



General Certificate of Education

Classical Civilisation

CIV1D Women in Athens and Rome

Report on the Examination

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Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.

CIV1D Women in Athens and Rome

Candidates had clearly enjoyed their study of this topic and usually remembered the narratives of the sources quite well. More variable, however, was candidates' ability to select and use knowledge to support a cogent argument focused on the particular question.

Question 1

Recall of the information required for parts (a)(ii), (iii) and (iv) was generally good – part (iv) in particular allowed a wide range of possibilities – but in part (a)(i) Euripides was frequently identified as a comic, rather than tragic, playwright. There were some perceptive responses to part (b) which showed good insights into the passage as performance, but often answers merely paraphrased, without analysis of the techniques and explanation of the comic effect.

In part (c), candidates generally demonstrated a sound understanding of the importance of childbirth in an Athenian marriage. Most were well aware of the importance of legitimacy, and the reasons for this, and could use details from the sources, especially Euphiletus' defence speech, to support their points. However, fewer candidates drew attention to Ischomachus' largely different emphasis on his wife's managerial skills, although concerns about childbirth and legitimacy are not entirely absent from that dialogue too.

Question 2

In part (a)(i) most answers showed good knowledge of the circumstances of Tiberius' death, but in parts (ii) and (iii) some lacked precision. The majority of responses to part (b) attempted to present a balanced point of view, but where details of other aspects of Cornelia's reputation apart from motherhood were missing the argument lacked conviction. Part (c) elicited some interesting discussion of Livy's purposes in writing history. Although some candidates merely summarised Livy's accounts, most made some attempt to assess his presentation of women as examples of desirable or undesirable behaviour. The word 'individuals' in the question sometimes proved problematic, with some candidates confusing individuality and independence, but where argument was strong marks were accordingly high.

Question 3

Most candidates had some appreciation of the dramatic context of *Women at the Thesmophoria* and so realised that Aristophanes' presentation of women does not necessarily reflect his own views but aims at comic effect through the use of stereotypes based on male anxieties. Far fewer candidates, however, were aware that Juvenal was a satirist who was also aiming at comedy but set out to achieve it by sustaining an exaggeratedly misogynistic rant to an absurd length and to an extreme pitch of intensity, castigating even the traditionally exemplary Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi. Consequently arguments tended to be one-sided, even when candidates had more detailed knowledge of *Satire 6* than of Aristophanes' play.

Question 4

The majority of answers took some account of the nature of the different sources in making judgements on women's involvement in politics and the courts. Candidates' knowledge of the evidence was generally adequate, despite some confusion between Turia, Arria and Fannia, and irrelevance in including the debate on the repeal of the Oppian Law. The best candidates set their knowledge in a clear evaluative framework which addressed the exact implications of the question.