**Ancient History exam sources**

**FIA1, 2025**

**Annotation of the sources given with consideration of what is said about the subject’s archaeological integrity, posterity, as well as the credibility and reliability of each source.**

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| **Source 1:** An extract from Heinrich Schliemann’s personal narrative, ‘Troy and its Remains’, 1875.  “In excavating this wall further and directly by the side of the palace of King Priam, I came upon a large copper article[[1]](#footnote-30726) of the most remarkable form, which attracted my attention all the more as I thought I saw gold behind it. On the top of this copper article lay a stratum[[2]](#footnote-3759) of red and calcined ruins, from 4 ¾ to 5 ¼ feet thick, as hard as stone, and above this again lay the above-mentioned wall of fortification[[3]](#footnote-1) (6 feet broad and 20 feet high) which was built of large stones and earth, and must have belonged to an early date after the destruction of Troy. In order to withdraw the Treasure from the greed of my workmen, and to save it for archaeology, I had to be most expeditious, and although it was not yet time for breakfast, I immediately had “*padïos”* called. This is a word of uncertain derivation, which has passed over into Turkish, as is here employed in place of *àváπaυσις,* or time for rest. While the men were eating and resting, I cut out the Treasure with a large knife, which it was impossible to do without the very greatest exertion and the most fearful risk of my life, for the great fortification-wall, beneath which I had to dig, threatened every moment to fall down upon me. But the sight of so many objects, every one of which is of inestimable value to archaeology, made me foolhardy, and I never thought of any danger. It would, however, have been impossible for me to have removed the Treasure without the help of my dear wife, who stood by me ready to pack the things which I cut out in her shawl to carry them away.”  **Context Statement:** In this narrative, Schliemann describes what he believes to be his discovery of the famous treasures of Priam, a cache (hoard, collection) of gold and other artefacts from the Bronze Age. The discovery occurred in May 1837 and is today attributed to both Schliemann and Frank Calvert. Schliemann smuggled the treasures out of Anatolia and the then Ottoman government revoked his permission to dig and sued him for its share of the gold. Schliemann went on to [Mycenae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mycenae) but later traded some treasures to the Ottoman government in exchange for permission to dig again at Troy.  **Reference**: Schliemann, Heinrich (1875), Troy and its remains; a Narrative of Researches and Discoveries  made on the Site of Ilium and in the Trojan Plain. [online] [www.googleusercontent.com](http://www.googleusercontent.com) |

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| **Source 2:** Extract from The Changing Role of Archaeologists  “One of the most ruthless collectors of the last century was Giovanni Belzoni, an Italian, working in Egypt for the British consul. Belzoni smashed his way into Egyptian tombs, removed all the objects that could be sold, including some remarkable mummies and abandoned or destroyed the rest. Belzoni’s own account of how he destroyed a tomb shows what a callous[[4]](#footnote-25842) collector he was: “When my weight bore on the mummy of an Egyptian, it crushed like a bandbox[[5]](#footnote-10086). I sank altogether amongst the broken mummies with a crash of bones, rags and wooden cases… I could not avoid being covered with legs, arms and heads rolling above…”  Another famous antiquarian was Heinrich Schliemann, a German businessman who dreamed of discovering the ancient city of Troy in Asia Minor. He began digging on a hill called Hissarlik. He hired over eighty workers and stood over them with a pistol in his belt and a riding whip in his hand. He ordered a shaft be dug straight down through the middle of the mound. Deeper and deeper he sank the shaft, throwing aside dirt, broken pieces of pottery and metal objects. Recklessly he rolled away stone boulders that had been the foundation walls and ripped away crumbling bricks. He then came across a layer rich in weapons and gold jewellery. He announced to the world that he had discovered the Troy described in Homer’s poem ‘The Iliad’.”  **Context Statement:** In the past, archaeologists (then known as antiquarians) were considered to be ‘treasure hunters’ who were driven by self-interest and ruthless in their quest for objects of value. In many cases they kept no records of their excavations.  **Reference:** The Changing Role of Archaeologists: Booklet 1: Archaeology |

