

Candidate 2 evidence

Classical Studies Higher Resource Sheet			
Candidate Name		Scottish Candidate Number	
<p>Source 1 : “The consul welcomed the augury and declared that the gods had never more plainly manifested their presence in human affairs.” - Titus Livius (Livy) the history of Rome Book 10</p> <p>Source 2 : Cassius Dio in his History of Rome, book 39 “For when they read the Sibylline verses, they found written in them this very passage: “If the king of Egypt come requesting any aid, refuse him not friendship, nor yet succour him with any great force; else you shall have both toils and dangers.”</p> <p>Source 3 : Cornelius Tacitus wrote, “Thereupon Asinius Gallus proposed to consult the Sibylline books. Tiberius refused, veiling in obscurity the divine as well as the human.”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro - receive signs, impetravit/oblative, signpost. 2. Augury, Chickens, Pulcher lost the war, drowned, divine - groundhog. Chickens & augury were accessible if they had money. Done before anything important. 3. Entrails, Haruspices only 60, Etruscan origin and never Roman. , unofficial, food - dreams, divinely sent. Not part of state religion. Applied on dreams; morning or midnight, food disturbs dreams. Calpurnia (Caesar's wife) dreamt of his death. 4. Sibylline books, old woman and Tarquinius, in 55BC source 2 (Ptolemy), river Tiber & source 3, Emperor Tiberius - astrology & psychic readings. Books were in an accident in Jupiter's temple, re-made & then burned in 405 AD. National emergencies. 5. Conc - reliant, rich v poor, priests & bribes. Presets' words = a true testament of the gods. 			

Classics Assignment

The Romans relied heavily on divination as a way to receive advice & signs from the gods. There were two types of signs that could be received: Signa Impetrativa (signs asked for & then presumably answered) and Signa Oblativa (signs not asked for). Divination was used as a form of communication between humans & the gods with the middle person being a priest of some sort. Access to divination could vary between families due to wealth gaps. In this essay I will discuss the many different types of divination the Romans used, such as; augury, observation of bird feeding habits, entrails, the weather, dreams & the Sibylline books. I will also discuss how & why they were important to the Romans during their classical era.

Augury was one form of divination that was quite important in Rome. Augury is the study of flight paths & cries of birds which were interpreted as messages from the gods by a specially trained priest called an Augur. Romulus and Remus (the - who were the founders of Rome - were believed to have ~~been~~ used Augury to determine the location of Rome. * Therefore, the

Romans saw Augury as their divine right, given to them from the gods. This shows how intertwined Augury was with the Ancient Romans. Another form of divination ~~used~~ the Romans used was the observation of feeding habits of birds, or otherwise known as the Sacred Chickens of Rome. These chickens would be used to help make predictions or answer any questions. ~~Before a question~~ There were priests who managed the chickens called Pullarius. Before answering any questions, the chickens would be kept unfed for a few days and then would be let out to perform its act. If the chicken were to eat the food presented to them, the answer was essentially 'yes' or a positive sign but if the chicken refused to eat, it was a negative sign. In the past, the Politician Pulcher was in the midst of a ~~battle~~ ^{battle} where he decided to consult the ~~one~~ sacred chickens. However, the chickens refused to eat and instead Pulcher said "let them drink!" which resulted in the chickens drowning after being thrown into a lake. Pulcher then lost the war. The fact that the chickens were consulted for battle advice shows how highly regarded & relied on they were. Augury & the Sacred Chickens would have been quite

accessible but still only to ~~the~~ wealthy Roman families. These animals ~~was~~ could have been summoned to answer questions about marriage, business, or war which suggests that the Romans were not only reliant on the gods' guidance but also the ~~also~~ way their questions were answered. A modern day comparison to animal divination would be the groundhog animal. Groundhog originally started in Germany but ~~is~~ now is mainly celebrated in the United States & Canada. This tradition ~~was~~ is done to ~~determine~~ every ~~year~~ year on the second of February to determine whether winter will last another 6 weeks or spring will come. They can determine this by seeing if a shadow appears from the groundhog. ~~the~~

