siege.

[2]

The majority of responses included Tyre.

### Question 16 (c)

(c) Give **two** examples of Persian behaviour or customs that Alexander adopted.

[2]

The most successful responses gave brief detail of the behaviour or customs, i.e., 'Persian clothing/dress', not just 'clothing'.

#### Misconception



Although it is unclear what was specifically involved 'proskynesis' and 'obedience' are the same concept, only one was credited if both were written.

### Question 17

17 What can we learn from **Passage D** about Alexander's character?

[5]

As for Question 7 and Question 12, the most successful responses covered at least three points from across the passage, explaining the quotation or very clear paraphrase. The most common observation was 'outside the box thinking'.

## Question 18

**18** Using details from **Passage D**, how accurate do you think Arrian's account of this incident is? **[5]**

The most successful responses focused on Arrian's own uncertainty of the accounts, and therefore how accurate can he be, if he himself does not know. Responses which focused on the mention of Aristobulus and his relationship to Alexander were marked highly as well as responses which discussed the distance between Arrian's writing of the account and his attitude towards Alexander.

## Question 19

**19** Explain the main differences between the battles of Granicus and Gaugamela. **[10]**

The most successful responses placed the battles within the timeframe of Alexander's Persian campaign and the stakes for both Alexander and Darius, as well as the difference in Alexander's reaction to Parmenion and the terrain on which they were fought.

### Assessment for learning



Battles with similar names are very confusing. Encourage students to remember 'Granicus River'.

Knowing who is present at which battle via a sporting league table with the commanders as managers/captains can help with visualisation.

## Question 20\*

**20\*** 'The killing of Cleitus is the best event to give us different views of Alexander.'  
How far do you agree with this view?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as supporting your answer with your own knowledge. **[20]**

This question was approached in various ways, and marks were given to responses which approached either from the perspective of 'Plutarch and Arrian approach this event in different ways' or 'these are different ways Alexander is behaving at different points in his own views towards...'. Responses which focused on either were credited equally. The most successful responses were analysing the accuracy and utility of the ancient sources, demonstrating an in-depth knowledge of the differing accounts of the death of Cleitus and comparing them with the accounts of other events which have accounts in the prescribed sources such as the death of Hephaestion or the burning of Persepolis.

## Exemplar 3

The death of Cleitus does help to provide different opinions on Alexander. For example, Arrian says that Cleitus ~~insulted~~ got into a disagreement with Alexander because of Alexander's ~~former~~ adoption of Persian customs, saying that Alexander was becoming too "barbaric". This suggests that Alexander's men were ~~also~~ becoming increasingly concerned over Alexander's preference of ~~Persian~~ foreign customs ~~instead of~~ instead of Macedonian customs. In contrast, Plutarch says that Cleitus was angry over Alexander's ~~acceptance~~ encouragement of ~~the~~ people treating him like a god, as it was disrespectful. This suggests that Alexander was more arrogant and prideful as he compared himself to a god, a ~~very~~ sacrilegious thing to claim. In this way, Plutarch and Arrian provide different views on Alexander's character at the time during the death of Cleitus.

This paragraph from a very successful response demonstrates how candidates can embed their assessment of the sources. The paragraph starts with knowledge of the event from a specific source, an explanation of how this relates to the question, a comparison with another source's perspective, finally a concluding sentence linking back to the question.

## Assessment for learning



Comparison tables with similarities and differences between predominantly Plutarch and Arrian for events, as well as why there might be those differences, is a useful tool to focus on when preparing for this type of question.

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