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| **Source 3:** Excerpt from Cable News Network (CNN) online news article  “CNN - A new theory about the iconic Venus figurines has suggested that the sculptures represent how climate change affected humans over 30,000 years ago.  The Venus figurines are statuettes depicting obese women that, up until now, were thought to have been associated with fertility and beauty. A recent study published in “Obesity” has suggested instead that the figurines are totems of survival in extreme conditions.  Unlike the challenges of global warming people face today, humans 38,000 to 14,000 years ago struggled with colder temperatures due to advancing glaciers. This made it harder for people to meet their nutritional needs, and population sizes began to dwindle, according to the study.  Fat is a form of stored energy, said study author Dr. Richard Johnson, Tomas Berl professor of medicine at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, and that fat can be lifesaving when food is not available, especially to pregnant women.  “Our studies suggest these figurines did not represent sexual totems, or a representation of male desire, but rather as a means for providing strength to motherhood even in the most adverse situations,” Johnson said.”  **Context Statement**: A Venus figurine is any Upper Palaeolithic statue portraying a woman, usually carved in the round. Cable News Network (CNN) is a multinational news organization operating, most notably, a website and TV channel headquartered in Atlanta, USA.  **Reference:** CNN, M. M. (2020, December 22). Stone Age Venus figurines were totems of survival, not sex, study suggests. CNN. https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/venus-figurines-theory-scn/index.html |

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| **Source 4:** Ian Hodder on History/Memory Houses at Çatalhöyük  “There is [also] much evidence at the site for the circulation of human body parts, including skulls and mandibles[[6]](#footnote-8586) of men and women that were removed, circulated and deposited (for example in other graves or in foundation pits for support posts in buildings). Since some buildings have up to 62 burials while others have few or none, it seems likely that the houses with many burials acted as preferential burial locations for the inhabitants of other buildings…  Houses with many burials may have been important in establishing corporate relations beyond the individual house. I argued in 2006 that one function of the construction of histories may have been to create genealogical links to ancestors buried beneath floors. But… [the] dental morphology[[7]](#footnote-4235) of the human remains (Pilloud and Larsen 2011) from Çatalhöyük show that biological affinity played only a minor role in interment location. To some degree those that were buried in houses were ‘practical’ rather than biological kin. The people buried in a particular building may have included adoptive, foster or fictive kin held together by memory and history making.  It is also possible that those buried in a building did not live within the ‘house’ of that building: it is possible that burial location was part of the negotiation of social and economic relations between households after the death of one of its members. On the other hand, the evidence for some degree of distinct diets associated with those buried in buildings (Pearson 2013) at least suggests that the group that ate together also was buried together.”  **Context Statement:** Ian Hodder is a British archaeologist and pioneer of [postprocessualist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-processual_archaeology" \o "Post-processual archaeology) theory in [archaeology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaeology) From 1993 - 2018, Hodder and an international team of archaeologists carried out new research and excavations of the 9,000-year-old [Neolithic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neolithic) site of [Çatalhöyük](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%87atalh%C3%B6y%C3%BCk" \o "Çatalhöyük) in central [Anatolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anatolia).  **Reference:** Project, Ç. R. (n.d.). Çatalhöyük Research Project. Çatalhöyük Research Project. <https://www.catalhoyuk.com/> |

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| **Source 5:** Extract from an online Article written by Dr Tiffany Jenkins called *Who Owns Human*  *Remains?* (2003)  Old bones, teeth and hair are essential for our understanding of human history, health and disease. Yet over the last decade this important material has been sent from museum research laboratories in America, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and some European countries to the place of origin for reburial, effectively destroying the evidence they hold.  British museums have been a refuge for international scientists studying the cadavers[[8]](#footnote-13815) still above ground. This is about to change. A working group appointed by the British government has issued a report recommending the law is changed to make it possible for museums and educational institutions to release remains. It suggests that in the name of ‘respecting other beliefs’ these institutions should be ‘empowered to relinquish human remains’ and that a panel of ‘independent experts’ is set up to mediate the cases for return.  Around 132 British collections hold human remains that amount to at least 61,000 items. Research on these has shed light on large-scale patterns of human evolution, adaptation, migration and historical contact. Demographic studies have explored lifestyle, diet and the impact of the environment on the body. Studies of osteoporosis, breast cancer and other illnesses have also benefited. Most recently DNA studies have begun to reveal further information, and will continue to do so…  Over half of the collection is from the British Isles. If the other remains are returned this selective reburial will compromise and bias the global sample. The collection of 400 (Australian) Aboriginals, for example, is under threat. The National History Museum’s director, Sir Neil Chambers explains: ‘It would be a great loss. As they are part of the human community these remains are an essential component to understanding the origin of human variety and our diverse abilities in combating disease.’…  There has been a brutal impact upon collections. Backed by government, museums have sent back vital material to be covered in soil. Bill Billick from the Repatriation Office at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC told me that, ‘to date we have sent back 3,300 human remains and 87,000 objects.’ These objects are ‘associated’ with the remains, probably funerary items. 1,500 remains have been offered by the Smithsonian but are unclaimed. Once offered, even if unwanted, researchers are forbidden from working on them without permission from the tribe.  **Context Statement**: The author, Dr Tiffany Jenkins, is an Honorary Fellow in Department of Art History at the University of Edinburgh and a former visiting fellow in the Department of Law at the London School of Economics. She is the author of the book, ‘Keeping Their Marbles: How Treasures of the Past Ended Up in Museums… and Why They Should Stay There’, 2016.  **Reference:** Jenkins, Tiffany 2003, Who owns human remains? (2025). OpenDemocracy. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/article_1623jsp/> |

