



**General Certificate of Education
January 2012**

Classical Civilisation 2020

CIV1D: Women in Athens and Rome

Report on the Examination

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CIV1D Women in Athens and Rome

Students' performance on Section 1 (on this occasion on Roman women) was sometimes inconsistent with that on Section 2 (in this examination on the Athenian sources). This suggests that in some instances both cultures had not been given equal attention.

Section 1

Option A

Option A, on Cornelia and Livy's accounts of women in his *History*, was about twice as popular as Option B, on Turia and the women Pliny writes about in his letters. Virtually all students demonstrated at least some of the knowledge expected in Question 01 and many gave more than the four points required. Answers to Question 02 were again mostly correct, and it was usually only those which simply stated 'died' that failed to score.

In Question 03, a high proportion of students demonstrated some evidence of relevant knowledge and evaluation, although they were not always clearly linked. Good answers made some attempt to balance the argument by referring to Juvenal's view, but to be fully effective this needed to be understood in its context in a satire.

The best answers to Question 04 made some perceptive judgements on the way Livy portrays male attitudes towards women in the light of his aims and intentions. By contrast, the weakest answers demonstrated many confusions, for example over chronology (which led to the introduction of irrelevant examples such as Sempronia) or over the identity of Cloelia (often muddled with Clodia). In the middle, there was much accurate narrative of the Sabine women, of Lucretia (often more on her rape and suicide than on the original contest) and of Cloelia, but much less use of this knowledge to support evaluation and little real attempt to discuss changes in men's attitudes. The debate concerning the repeal of the Oppian Law was sometimes handled very well indeed, but was often misunderstood or ignored.

Option B

Virtually all students answered Question 05 correctly but in Question 06, although there were some pleasingly detailed answers, some struggled to gain the full four marks, the problem with the will being a particular cause of misunderstanding.

Question 07 produced a wider spread of marks than the corresponding Question 03. The best students used their admirably detailed knowledge of the eulogy to support relevant evaluation that included appropriate comment on its overall length, the differences in emphasis the husband gives to her various qualities, and sometimes its possible political purpose. Others repeated material that more properly belonged in the answer to Question 06.

In Question 08, good informed evaluation of Pliny's celebration of the dutifulness and personal qualities of Calpurnia and her aunt led to a generally higher standard of work than in the corresponding Question 04. However, the quality of the first part of the answers was not always sustained to cover the full range of women about whom Pliny writes, and there was a tendency to confuse Arria and Fannia and to ignore Minicia Marcella.

Section 2

Option C

Question 09 was attempted by about one third of the students. Many of those who tried to use most of the sources suggested by the bullet points were seduced by the colourful narratives and did not give sufficient thought to considering the implications of the key word 'private' or to sustaining evaluation throughout the essay. Ischomachus' conversation with Socrates and Euphiletus' defence speech were generally well known and understood, but there was a tendency to select inappropriate material from the trials of Neaera and of the wife who allegedly caused her husband to be poisoned, and so to draw inappropriate conclusions. Students who took into account the nature of the evidence usually produced the most perceptive judgements; this was particularly true in the case of the *Women at the Thesmophoria*, in which it is important to appreciate what has been exaggerated or distorted for comic effect. Balance could be achieved in the argument both by considering women's roles in religious and funerary rituals and by drawing attention to finer details, for example Euphiletus' admission to the jury that his wife left the house to get a light without arousing suspicion.

Option D

Although Question 10 required knowledge of the same sources as Question 09, the evaluation was generally stronger and consequently a higher proportion of students reached Level 4. Nevertheless, unevaluated narrative still crept in and there were similar misunderstandings of Neaera and the poisoning trial.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

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