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Examiners' report

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

H408

For first teaching in 2017

H408/32 Summer 2022 series

Contents

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. A selection of candidate responses is also provided. 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 and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our website.

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Paper 32 series overview

The highest performing responses were those which focused on the primary sources and then analysed them in a way which answered the question. This was most successfully achieved by use of direct quotes or detailed paraphrasing which conveyed an impression of detailed knowledge. Candidates who answered the question directly in their opening sentences and avoided the temptation to give lots of background information such as life in Athens/Lesbos, women's role in the ancient world or biographies of writers made efficient use of the time available. Candidates who made reference to two or more scholars by name in the 30-mark questions performed better than those who did not reference scholarship. Candidates who did not reference scholarship were unable to access the higher marks in AO2.

The most successful AO2 responses saw candidates offering a balanced evaluation in which all primary sources were given equal focus. In many cases, the treatment of Sappho for the 30-mark questions was lengthier than the evaluation of Plato, Ovid or Seneca. While it was pleasing to see enthusiasm for Sappho's poetry, in some cases this was to the detriment of the evaluation of other sources.

Finally, candidates who were able to make regular links back to the main question managed to keep their analysis focused on the precise remit of the question.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
- used direct quotations from the source on Ovid (Question 3) - referred to a range of Seneca's work in answering Question 5 - answered questions directly by referring back to the key words in the question - made at least two references to scholarship by citing the scholar's name directly.	- spent too long answering the 10-mark questions - demonstrated limited knowledge - provided commentaries rather than evaluation of key thinkers and writers - did not engage critically with the question.

Section A

Question 1

Source A
Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, III 279–296

1 Under the rule of which emperor did Ovid write the *Ars Amatoria*? **[1]**

Most responses were correct however there was occasional confusion with Nero (because of Seneca).

Question 2

2 What do some scholars believe happened to Ovid as a result of writing the *Ars Amatoria*? **[1]**

Most responses were correct although some candidates listed potential punishments which made it impossible to award the mark. A 1-mark response usually requires one word, so no extra credit was possible for the geographical location of his exile.

Question 3

3 Explain how serious Ovid is being in **Source A**. Support your answer using evidence from **Source A**. **[10]**

The best responses appreciated that Ovid was not being serious in the extract and could identify features of the mock-didactic style. Direct quotations were used to support claims. Successful responses cited key techniques used, such as hyperbole. Some candidates were distracted by their views on Ovid's misogyny which led them away from the intention of the question. Very few candidates appreciated the contradictory tone in the last two lines.

Assessment for learning

The 10-mark questions must include evidence from the source/idea to support the points being made. For example, techniques such as rhetorical questions and their effects must be supported by the relevant example from the source.

Exemplar 1

3		In source A, there is evidence to suggest that Ovid's tone and advice lacks seriousness almost entirely. For example, hyperbolic ecclamations and statements are used to highlight what an error showing your teeth can be: 'laughing would be a fatal error'. The word 'fatal' likens physical appearance to a more serious injury, and thus carries a mocking and insincere tone.

> In Exemplar 1, the candidate has addressed the question directly in the first sentence. Then points are supported with evidence from the source, and it is integrated into the argument. There is some development here.

Question 4 (a)

Seneca is keen to show that love is not a necessary emotion, but one which we can successfully resist so long as we can develop the necessary character.

4   (a)   What is the name of Seneca's wife?   **[1]**

> Many candidates answered correctly.

Question 4 (b)

(b)   How is she important to Seneca's work? Make **two** points.   **[2]**

> There was a number of potential responses to this question and candidates often demonstrated a lack of specific knowledge here. Some candidates wrote a paragraph, which is excessive for 2 marks.

Question 5

5   Seneca states that 'love is a kind of friendship'. Explain how far this is shown in your study of Seneca.   **[10]**

Successful responses referenced Seneca's modified stoicism and rejection of recreational sex, and also used references to *Phaedra* effectively to show that love can be totally opposed to friendship if it is just based on desire. Many responses articulated that Seneca states having sex is not a part of a friendship, unless with one's wife when it becomes 'maddened' and is for procreation. Less successful responses could identify Seneca's approach to love and friendship but struggled to cite how far the two were similar. Many candidates mentioned Seneca's writings about his wife as an example.

Question 6*

6*   Assess whether Seneca **or** Ovid offered more useful guidance to Roman women. Justify your response.