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| **Source 6:** Excerpt from a chapter by George Nicholas and Claire Smith (2020)  “The antiquities market has always been dependent on the looting of archaeological sites worldwide, most often burial grounds. The image of over 650 exposed burials at Slack Farm, Kentucky in 1987 remains etched into the memory of many North American archaeologists. Throushout the American Southwest, artefact hunting has often targeted burials as a source of highly desired (and saleable) ancient pottery (such as Mimbres[[9]](#footnote-4387)) and other items, as is the case with tomb robbing elsewhere in the world.  Even more egregious[[10]](#footnote-2) has been the collection of body parts, whether as war trophies or ‘ehtnographic[[11]](#footnote-3) specimines’, including the heads, skulls and scalps of indigenous peples from battleground and burrials – practices that cause severe harm to descendant communities (Colwell 2017). While especially common in the nineteenth century (for examble, there was a considerable market in the Māori mokomakai [tattooed heads]), it is only recently that eBay and other online markets have stopped such sales, though they still continue elsewhere (Cumback 2018).  In other contexts, Indigenous peoples consider blood, hair and other body elements, including DNA, to be no different from an individual. For example, in the Māori worldview, Durie (2014, 1141) notes that ‘people are vulnerable if their body parts, including fluids, fall into malicious[[12]](#footnote-4) hands’. Underlying that fear is a widespread conviction that the mistreatment of body parts, including even a human shadow, can result in mental or physical harm to an individual. This contributes to concerns expressed by Indigenous peoples worldwide about bio-cultural research done by archaeologists, geneticists and others, and the consequences thereof (Kowal et al. 2013).  … The procurement and sale of sacred objects is no less harmful. In Australia, sacred items such as tjuringa, cyclons and bullroarers are readily found in online auctions and other venues. Despite protests, there continues to be a market for these, facilitated by internet sales. What is less apparent is that some anthropologists and scholars have caused harm by collecting such items, with or without permission. For example, Theodore Strehlow, who grew up among Arrernte in central Australia, was entrusted with the songs and ceremonies associated with particular Dreaming locales, and with sacred objects associated with them. He later felt that the elders no longer possessed the requisite knowledge and refused to return these items to those who, in his view, had become the outsiders to Arrernte culture (cox 2018; Morton 2018).”    **Context Statement:** In their 2020 text, the authors discuss the problematic nature of ‘heritage’, focussing on ongoing problems in archaeology and collections in Australia, Canada and the USA.  **Reference:** George Nicholas and Claire Smith (2020).Considering the denigration and destruction of  Indigenous heritage as violence. [online] Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv13xpsfp.14> |

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| **Source 7: Extract from a lecture by Anne De Villiers at the University of Melbourne in 2018**  Currently, significant numbers of Indigenous Ancestral Remains and cultural material are held in collecting institutions all over the world. The majority of these collections were collected without consent and furthermore, were removed from contextual Indigenous knowledge, to be replaced with the colonisers’ interpretation.  Hence, as Nathan “Mudyi” Sentance, wrote recently: My ancestors are in these memory institutions, but their voices are missing from the words written, the art created and the cultural objects taken. All of their cultural knowledge and their history is recorded and interpreted through the colonisers’ lens. We are part of the memory conveyed by galleries, libraries, archives and museums, but we have had no say or agency in construction of it… Many institutions have for decades obstinately refused to return them. Precious little diplomatic effort or public financial resource has been applied to convince these institutions to do otherwise. – Paul Daley, 2017  The repatriation of a community’s Ancestral Remains is often a long, emotionally exhausting, painstaking and arduous process. However, a community’s repatriation efforts are fuelled by cultural customs which dictate that Ancestors aren’t at rest until they have been appropriately laid to rest on their own country.  **Context Statement:** Anne De Villiers is a Research Archivist at the Scholarship Research Centre at the University of Melbourne. She is a project manager for the ‘Protocol for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Content’ and the ARC Linkage Project - 'Return, reconcile, renew: understanding the history, effects and opportunities of repatriation and building an evidence base for the future'  **Reference:** Anne de Villiers, June 18 2018, Melbourne University |

