



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

CLASSICAL TRIPOS Part II  
Group X

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Wednesday 30 May 2007 13.30-16.30

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Paper X1

DEATH

*Answer three questions.*

Candidates who do not write legibly may find themselves at a grave disadvantage.

Irrelevance will be penalised.

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS  
20 Page Booklet x 1  
Rough Work Pads x 1

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS  
None

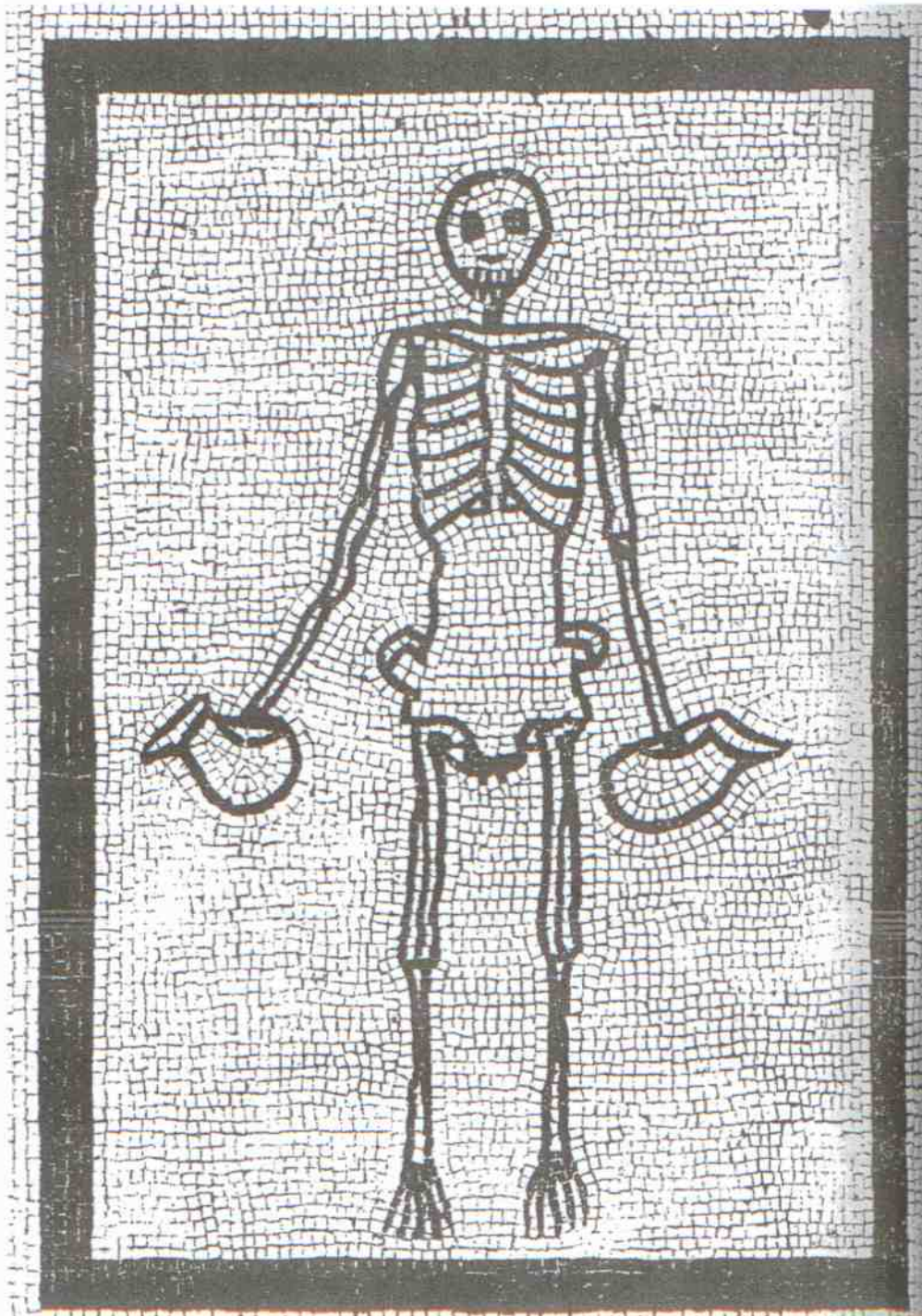
You may not start to read the questions printed on the subsequent pages of this question paper until instructed that you may do so by the Invigilator

1 **Either** 'Death is not so much a subject in itself but a trope or tool for thinking about life'. Is this true of ancient death?

**Or** What does the art **and/or** epigraphy of death reveal about ancient emotion?

You may, if you wish, use **one or more** of the following texts or images in your answer.

(a) Mosaic with skeleton, Pompeii (probably first half of first century AD)





## (b) Gold Leaf from Hipponion in Calabria

This tomb belongs to Memory. When you die you will go to the strong house of Hades. On the right is a spring, beside it stands a white cypress; there the souls of the dead come down and cool themselves. Do not go anywhere near this spring. Further on you will find cool water flowing from the lake of Memory; in front of it are guardians who will ask in wisdom of heart what you are seeking in the gloom of destructive Hades. Say: 'I am son of the Heavy One [i.e. Earth] and starry Heaven, and I am dry and am perishing; quickly give me cool water flowing from the lake of Memory'. Through the king beneath the earth they will pity you and they will give you a drink from the lake of Memory. And then you would go on the sacred way which other *mystai* and *bakkhoi* also travel.