Haruspices were also an important part of Rome and their divination practices. ~~They~~ They were trained specialists in interpreting omens & signs from entrails or the weather. Weather divination would include the haruspice determining the direction of thunder and lightning to interpret a gods message. ~~But~~ Studying entrails was slightly more intricate as it would mean

examining parts of an animal after each sacrifice. After any sacrifice that took place, a haruspice was called upon to inspect the liver, lungs, heart & other organs for any anomalies which may show a sign from the gods. They were called for big sacrifices, for example, at festivals or state-run sacrifices or wealthy Roman families could hire a personal haruspice. This would create more of a wealth gap between poor & rich families as well as a gap between their relationship or access to the gods. There were only 60 haruspices at a time. ~~and~~ This could be because they were of an Etruscan origin and not a Roman tradition. The haruspices were ~~never fully~~ adopted by the Etruscans but were never officially a part of the Roman state since this form of divination was not 'demanded' by the gods. There was also no official priestly-hood attached to them. ~~or~~ ~~rather~~ However, we know this practice was still important to the Romans because it would be done at every sacrifice & they would be called upon time and time again. A weaker form of divination would have been the interpretation of dreams. Dream interpretation was

not the most relied on form of divination and there was a lot of debate as to where they would come from. Some Roman philosophers believed they came from Gaia, in charge of Earth, others thought they came from Pan, the god of nature. Apollonius believed that 'true' dreams only occurred in the morning or between the hours of 12am to 3am. He believed this to be true because "food disturbs dreams". There is the story of Julius Caesar's wife, Calpurnia, dreaming of his death, however he ignored this omen and was ~~assassinated~~ assassinated later that day. This shows how dreams were not seen as completely reliable, much like today. Even today, dreams are not seen as a reliable way to predict things or even seen as divinely sent. Nowadays, there are many different explanations for why we dream, such as the dreams being a reflection of one's subconscious, however for the Romans, they would still believe all their dreams were sent to them by a god.

The most important form of divination for the Romans would have been the Sibylline Books. These books were consulted during national emergencies and for state use only. They were

believed to hold a great amount of knowledge. The books were guarded constantly by 15 men called the Quindecimviri who spent their lifetime studying & protecting the books. An old woman was supposedly offering the Emperor Tarquinus the books at a high price. Originally, the emperor refused but after discussing with other augurs & haruspex, he took the books. The sibylline books were almost undoubtedly followed, ~~for~~ for example, in 55 BC the Romans consulted the books in regards to their stance in Egypt with ~~the~~ Ptolemy. ~~Cassius Dio~~ wrote in his 'History of Rome' "For when they read the Sibylline verses, they found written to them this very passage: Cassius Dio recorded that when they consulted the sibylline books, this is what they read: "If the king of Egypt come requesting any aid, refuse him not friendship [...] else you shall have both tails and dangers." This would result in not helping the king. At one point, the books were caught in an accidental fire and burned away in Jupiters Temple. However, they were re-made before they were again burned in 405 AD. ~~The~~ In some cases the books were not always followed or even consulted.

When the River Tiber dried up, the Emperor Tiberius refused to consult the divine books. Cornelius Tacitus wrote of the incident, "Thereupon Asinius Gallus proposed to consult the Sibylline books. Tiberius refused, veiling in obscurity the divine as well as the human."

A modern day comparison to the Sibylline books could be the use of astrology or psychic readings.

In today's era, in newspapers or magazines there is always a small section dedicated to telling astrological predictions for the zodiac signs. There is a small community of people who will believe what these predictions have to say and follow it blindly, ~~the~~ similar to how the Romans followed the Sibylline books.

In conclusion, we can see how reliant & dependant the Romans were on divination. No important event or decision would be done without asking for signs from the gods, even for simpler decisions like marriage or business decisions. Although, there would be a difference in accessibility to divinations between the poor and the rich since wealthier families had the option to hire priests or haruspices whilst poorer families couldn't afford to. During that time period, a priests'

would be seen as a true testament of the gods' will, therefore priests would have been highly respected and taken very seriously. There is also the possibility they were influenced by politicians who could bribe priests to influence the gods' will to everyone else.

* Livy, on the History of Rome, wrote that "the consul welcomed augury and declared that the gods had never more plainly manifested their presence in human affairs."