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Examiners' report

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

H408
For first teaching in 2017

H408/32 Summer 2019 series
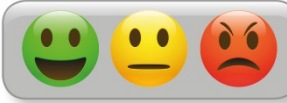
Version 1

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 32 series overview

The 'Love and Relationships' paper is one of four options in Component Group 3: Beliefs and Ideas. The prescribed sources include the poetry of Sappho and Section III of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*. There are no prescribed sources for the study of Plato and Seneca on love and desire. Candidates are required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in the evaluation and analysis of attitudes to love, desire, sex, sexuality, marriage, and the position of men and women in ancient Greek and Roman societies. The exam offers low tariff questions, which test knowledge and understanding (AO1) as well as higher tariff questions which requires the candidates to demonstrate their skills of analysis and evaluation (AO2) in addition to AO1.

Candidates responded well to the new paper, and all dealt with the higher tariff questions (Question 5 in Section A, and either Question 6 or 7 in Section B) appropriately by comparing and contrasting and allowing ample time to write a sufficient response. Almost all candidates followed the format of the question paper, rather than answering the 30-mark question first. This allowed candidates to develop on the themes that the previous questions pointed to.

Very few candidates did not include references to modern scholarship (a requirement of the 30-mark questions in Section B), and almost all candidates attempted some kind of evaluation of the scholars they cited. Only the weakest answers included references to wider reading without commenting further or evaluating their scholar.

It was evident that the candidates have learned a lot of knowledge for this new series. As ever, the strongest answers demonstrated accurate and relevant selection of knowledge in tackling the extended questions. Weaker answers lost marks on the AO2 for slipping into a narrative account, rather than keeping the focus on evaluation and analysis (AO2).

Section A overview

Almost all candidates answered Section A sequentially, rather than answering the higher tariff 20-mark question first. Most used the Ovid source in given in Question 2 to support analysis in Question 5. Overall, candidates performed better on the 'Ideas' Question 4 than the 'Source' Question 2. The most effective 10-mark responses were limited to no more than 200 words, and used quotations to support the analysis.

Question 1 (a)

Source A: Ovid *Ars Amatoria* III. 555–576

1   (a)   The *Ars Amatoria* is an example of didactic poetry. What does "didactic" mean?   [1]

Almost all candidates correctly identified that 'didactic' means to teach or instruct.

Question 1 (b)

(b)   Describe how the *Ars Amatoria* is different from earlier examples of didactic poetry. Make **two** points.   [2]

Candidates mostly identified that the *Ars Amatoria* is amusing and a parody of the genre, many correctly identified another unique feature (such as addressed to women or the subject matter being love and sex) but few correctly mentioned that it is written in elegiac couplets.

Question 2

2   How are women represented by Ovid in this passage? Explain your answer using evidence from **Source A**.   [10]

Candidates should note that they only need to refer to the passage. The best answers quoted from the passage and then clearly stated how it represented women. There were quite a few references to women being controlling, possessive, and skilled at the game of love. Most candidates rightly pointed out that women are seen as vulnerable as they can be attacked by a young lover. The best approach was to deal with the passage from start to finish while vaguer answers talked about the passage as a whole. Too many candidates were focusing on how men were portrayed. Many candidates misinterpreted the passage suggesting that women are 'objectified' by Ovid: they thought that women were likened to 'horses' to be tamed and 'fresh prizes' rather than the other way around and therefore missed Ovid's clever redirection of the reader's expectations. A few candidates did not use quotes, which was a missed opportunity.

Question 3

> In his writings, Seneca attempts to define love. In one of his letters, he writes about his marriage to Paulina and describes their love as a kind of 'friendship'.
>
> 3   Other than letters, list **two** other forms of literature which Seneca wrote.   [2]

Many understood that the question was looking for other forms of literature, such as essays, dramatic works, dialogues etc. 'Books' and 'poetry' were commonly cited and therefore not creditworthy.

