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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

## Level 2 Classical Studies 2024

### 91203 Examine socio-political life in the classical world

Credits: Six

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Examine socio-political life in the classical world.	Examine, in-depth, socio-political life in the classical world.	Examine, with perception, socio-political life in the classical world.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

**You should attempt ONE of the questions in this booklet.**

If you need more room for any answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–11 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in the margins (// // //). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

**YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

Excellence

TOTAL 07

## Page 1

### INSTRUCTIONS

Answer ONE of the questions below with reference to a **classical civilisation**. This may include, but is not limited to, a city-state, republic, or empire.

You must answer using paragraphs.

### QUESTIONS (Choose ONE)

1. Explain the impact class and / or gender had on an individual's education.
2. In what ways did public and private religious observance reflect cultural identity?
3. Explain how class structure determined people's actions in a classical society.
4. Explain how authority was gained and / or maintained during a social and / or political conflict.

### SELECTED QUESTION

Copy and paste the question you have chosen into the space below.

4. Explain how authority was gained and / or maintained during a social and / or political conflict

### CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

The Roman Republic

### PLANNING

"When they had completed their military service I allotted them land"  
Caesar Augustus in Res Gestae

"Saturninus, a tribune of the plebs, proposed legislation to allow the distribution of new lands in Africa to the veterans of Gaius Marius"  
Victor Aurelius in Concerning Illustrious Men

"Six full legions"  
Pluto in Life of Sulla

"[Sulla] was the first dictator to exercise his power his harshness and cruelty"  
Dionysius in Roman Antiquities

"[Sulla] added 300 of Rome's best men to the list of senators"  
Appian in The Civil Wars

"Sullan proscription"  
Cicero in Letters to Atticus

Mary Beard in SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome, says he neutered the powers of the magistrates especially the Tribunes of the Plebs by removing their powers of veto and legislation proposition

## ANSWER

Type your answer in the space below. You should aim to write a concise answer of no more than 750–800 words. (The counter will change colour when you reach the recommended word count.) The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your answer.

Support your answer with primary-source evidence.

B I U

### Explain how authority was gained and / or maintained during a social and / or political conflict

#### **Intro:**

The conflict I have chosen is the period in Roman politics between 83 BC and 79 BC, I call this conflict the Greater Sullan Civil War. Authority was gained at first by Sulla personally and then later by those that were a part of the Optimate movement.

#### **Event:**

The Greater Sullan Civil War began in 83 BC through a dispute of control over the Mithridatic war. The Kingdom of Pontus (led by King Mithridates) invaded Roman Asia. Rome quickly declared war on Pontus and according to Appian in *The Mithridatic Wars* "the governorship of Asia and the Mithridatic War fell upon Lucius Cornelius Sulla". Pontus was a small Kingdom located in northern Anatolia on the south coast of the black sea, its armies did not compare to that of Rome's, all it had was the element of surprise. Gaius Marius was a Roman general he had fought by Lucius Sulla's side many times but was a political enemy of Sulla (Marius was a populares and Sulla was an optimate). Marius knew Rome would surely win the war and that it promised to be "easy and lucrative" (- Appian in *The Civil Wars*). He decided that he wanted this easy glory for himself so he pulled strings and payed bribes in the senate in an attempt to have the command turned over to him. Marius was successful as the senate informed Sulla he was to return home with his troops as Gaius Marius and his legions would be taking over. Sulla was not happy with the change in management and swiftly declared war on the senate and Gaius Marius, marching on Rome with his legions. In the following civil war (come to be known as Sulla's civil war) many were killed with the majority of them being populares. Gaius Marius was also killed along with his son of the same name. Immediately following the civil war, Sulla declared himself dictator and began an era of great political violence. This included both assassinations and executions which while both parties were guilty of these things, it mostly came from the Optimate side. The optimates during this period were likely guilty of what would now be called politicide or a political genocide. I would call this one single conflict as the great terror following the civil war is not much more than an extension of it. It was led by the same man, with the same goal, and was done back to back. I would say the conflict ended with Sulla's stepping down as dictator in 79 BC.

#### **Authority gained in the beginning:**

The first way authority was gained during the greater civil war was Sulla over his men in the beginning of the war against the senate. The Roman standard had always been that the distribution of riches gained from campaigns was managed by the commanding general. This was then made even more true through military land reform pushed for by Gaius Marius and the populares. According to Victor Aurelius in *Concerning Illustrious Men*, "Saturnius, a tribune of the plebs, proposed legislation to allow the distribution of new lands in Africa to the veterans of Gaius Marius". [While this quote is written in the late empire period, meaning I am a bit doubtful of its accuracy, this is the kind of legislation that the optimates would push and does line up well with the beginning of this style of land distribution]. This system of military rewards was desirable to Rome as they were struggling to develop agriculture within their society after the sacking of Italy by Carthage in the second Punic war. By having retired military veterans be the ones to have the land rather than the wealthy war investors who were normally given it, it was more likely that the land would be worked for agriculture as the veterans needed a way to make money after the military. Unfortunately this system had a side effect which was likely present before, was far more egregious now, it created loyalty to the general rather than the state as the general was the one that controlled the most wealth to give. This is extremely relevant for Sulla as he knew like Marius, the Mithridatic war was going to be both "easy and lucrative" and the flat lands just near the coast of the black sea promised both great views living conditions but also large and easy land to work. So when Sulla and his men were told to step away from the war, this was used to leverage the men into staying loyal. This was so successful to the point that when Sulla marched on Rome, declaring war on his home and the home of his men, he did so with "six full legions" at his back (according to Plutarch in *The Life of Sulla*).

