



## Internal assessment cover sheet: Classical languages (HL & SL)

Arrival date: 20 April / 20 October

Session: May 2013

- Please retain a copy of this form either using the **Save As** function or by printing a copy.
- Complete this form in the working language of your school (English, French or Spanish).
- Complete one copy of this form to accompany each piece of work submitted.
- After completing this form it must be printed and then signed by the teacher and candidate to confirm the authenticity of the work.

Subject: Latin

Level: HL

Candidate name:

Candidate session number:

Title of work:

Was Asclepius well regarded in the Roman world ?

Please select the appropriate option:

A: Research dossier ☒

B: Oral presentation ☐

C: Composition ☐

Number of words (options A and C only): 1200

### Assessment criteria:

(Please insert marks using whole numbers only)

	A (0-10)	B (0-10)	C (0-10)	Total (0-30)
Teacher	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>22</u>
Moderator				
Senior moderator				

General comments:

has chosen an interesting and ambitious topic and she has selected a wide range of interesting sources. Annotations demonstrate a good knowledge of the topic and understanding of the relevance and importance of the selected sources. She has organised her material with a logical flow of ideas and arguments are generally focused and pertinent.

**Candidate declaration:** I confirm that this is my own work and is the final version. I have acknowledged each use of the words or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

Candidate's signature

**Teacher declaration:** I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the material submitted is the authentic work of the candidate.

Teacher's name:

## Was Asclepius well-regarded in the Roman World?

Word Count: 1200

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## Introduction

In the Greco-Roman world, Asclepius was the god of healing, although he was not born a god but deified after death. His use of his ability manifested itself in the form of Asclepions, (healing temples). An Asclepion would be visited either by someone who was unwell seeking a remedy for their affliction or by invalids hoping to be healed. Once there, they would spend one night in the sanctuary in the Asclepion and be visited by Asclepius in a dream where Asclepius would either perform the healing directly or instruct the patient on how to help themselves get better. In this research dossier I will examine whether Asclepius and his practices were well-regarded in the Roman world.

### Source I: Statue of Asclepius (AD160, Asclepion of Epidauros)

The presentation of Asclepius as having a youthful, muscular body shows respect and reverence for the god – he is shown as powerful not decrepit. The snake is a symbol of rejuvenation and the depiction of it here suggests Asclepius' healing power – the process of recovering from illness was seen as almost becoming young again.

This statue was found at Epidauros, Northern Greece, showing that his cult was present in the wider Roman world.



Pentelic marble, Roman copy AD160 of a 4th-century BC Greek original

## Source II: Mosaic of Asclepius arriving at Kos (C.2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> AD, Kos Island)



Asclepius disembarking

Hippocrates greeting Asclepius

An islander observing

In this mosaic Asclepius is presented as mortal, contrasting to Source I. This perhaps heightens his abilities – he was a mortal who could perform remarkable actions – thereby suggesting that he was regarded as someone special and to be valued above others.

This mosaic is a floor decoration found in a house on the island, showing that it is quite large. This domestic location implies that Asclepius was greatly respected, at least by this house, since there was a mosaic of him in the home. Being on the floor it would be clearly visible to all members of the household and any visitors suggesting that the house owner wanted it to be known that Asclepius was important to them. However, the mosaic is only decoration and not a shrine, suggesting a more superficial appreciation for Asclepius rather than an avid devotion.

## Source III: Reverse of a bronze medallion of Antoninus Pius (AD138 - AD161, Rome)

Asclepius in the form of a snake



The River Tiber

Medallions would have been awarded for e.g. military or academic prowess so the fact that the story of Asclepius is depicted on one suggests that it was considered an important enough event to be given as a prize. It may also simply be an illustration of an historical event. If given in a military context it could be as a sort of good luck charm whereby the receiver was protected against illness by the presence of Asclepius (on the medallion).