Question 4

> 4   Seneca was a Stoic philosopher. How far do you think his comparison between love and friendship fits with his Stoic philosophy?   [10]

Most candidates scored more on this question than Question 2, referring to concepts like 'maddened friendship'; selfless love; Seneca's marriage with Paulina; apatheia; preferred indifferent, etc. The best answers focused on Seneca's own brand of Stoicism and how this differed from the original, less-forgiving philosophy. Candidates made good use of Seneca's comments about his relationship with his wife. It was also useful to talk about Seneca's view on friendship being a "natural" state. The best answers appreciated that a 'maddened friendship' (which was widely quoted) seems contradictory to the stoic ideal of always keeping your emotions under control as it suggests a lack of control, and some candidates wrestled with whether this notion was positive or negative. Answers which were able to quote what Seneca had actually written and then analyse that were more convincing than ones which erred towards vague summaries. Some candidates discussed whether Seneca followed his philosophy or not, which is irrelevant to the question. Although Seneca was not a prescribed source, some candidates were not able to adequately explain his views.

Question 5

> 5*   Who provides a more realistic portrayal of the position of women in Roman society, Ovid or Seneca? You should discuss what you know about the lives of Roman women. Justify your response. You may use **Source A** and your knowledge of Seneca's ideas as a starting point in your answer.   [20]

The best answers appreciated that Seneca and Ovid were writing for very different reasons – Seneca was idealistic while Ovid was subversive. Strong responses demonstrated excellent knowledge of Ovid and Seneca by using quotes/paraphrases from both authors. The best answers then went on to compare what they said with other sources/knowledge e.g. lots of mentions of Augustus' Julian Laws but very few candidates appreciated that the fact he had to pass such laws suggested that adultery was rife and therefore Ovid's view was realistic. There were some good responses which showed that Ovid and Seneca realistic on different elements of a woman's position in Roman society. There were some very good responses which blended well knowledge of Ovid, Seneca and Roman society and a successful and clear structure proved to be setting up areas of a woman's life and then making direct comparisons between Seneca and Ovid. Some candidates were drawn into talking about what life was like for women in Greece and not enough discussed the fact that the lives of the vast majority of ordinary women were ignored by both writers. It was easy to be side-tracked into writing an essay on who gives a more positive/modern view of women and some were distracted into criticising Roman society for "misogyny". Weaker answers would habitually favour writing about Roman society and did not back up opinions on the sources with detailed reference.

Section B overview

Almost all candidates made reference to modern scholarship but in the few instances where no reference was made, the AO2 had to be limited to the lower end of the level descriptor. There was an even balance of responses between Question 6 and Question 7. Candidates who favoured an approach closer to literary analysis clearly enjoyed writing about Sappho, and Ovid was often played a supporting role in the responses. Candidates answering Question 7 had the benefit of utilising some discussion explored in earlier questions to support their answers, but the bulk of discussions focused on Plato rather than Seneca.

Question 6

Use classical sources, and secondary sources, scholars and/or academic works to support your argument. You should also consider possible interpretations of sources by different audiences.

6*   'Sappho only writes about love, but Ovid only writes about sex.' Based on the poetry you have read, assess to what extent you agree with this statement.   [30]

There was a lot of potential material to be used for this question and the better candidates thought carefully about how they were going to structure their essays. The best answers appreciated the fragmentary nature of Sappho and that she writes about love, family, marriage, desire and Lesbos, and that although Ovid brings in myths and descriptions of the daily lives of wealthy women in fact everything he writes about is aimed at having sex. There was some interesting discussion about whether there was a hidden political motive in *Ars A III*. Weaker responses were too general and, given that Ovid and Sappho were prescribed sources, a high level of detail was expected. Generally, candidates were better at Sappho than Ovid. Some candidates talked about Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and other works which was not necessary as there is plenty of material in the set texts. Scholarship on Sappho was well-used with candidates able to quote the specific passages which best-illustrated the view of the scholar, while knowledge of Ovid was less impressive which resulted in some vagueness. There was widespread misrepresentation of the Lefkowitz quote from the Bloomsbury textbook.

