**How useful are these sources for our understanding of how the conflict with the Persians came to influence Athenian art and architecture? [12]**

The first passage records Pericles’ defence of his building programme and its cost, whilst the second source is a metope from the south-side of the Parthenon, construction of which finished in 433/32 BC.

The sources are useful in understanding the influence conflict with Persia had on Athenian art and architecture because both source show how much it motivated buildings and sculptures. The extract from Plutarch claims that the building were signs of the “ancient power and glory” of Greece and Athens, power which came from the victory over the Persians in 479. The source is also useful because it tells us that Pericles used the ongoing conflict with Persia to justify the huge spending needed on public buildings, claiming it was deserved because Athens “kept the Persians away”. This shows that conflict with Persia continued to influence the building programme after 479 as Athens led the Delian league against Persia up to the Peace of Callias in 449 BC. Plutarch’s account may also be useful as he tended to combine different sources to reach an accurate account making its contents more reliable. The metope is also extremely useful in understanding the influence of Persia on art and architecture as it represents the victory of the civilised (the Lapiths) over the barbarians (the centaurs). This was a reference to Athens’ victory over Persia in 480/79 and was reflected in other artwork as well, such as the frieze around the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion which showed the victory of the Gods over the Giants. The metope is particularly useful as it is a physical remain and gives us a direct sense of what ideas the Athenians wanted to celebrate on their buildings. The fact that the metope decorated the Parthenon, the largest temple in the Greek world, also shows us how significant victory over Persia was.

There are, however, limitations to the usefulness of the sources. The Plutarch source, for example is written in the 1st century AD meaning that it may not have an accurate understanding of what influenced the building programme. Plutarch also based his work heavily on Thucydides who was extremely pro-Pericles. The celebration of Athens’ victory over Persia in the source could therefore be an attempt to glorify Pericles as a leader. Finally, the metope is limited as it only implies that conflict with Persia was influential, other influences, such as traditional religion and mythology may be more important in influencing buildings such as the Parthenon. The pediments, for example, showed traditional religious scenes of the contest between the gods and the birth or Athena, and the metopes may have been influenced by these same traditional religious ideas and not conflict with Persia.

Overall the sources are useful in understanding the influence of conflict with Persia on Athenian art and architecture to an extent, as they both demonstrate the desire to celebrate victory in 479 and the ongoing success of the Delian League. However, they don’t explain the other possible motives and influences such as religion or the glorification of Pericles.

**Improvements:**

**Strengths:**