A LEVEL

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

H408
For first teaching in 2017

H408/31 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 answers 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 31 series overview

The paper is one of the four options for the 'Beliefs and Ideas' unit, and asks candidates to explore the nature of Greek religion. Through studying Greek religious beliefs and developing an understanding of the nature of participation in religion, the paper requires candidates to show both a conceptual understanding of the topic and mastery of the sanctuary sites and sources from the period. It offers a mixture of low tariff AO1 questions, alongside longer responses which require skills to be demonstrated in both AO1 and AO2.

To do well on the paper, candidates needed to combine a mastery of the prescribed sources with a firm grasp of what Greek religion meant to the Greeks. Where there was confident knowledge, candidates dealt with the lower-tariff questions effectively. In general, the source question differentiated between those who used the source to address the question and those who misunderstood the nature of the task and approached it from their own prior knowledge.

For the higher-tariff questions, it was important to have reflected on what religion meant to the Greeks, and the extent to which it was a reflection of human priorities or divine expectations. The paper attracted some very good responses, with the most successful candidates demonstrating an impressive mastery of detail. There were no obvious problems with timing, as nearly all candidates were able to answer the full range of questions. Some chose to answer the 30-mark essay question first, which was a valid approach. The higher-tariff questions depended on a careful reading of their demands; where this was met, candidates were usually well prepared and had appropriate knowledge. In the cases where the question was not understood well, the knowledge deployed by candidates was not matched to the question. There were some extremely well argued essays, with strong critical analysis.

The need to answer the question was especially apparent in Question 5 where most candidates missed the essence of what they had been asked. Although candidates had plenty of knowledge, they did not always use what was required. Things were rather better in the 30-mark essays, where examiners were pleased to see more careful attention paid to the specifics of the question. Here excellent knowledge (AO1) was often deployed in order to fashion persuasive and perceptive arguments for AO2. The major weakness was in references to scholarship. While the deployment of scholars' opinions was generally evident, it was rare to see candidates do much more than simply quote them, and examiners often looked without success for any evidence of critical analysis.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
● utilised the evidence of Source A carefully in Question 2 ● in Question 5, linked the ideas of Homer and Hesiod to their later use in Greek religion ● used a broad range of knowledge to assemble an argument in Question 6 ● in Question 7, marshalled a number of factors in explaining the importance of mystery and healing cults.	● lacked an analytical focus to their writing either because they did not focus on what the question was asking, or because they gave too much emphasis to AO1 ● did not support responses to 30-mark essays with a range of detailed evidence ● used scholars, but did not analyse them critically.

Section A overview

Levels of knowledge (AO1) were reasonably sound, with the factual requirements usually met by most candidates. The main issue was in the skills needed to deploy that knowledge to meet the requirements of AO2. Too many candidates did not read the questions carefully: consequently, examiners found it difficult to give marks. Many candidates made a response based around the general topic (e.g. the Delphic Oracle, Homer and Hesiod), to the detriment of the requirements of the actual questions.

The majority of candidates tackled Section A before Section B, and had clearly planned well enough to allow for sufficient time to complete the 30-mark essay.

Question 1

1   Give **two** facts about the Pythia.   **[2]**

Nearly all candidates found accurate points to offer here.

Question 2

2   Explain how useful **Source A** is as a source of information about the consultation of the Delphic Oracle.   **[10]**

The key feature of this question was the word 'consultation'. Those who took their lead from that were able to offer a number of good points about the source's evidence on consultation, as well as noting that it left a number of unanswered questions. As ever with this style of question, examiners were happy to reward those who had engaged closely with the source and drew inferences from it.

There were, however, too many candidates who took this question to be an opportunity to summarise what they already knew about the Pythia, without clear links to the source.

Exemplar 1

> Source A is also useful as it implies the consultation took place indoors as the Doric column in the background suggests the people are in the Temple of Apollo. The column can also be interpreted as a division between the Pythia and the man, something that would again maintain her chastity as she was seperate from the consultant.
>
> Source A however may be less useful as the identity of the man is unknown. It is thought to depict either a Priest of Apollo interpreting the Pythia or a consultant. The man has ornate and finely draped clothes implying he is wealthy, and also looks to be carrying a travelling cane which might imply he is a consultant as he travelled to meet the Pythia. However, this

The candidate in Exemplar 1 started with their point, then applied their knowledge to support it.

Assessment for learning
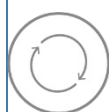
This type of question asks for candidates to focus on the source. An effective approach to this question is to lead with the point that the candidate is making, and then apply their knowledge to support it. This is demonstrated in **Exemplar 1**.

Question 3 (a)

Homer and Hesiod wrote about the Olympian gods extensively in their works.

3　(a)　Why were the most powerful Greek gods called 'the Olympians'?　　　　　　**[1]**

Nearly all candidates knew this.

Question 3 (b)

　(b)　Give **two** epithets which the Greeks commonly used to worship Zeus.　　　**[2]**

The main issue here was the nature of the epithets. The requirement was for *Greek* epithets.

Question 4

4   Explain the advantages for a Greek in worshipping the Olympian gods.   **[10]**

Many candidates answered this question well, offering a range of different advantages. Examiners rewarded explanations that the gods offered particular assistance linked to their individual epithets. More perceptive candidates noted that there were theoretical advantages as well as tangible ones. This led them to offer a good collection of points, conscious that worship could improve the social and community standing of Greeks.

Where candidates only offered examples of reciprocity, it was more difficult to reward them in the higher levels. Simply listing the roles of various Olympians did not give a wide enough range of discrete points or sufficiently broad outlook to access Level 4.