Tiber welcomes Asclepius in the form of snake

Source IV: Account of the Cult of Asclepius coming to Rome (Valerius Maximus C.1<sup>st</sup> AD *Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilium*)

1.8.2 Sed ut ceterorum quoque deorum propensum huic urbi numen exequamur, *triennio continuo* uexata *pestilentia* ciuitas nostra, cum finem tanti et tam diutini mali neque *diuina misericordia* neque *humano auxilio* inponi uideret, *cura* sacerdotum *inspectis Sibyllinis libris* animaduertit non aliter pristinam recuperari salubritatem posse quam si *ab Epidauro Aesculapius esset accersitus*. itaque eo legatis missis unicam fatalis remedii opem *auctoritate* sua, quae iam in terris erat *amplissima*, impetraturam se credidit ... si quidem is anguis, quem Epidauri raro, sed numquam sine magno ipsorum bono uisum in modum Aesculapii uenerati fuerant

But let us continue with other gods who also favoured this city with their divine power. Our citizens had been devastated by a *plague* for *three years in a row*, and we saw that neither *divine mercy* nor *human devices* would put an end to this great and lasting misfortune. But by *carefully inspecting the Sibylline Books*, the priests discovered that we could not recover our health unless *Asclepius were brought from Epidauros*. Since this was the only remedy that was destined to help us, we sent envoys there, confident that our request would be granted since our *prestige* was already *very great* throughout the world ... There is a snake that the Epidaurians rarely saw, but whenever they did, it always brought some great blessing upon them and they worshipped as a form of Asclepius.

This account suggests that Asclepius was considered important enough, and successful enough in his healing ability, not only to be sought out in a time of crisis, even if it was by divine instruction, but to also have an Asclepion established in Rome. This passage has a tone of superiority as shown by *auctoritate amplissima* suggesting the pride of the Roman people and a want to only have the best. Valerius Maximus writes that a terrible plague ravaged Rome for three years, *triennio*, which would have put enormous pressure on the city – there would have been mass death that could have led to further disease. Here, Asclepius was sought in a time of desperate need when all other options had been exhausted, suggesting he is seen as a saviour and therefore a necessary part of recovery. The Sibylline Books, *Sibyllinis libris*, were a collection of prophecies purchased from a sibyl by Tarquinius Superbus, the last king of Rome, that were consulted at times of great crisis.

## Source V: Consecration of Shrines in Rome to Asclepius (Ovid 43BC – AD17, *Fasti*)

1.289:

Quod tamen ex *ipsis* licuit mihi discere *fastis*,  
*sacravere* patres hac *duo templa* die.  
accepit *Phoebo* nymphaque Coronide *natum*  
insula, dividua quam premit amnis aqua.

Q1

As I was allowed to learn from the *Fasti (Calendar) themselves*, the Fathers [of Rome] *consecrated two shrines* today [January 1st]. The *son [Asklepios] of Phoebus* [Apollon] and of Nympha Coronis settled on the island which the split river [Tiber] hugs.

Q1

The consecration of two shrines to Asclepius shows that he was considered worthy enough to have his own places in which he could be worshipped.  
The *Fasti* was a poem of religious theme, explaining the origin of Roman holidays. The fact that this occasion was deemed important enough by Ovid to be included in his poem suggests the importance of and respect held for the god to which the shrines were dedicated.

KU

## Source VI: Worship of Asclepius (Cicero 106BC – 43BC, *De Natura Deorum*)

[45] Quid Apollinem, Vulcanum, Mercurium, ceteros deos esse dices, de Hercule, Aesculapio, Libero, Castore, Polluce dubitabis? At hi quidem coluntur aequae atque illi, apud quosdam etiam multo magis. Ergo *hi dei sunt habendi* mortalibus nati matribus.

Q1

3. 18:

If you call *Apollo, Vulcan, Mercury and the rest gods*, will you have doubts about *Hercules, Asclepius, Liber [Dionysos], Castor and Pollux [the Dioskouroi]*? But these are worshipped just as much as those, and indeed in some places very much more than they. Are we then to *deem these gods*, the sons of mortal mothers?

Q1

Asclepius was only semi-divine (his father was Apollo) but in this account there is shown a want to deem him a god, suggesting that Asclepius was valued as equal to those whose divinity could not be questioned and worshipped to the same degree.

CC

### Source VII: Votive Offering (Leg) (200BC – AD200, Rome)



Clay-baked Leg

Votive offerings of the body part that had been healed, here a leg, were given to Asclepius as thanks for being healed. The giving of one suggests a reverence for Asclepius and highlights the two-way relationship between the gods and mortals – that a person had to show thanks for divine help in order to ensure that they may be helped again in the future.