You may use **Source A** as a starting point in your answer.   **[20]**

Successful responses defined their terms in the introduction by exploring what is meant by 'useful': Ovid provides useful advice if you want to have affairs and live dangerously, while Seneca provides useful advice if you want to live up to traditional Roman values and observe the *Lex Julia*. More successful responses discussed the writers' perceptions of women, such as Seneca's stance that women are capable of virtue, and how these ideas may have been received in Roman society. Some candidates explored whether Seneca's idealism was unrealistic and unattainable, and there was some good reference made to the relative social and legal context for both writers. Less successful responses often did not discuss Ovid's advice as comic, and also lacked the depth of knowledge required to build a range of arguments, especially regarding Seneca.

Exemplar 2

On the other hand, much of Seneca's advice would also have been extremely difficult for Roman women to follow. In his Consolation to Marcia, Seneca advises a mother to stop grieving her son's death, for he is now unable to commit any more sins.

This advice —as part of his ideology of Stoicism — is futile, as a mother would be unable to stop grieving the death of her son for such reason. In addition, his consolation to Helvia is similarly useless — his mother it is difficult to advise a woman against grieving for her exiled son. Lastly, Seneca's advice on controlling

In Exemplar 2, the candidate has demonstrated depth of knowledge of Seneca by citing two relevant sources (Consolations to Marcia and Helvia). The opening sentence is clearly signposted and refers to the question. The candidate is taking a critical approach and the argument is sustained. This is a good example of structuring a critical paragraph and integrating examples.

Section B overview

There was not a clear preference between Question 7 and Question 8 for the 30-mark responses. Less successful responses described what Plato, Seneca, Sappho and Ovid wrote about marriage rather than assessing positive (and negative) representations of marriage.

Candidates who chose to respond to Question 8 tended to access the evaluative dimension of the question more successfully, and most used direct reference to Sappho's poems to support their responses. Successful responses balanced analysis of Sappho with analysis of Plato in equal measure.

Question 7*

7*   Assess who represents marriage most positively – Plato, Seneca, Ovid or Sappho. You should include reference to the work of **at least three** of these you have studied.   **[30]**

Candidates demonstrated extensive knowledge of Sappho and good knowledge of Seneca, but many struggled to discuss Plato and Ovid's approaches to marriage. Candidates often utilised Plato's *Republic* and his suggested reform of marriage, and linked Aristophanes' speech in *Symposium* to the issue of marriage. Higher performing responses identified the difficulties discerning Plato's view and the differences in Sappho's approach to marriage. Many successful responses made reference to Ovid's presentation of positive and negative mythical marriages. Candidates who wrote about three writers tended to achieve higher grades because writing about all four writers meant that at least one was rushed.

Assessment for learning
Good evaluation (AO2) can be developed by balancing the response across the sources, rather than discussing each author one at a time. Planning the response by using a thematic approach helps avoid excessive narration of the sources.

Exemplar 3

| 7. | | Marriage in the Ancient world varied in dynamic and importance but ~~out of~~ Seneca regards it the most highly overall since to Plato marriage is a detriment to society. |

| | | to Ovid marriage is a cumbersome ~~objec~~ obstacle in a promiscuous lifestyle and to Sappho marriage seperates her from her lovers and she must ~~only~~ ~~praise it~~ perform at weddings in praise in order to earn a living. |

In Exemplar 3, the candidate has clearly stated their argument in the introduction, and this analysis is carried through the rest of the response. This results in a sustained and coherent line of reasoning and points to a logical structure. Weaker responses tended to arrive at a response to the question after providing a commentary of three of the writers.

Question 8*

8* 'Sappho's poetry warns her audience to fear love, whereas Plato encourages his to seek love out.'

Assess to what extent you agree with this statement, with close reference to the work of Sappho and Plato. **[30]**

The highest performing responses appreciated that in places this statement is true for both authors but not true in others. Successful candidates provided a range of arguments for each writer that supported and challenged the statement. There was a tendency to focus too much on the author the candidate knew better, in most cases Sappho. The response required a broad range of detailed references to the primary sources. Higher performing responses recognised Sappho's work was not intended as instruction, unlike Plato.

Misconception

? Candidates are required to make reference to at least two scholars by name. Some candidates forgot to do so, which meant that their mark was at the lowest mark for their AO2 level. For example, if a candidate produces a good response with a range of relevant points and the points are consistently supported by critical analysis (AO2 Level 4) but they have not included any scholarship, the maximum mark for AO2 will be 13.

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