Question 5*

5*   Explain how the ideas of Homer and Hesiod were significant in shaping the Greeks' views of the Olympian gods. Justify your response.   **[20]**

This question asked candidates to explain how Homer and Hesiod shaped Greek views: unfortunately, the vast majority took it to be an invitation to summarise the views of Homer and Hesiod. As a result, the question was generally not done well.

More successful candidates engaged with the idea of 'shaping' and found evidence of the existence of Homeric or Hesiodic ideas in the centuries after they had written. This was done most effectively through identifying their ideas on anthropomorphism, family and powers, alongside the nature of worship. This allowed connections to be made with later artistic portrayals on temples (e.g. on the Parthenon, or the temple of Zeus at Olympia), rituals or festival activities. Some candidates were successful in using the Homeric hymns as evidence of Homeric influence in later work.

Unfortunately the majority did not engage with the question. As a result examiners saw many candidates who knew a lot about Homer and Hesiod's views of the Olympian gods, but very few who did more than just assert that they were influential. Furthermore, many candidates did not spot that the question was about Olympian gods, and drew in an eclectic range of ideas from across their studies of Greek religion.

Section B overview

There was a reasonably even split between the numbers of candidates doing Questions 6 and 7. It seemed that the pre-release material had benefited many who chose Question 6, as the levels of knowledge were generally good. However, this did not tend to be the case in responses to Question 7, where knowledge was more limited. This was especially surprising given the narrow range of details needed for this essay. Overall, the result was that Question 6 tended to be answered more effectively than Question 7, demonstrating the difficulty of constructing a persuasive argument without a sufficient level of knowledge.

As in previous examination seasons, the use of modern scholarship was an issue in both questions. While examiners were impressed to see scholars being cited, and sometimes being tied to an argument, there was less sign of their views being critically analysed. The majority of responses quoted a scholar without offering a view as to why their opinion might or might not be persuasive. For essays that had reached Level 4 or Level 5 in AO2, examiners were not always able to give the highest marks in the level because of a lack of critical analysis.

Assessment for learning
While most candidates understand the need to discuss the work of scholars in their essays, examiners found that there were numerous candidates who wrote 'some scholars say' rather than naming individuals. Candidates perhaps do so because they cannot remember names, but there is a need for specific referencing of these scholars to enable examiners to reward such points.

Question 6*

6* 'The Athenian Acropolis and the sanctuary at Olympia celebrated human achievements more than they celebrated the gods.'

Assess to what extent you agree with this statement. Justify your response. **[30]**

Examiners were impressed by the levels of knowledge used in response to this question. Where candidates offered a broad and comprehensive range of points, they were able to construct convincing responses. On the Acropolis, there was strong analysis of both the Parthenon and Erechtheion, as well as sculpture and how the Panathenaia related to the site. For Olympia, examiners were pleased to see candidates widen their consideration beyond the temple of Zeus to include, for example, the ash altar, treasuries and sculpture.

The most successful responses were flexible and agile as regards the interpretation of the two sites, able to see that different features could work to celebrate human achievements as well as celebrate the gods. It was pleasing to see the number of candidates who stated an overall position at the start of their essay, and then looked to sustain that view throughout.

Some responses were overly narrow in their approach, tending to look only at the Parthenon or the temple of Zeus, or giving undue attention to one site rather than both. There were also responses that drifted from the focus of the question to consider points that did not pertain to the Acropolis or the Altis.

Exemplar 2

The statues found in both sacred sites give a clear indication of the fact that worship of the gods came first, before the worship of human achievement. Aston is quite clearly correct when stating that cult statues were the focus of religious observance, and the optimal form of contact between god and mortal. Both sites have chryselephantine – ivory and gold – statues made by Pheidias. The statue in the Temple of Zeus was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, depicting Zeus throned, with an eagle-topped sceptre in one hand and statue of Nike in the other – implying his superiority over all living beings, Pausanias

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Most candidates referred to scholars, and those who analysed interpretations on civic religion (based, for example, on Sourvinou-Inwood or Zaidman/Pantel) often attracted the most marks from examiners. In addition, the *critical* use of scholars was particularly praiseworthy – as demonstrated in **Exemplar 2**.

Question 7*

7* Explain why mystery and healing cults became such an important part of Greek religion. Justify your response. **[30]**

The most successful candidates thought carefully about a range of reasons for the importance of mystery and healing cults. They often used ideas such as personal experience, community participation and inclusion to cover the question effectively. It was always pleasing for examiners to find a fully developed set of details to support such ideas, as not all candidates could offer this. Thus an essay which understood the whole process of the Eleusinian Mysteries and married that to the incubation process of Asclepius tended to stand out.

More commonly, but less successfully, candidates tended to offer a simple summary of some of the elements of the Eleusinian mysteries and Asclepius (as shown in **Exemplar 3**). Such responses often included too few points, with little attempt to explain their importance, and offered little in the way of modern scholarship to help illuminate the response.

Exemplar 3

One common mystery cult was the Eleusynian Mysteries and the reason it was so common was because almost anyone could join — as long as you spoke Greek and had never committed murder, you were allowed to join. Once you joined, you were forever an initiate. Perhaps in this inclusiveness of any outsider, or slave, or woman, was part of its charm, but in any case, it was an incredibly widespread cult, with huge following. The Eleusynian Mysteries were dedicated to the goddesses Demeter and Persephone (sometimes called Kore) and many of their practices come from The Homeric Hymn to Demeter, which was a widely known story and thought to be used as a guideline for the cult activities.

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