### Source VIII: Votive Offering (Ear) (C.2<sup>nd</sup> AD, Pergamum)

Include inscription and details about Asclepius' association with Pergamum



Gold ear

Inscription: *To Asclepius, saviour, from Flavia Secunda*

The fact that this is a gold votive offering is significant because metal was precious and more likely to be used to make things of practical use, such as a bowl, or something that could be enjoyed in the home, like a statuette. Therefore, devoting a golden object to a god suggests that this god was held in high esteem and considered worthy of devotion.

Both Source VII and VIII are votive offerings. However, they were discovered in different locations – the leg in Rome and the ear in Pergamum, modern day Turkey. This shows that the worship of Asclepius extended beyond the capital into the wider Roman world.



## Source IX: Deification of Asclepius (Ovid 43BC – AD17, *Metamorphoses*)

2.642:

toto [que] *salutifer* orbi  
cresce, puer! [dixit;] tibi se mortalia saepe  
corpora debebunt, animas tibi *reddere ademptas*  
fas erit, idque semel dis indignantibus ausus  
posse dare hoc iterum flamma prohibebere avita, *Q1*  
*eque deo corpus fies exsanguis deusque,*  
*qui modo corpus eras, et bis tua fata novabis.*

Grow and thrive, child, *bringer of health* to all the world [Asclepius]! Human beings will often be in your debt, and you will have the right to *restore the dead*. But if ever it is done regardless of the god's [Jupiter's] displeasure you will be stopped, by the flame of your grandfather's lightning bolt, from doing so again. *From a god you will turn to a bloodless corpse, and then to a god who was a corpse, and so twice renew your fate.* *Q1*

✓ In this extract, Asclepius is shown as someone hugely important – he is described as a *salutifer* which suggests the extent of his healing powers. It is also within his ability to restore the dead. This shows that he had extraordinary power and authority for one who was not one of the twelve Olympian gods, and so suggests that he was a vital part of Roman divinity. The final couplet (*eque ... novabis*) shows not only that Asclepius was deemed worthy to become a god but also that he was the ideal person to have the power to bring people back to life, given that he himself knew what it was like to die. Like Source V this extract is from one of Ovid's poems, which could either mean that the prophecy was important enough to be recorded or it could just reflect Ovid's personal opinion towards Asclepius.

## Source X: Asclepions and Slaves (Suetonius AD69 – AD130, *Vita Divus Claudius*)

25.2: Cum quidam aegra et adfecta mancipia in insulam Aesculapi *taedio medendi exponerent, omnes qui exponerentur liberos esse sanxit, nec redire in dicionem domini, si conualuissent*; quod si quis necare quem mallet quam exponere, caedis crimine teneri. Q1

When certain men were exposing their sick and worn out slaves on the Island of Aesculapius [In the Tiber at Rome, so-called from its Temple of Aesculapius] *because of the trouble of treating them, Claudius decreed that all such slaves were free, and that if they recovered, they should not return to the control of their master*; but if anyone preferred to kill such a slave rather than to abandon him, he was liable to the charge of murder. Q1

CC This account suggests that the Asclepions were not so well regarded since they are described as a place to put slaves when their care became too tedious. This suggests the position in which slaves were held – that they were perhaps not very important or that it was not worth trying to treat them as a replacement could easily be found. The Asclepions were not seen as places of healing but as a useful way to get rid of unwanted slaves.

Suetonius wrote “The Twelve Caesars” during the reign of Hadrian and therefore after the death of his subjects. This reduces the reliability of his writing because he would have relied on the knowledge of others or historical accounts. However, this is a historical account, thus making it more reliable than a fictional story.

## Conclusion

LE Overall, Asclepius was well-regarded not just in Rome, but throughout the Roman world as well. Evidence of worship, perhaps as votive offerings or consecration of shrines, can be seen throughout the domain of the Romans. However, Asclepius was not esteemed by all as some saw his Asclepions as places for unwanted slaves rather than healing.

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*Votive Offering – Clay-Baked Leg*