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| **Source 8: Fiorelli’s casts**    **Context Statement:** In 1870 archaeologist [Giuseppe Fiorelli](http://www.pompeiin.com/en/Giuseppe_Fiorelli.html) used a technique based on filling the cavities generated with liquid plaster where the corpses had decomposed, in order to produce casts of the Pompeiian victims. Once the plaster had hardened, the surrounding soil was removed and the cast was brought to light.  During the excavations in Pompeii, the remains of over one thousand victims of the 79 AD eruption have been found. During the first phase of the eruption, those who hadn’t left the city in time were trapped in their homes or shelters, buried by a shower of pumice stones and lapilli or killed by the roofs and walls collapsing under the weight of falling volcanic debris, reaching about three metres in height. Of these victims, only the bones have been found… Thanks to the method perfected by Giuseppe Fiorelli, since 1863 a little over a hundred casts have been made.  **Reference:** The Casts. (n.d.). Pompeii Sites. https://pompeiisites.org/en/pompeii-map/analysis/the-casts/ |

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| **Source 9: Excerpts from Pliny the Younger’s letters**  From letter 1:  My dear Tacitus,  You ask me to write you something about the death of my uncle so that the account you transmit to posterity is as reliable as possible. I am grateful to you, for I see that his death will be remembered forever if you treat it [sc. in your Histories]. He perished in a devastation of the loveliest of lands, in a memorable disaster shared by peoples and cities…  From letter 2:  … My mother begged me to leave her and escape as best I could, but I took her hand and made her hurry along with me. Ash was already falling by now, but not very thickly. Then I turned around and saw a thick black cloud advancing over the land behind us like a flood. "Let us leave the road while we can still see", I said, "or we will be knocked down and trampled by the crowd". We had hardly sat down to rest when the darkness spread over us. But it was not the darkness of a moonless or cloudy night, but it was just as if the lamps had been put out in a completely closed room.  We could hear women shrieking, children crying and men shouting. Some were calling for their parents, their children, or their wives, and trying to recognize them by their voices. Some people were so frightened of dying that they actually prayed for death. Many begged for the help of the gods, but even more imagined that there were no gods left and that the last eternal night had fallen on the world. There were also those who added to our real perils by inventing fictitious dangers. Some claimed that part of Misenum had collapsed or that another part was on fire. It was untrue, but they could always find somebody to believe them.  **Context Statement:** Some 25 years after the tragedy at Pompeii, Pliny the Younger described events in two letters to his friend, historian Tacitus.  **Reference:** SIO15: 79 A.D. Eruption at Mt. Vesuvius. (2001). Ucsd.edu. https://igppweb.ucsd.edu/~gabi/sio15/lectures/volcanoes/pliny.html |

**END OF SOURCES**

1. Article: a particular item or object. [↑](#footnote-ref-30726)
2. Stratum: a layer of rock or sediment. [↑](#footnote-ref-3759)
3. Fortification: a defensive wall or other reinforcement built to strengthen a place against attack. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
4. Callous: insensitive or showing disregard. [↑](#footnote-ref-25842)
5. Bandbox: a circular cardboard box for carrying hats. [↑](#footnote-ref-10086)
6. Mandible: lower jaw bone. [↑](#footnote-ref-8586)
7. Morphology: the study of the forms of things. [↑](#footnote-ref-4235)
8. Cadaver: dead human body. [↑](#footnote-ref-13815)
9. Mimbres: a type of prehistoric North American pottery. [↑](#footnote-ref-4387)
10. Egregious: outstandingly bad; shocking. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
11. Ethnographic: relating to the scientific description of peoples and cultures with their customs, habits, and mutual differences. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
12. Malicious: intending or intended to do harm. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)