Exemplar 1

Both Sappho & Ovid make clear political
Statements in their writing, Subverting
the idea that they only write about
'love' and 'sex'. Alison Sharrock comments
that in Ovid's 'Ars Amatoria' "sex is set up
as an alternative to citizenship"; he is
mocking the Julian laws of AД Augustus had
many laws against adultery and promoting
families such as the 'Lex Julia',
'Lex papia poppaea' and 'Leges Iulae',
which ovid subverts humorously before his
exile to Tomis in 9AD. Ovid tells women
to look for lovers on the holy Palatine
and 'the shades of Pompey', which is
highly inappropriate, and despite still writing
about sex, it is clear he is also
writing to invert the laws of Mos Maiorum.

This paragraph demonstrates an effective use of modern scholarship. The candidate begins with the claim that both Sappho and Ovid are politically subversive, and supports this by citing Sharrock. The candidate adds further weight to the claim by detailing the Julian Laws, and examples from Ovid encouraging promiscuity. Overall, the candidate scored Level 5 for AO2.

Exemplar 2

love which are so universal to many. Moreover,
critic Gloyn stated that Sappho uses her poetry
to express the 'marital anxiety' which so
many ancient Greek young women experienced
before an arranged marriage, which ties into

the theme of love which commonly runs through
her poetry In the form of marriage.

In this example, the candidate has cited Gloyn but has not developed the example of 'marital anxiety' sufficiently. Here, critical analysis is assumed rather explicit: the candidate has not stated that Sappho's poetry also includes themes other than love. Overall, the candidate scored Level 3 for AO2.

Question 7

7* Discuss how far Plato and Seneca agree about what sorts of relationships should be considered 'good' and 'bad'. You should justify your response with reference to the ideas of Plato and Seneca.

[30]

Despite the philosophers not being prescribed sources, the best candidates had a very impressive knowledge of both Plato and Seneca. Being able to refer to particular speeches in the *Symposium* was useful, but candidates also made good use of *Phaedrus*. The major dispute was over homoerotic relationships and the best candidates discussed how difficult it is to assess Plato's own view. Candidates generally knew that Seneca disapproved of homoerotic relationships while Plato believed they were superior to heterosexual ones in terms of achieving virtue – the best candidates referred to how his views had changed by the time he wrote the *Laws*. Further development of this analysis led some candidates to discuss his views on the family and marriage in the *Republic* and how that contrasted with Seneca. Most candidates adopted a thematic approach focusing on areas such as homoerotic relationships; marriage; status of women; views on love and desire. Weaker responses were limited to a description of Seneca and Plato without comparing and contrasting the two of them. They also lacked detail and scholarship was often poorly utilised.

Exemplar 3

During Pausanias' speech, he claims
that there are two types of love; Pandeman
which is the base lust for ones body, and
Uranian eros which is an advanced form of
love of the mind, an impermeable idea.
Burton states that Plato clearly distinguishes
between the two types of love, the base
lust and the advanced love of the soul
and the mind. The love that we should
all wish to attain is Uranian eros.
Seneca agrees with this idea, and ~~to~~
also agrees that there is a difference
between the two types of love. Seneca
picks up on the variance between a
desire for the body, which he refers to
as a harmful vice, and the advanced
love, which he has for his wife
Paulina. Liz Gloyn tells us that due to

The candidate here is demonstrating a clear understanding of the comparative requirements for this question. They are comparing the similarities of both Plato and Seneca, and showing accurate knowledge by citing Pandemian and Uranian eros as discussed in Plato's *Symposium*, as well as reference to Seneca's attitude towards marriage. The analysis is integrated, which requires more skill than simply discussing one thinker, followed by another, then drawing comparative conclusions. The analysis here is typical of Level 4 AO2.

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