#### **Authority gained in the middle of the civil war:**

The second way authority was gained during the civil war was Sulla's becoming dictator. The office of dictator was an old one dating back to the early republic period. It was often used with the senate declaring someone dictator to normally oversee consular elections in times of crisis or to manage the senate when consuls were unable (e.g. the first Punic war). It was also used to manage class conflict like the crisis of the orders. Sulla's becoming of dictator was unlike the dictators that came before him. Plutarch writes in his book *The Life of Sulla* that "Sulla declared himself dictator, reopening the office after a span of 120 years". This shows how unique Sulla's dictatorship was, not only because it was in a time when dictator was rarely needed but mainly because he declared himself dictator. Throughout the entire history of the role, the dictator had always been appointed by the senate to manage a crisis. This was not the case with Sulla, he levied his armies against the senate and declared himself dictator. His becoming dictator was not necessary to the current crisis as neither consuls had been killed or arrested. What this did do though was rise him to a level of authority not seen in 120 years. And even then they were pretty limited to the crisis they were managing and were expected to stand down as soon as the crisis ended, as Sulla did not have a crisis we was appointed to manage and rather justified it by claiming he was vaguely "restoring power to the senate", his authority as dictator was far greater than any that came before him. He would rule for 3 years through 3 consecutive terms. This was the greatest power grab and gaining of authority during the greater civil war and would go on to justify Sulla's actions during the civil war and the following terror.

**Authority gained in the terror period:**

The third way authority was gained was in the period directly following the civil war. This power was gained by Sulla through mass execution and assassination. This saw the deaths of Gaius Marius, his son of the same name, and many other optimates. Sulla's violence during this period is noted on by Dionysius, a Greek historian writing in the mid empire period, in his book *Roman Antiquities* in the passage "He [Sulla] was the first emperor to exercise his power with harshness and cruelty". While he does not go into details about the form of this violence, we can quite clearly see what kind by how others of the period speak about him. Cicero writing in the 30's BC in a letter to his friend Atticus (Published under *Letters to Atticus by Cicero*) in which he critiques the abuse of power done by the third triumvirate. He focuses on proscription which is a political assassination or execution along with the confiscation of their property for the benefit of the senate. Cicero describes these proscription as "Sullan Proscriptions" in reference to Lucius Sulla. We can see from this how notorious his proscriptions must have been if someone writing around 50 years after the fact is able to make casual reference to them. This large scale proscription campaign slaughtered populares senators who were Sulla's main political opposition.

**Authority maintained in Rome:**

Authority was maintained during the conflict through political and constitutional reform. The main thing was the expansion of the senate. According to Appian in the civil wars, "Sulla enrolled 300 of Rome's best men to the lists of senators". As Sulla was dictator he single handedly managed this process. While I am unable to find a list of the men he added to the list of senators, it is easy to assume that these men would have likely been majority if not entirely optimate. This is because Sulla has a past of violence against political opposition and it's unlikely he would add any more to the senate. We can see from sources around the period of the first triumvirate that the Roman senate was almost entirely Optimate dominated during the period following Sulla. This was not the only constitutional reform done by Sulla, according to Mary Beard in *SPQR: a History of Ancient Rome*, Sulla "neutered the magistrates" by removing many of their powers within the senate, this included the power of veto and legislation proposition from the Tribunes of the plebs. This meant that the Tribunes of the Plebs became nothing more than a signature on bills already passed by the senate. This helped centralise power within the Optimate movement as Tribunes of the Plebs were more often than not Populares, this is because Populares had always been more popular with plebeians because of their support for economic reform and debt cancellation. These reforms gave more authority to the Optimate political movement through neutering positions they were unlikely to get and enrolling 300 people who were likely majority Optimate to the senate. This not only created an optimate dominance over the senate but as Sulla was the head figure of the Optimates, it gave him even greater authority.

**Conclusion:**

To conclude, authority was gained during the greater Sullan civil war through the leveraging of wealth/land distribution to create loyalty for Sulla's revolt, Sulla declaring himself Dictator so push himself above the senate, and the wide scale murder of political opponents within the Roman senate. Authority was maintained during the conflict through political reform which centralised power within the Optimates.

1736 WORDS / 800 RECOMMENDED

## Excellence

**Subject:** Classical Studies

**Standard:** 91203

**Total score:** 07

Q	Grade score	Marker commentary
Four	E7	<p>The introduction is brief and focused on establishing the socio-political conflict and the groups that would gain authority during it. The majority of the response, aside from the first paragraph that sets the scene, is clearly and explicitly focused on authority gained or maintained during the conflict. Specific and relevant primary source evidence is consistently used throughout the response and a substantive proportion of this evidence is explained. This could be improved by ensuring evidence is not used to pad the narrative at times and is fully explained on a consistent basis. It is clear that some insight into the wider context is evident. For example, the reduction of the tribunes to tokenism, the discussion of the system of military rewards, or the discussion of norms around Roman's political appointments. This could be improved with consistently elaborating on this context, drawing more critical discussion of source evidence and its bias, or unpacking the cultural expectations surrounding the mos maiorum.</p>