## (c) Funerary relief, Amiternum (mid to late first-century BC)



(d) SGO I, 01/20/38, Miletos (third century BC)

οἰκτρὰ πατήρ ἐπὶ σοὶ βάλε δάκρυα, Πουλυδαμαντί.  
 ἦνίκα κυανέαν πορθμίδ' ἔβης νεκύων·  
 οὐδέ τι πατρὶ φίλῳ νεαροῦς ἐπὶ γούνασι παῖδας  
 κηδεμόνας θήκας γήραος οὐλομένου,  
 ἀλλ' ἐπιποφυρέη νεφέλη χαρίεντα μέλαθρα,  
 λήθη σήγ γενεὴν φάρεσιν ἔσκιασε·  
 μητρὶ δὲ γηραιᾷ λίπες ἄλγεα δακρυόεντα  
 ἀνδρὶ τε· κωκύει δὲ οἶκον ἔρημον ὀρώων

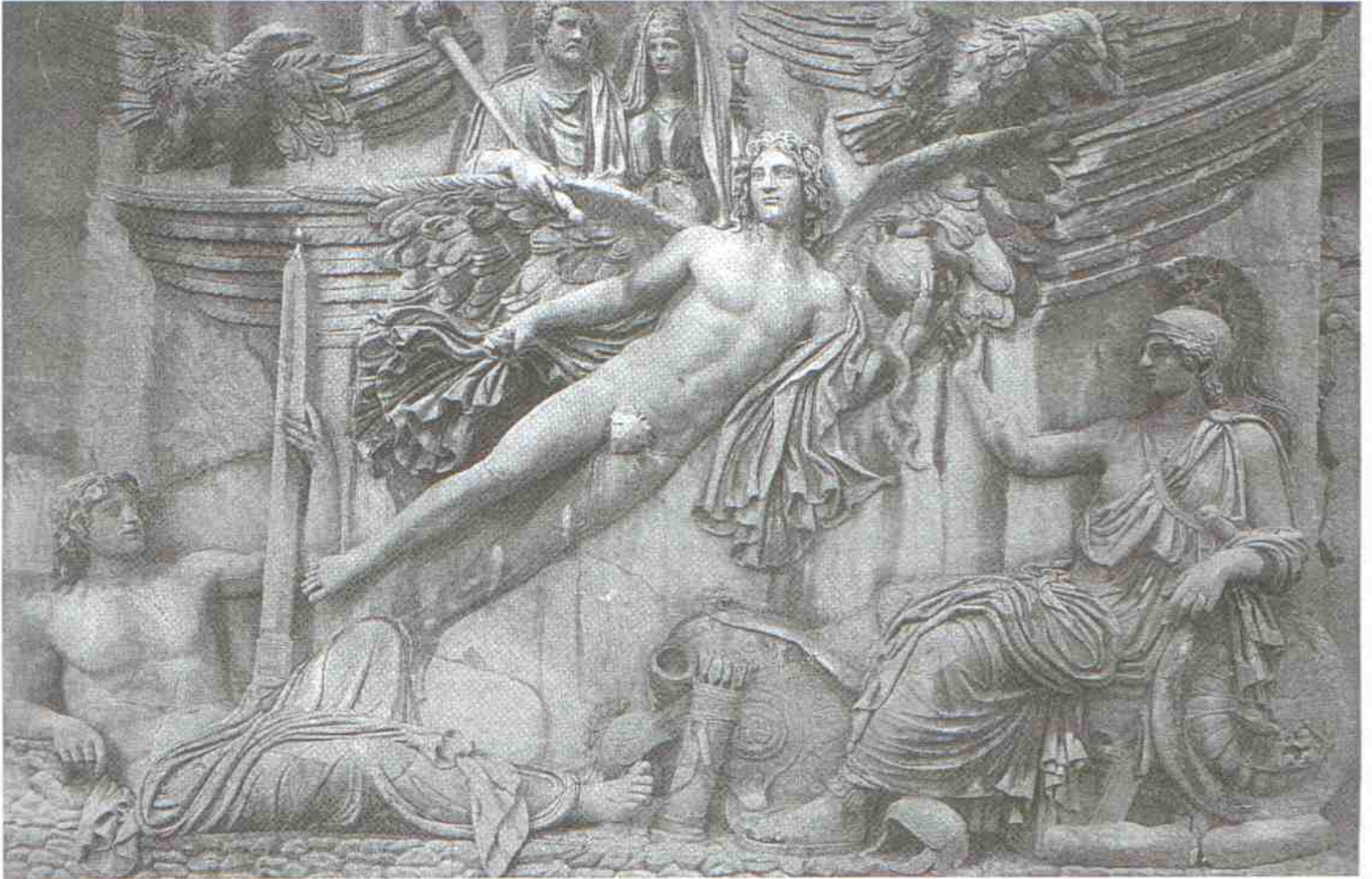
For you, Polydamantis, your father shed piteous tears, when you embarked on the black ferry of the dead. You did not place young children on your dear father's knees, to look after him in dreadful old age: a dark cloud has shaded the lovely house, and forgetfulness has cast her robe over your family. For your aged mother you leave grief and tears, and for your husband also: he laments as he sees the desolation of the house.

(e) Funerary relief of Lucius Vibius and Vecilia Hila (13 BC-AD 5)





(f) Pedestal of the Column of Antoninus Pius, Rome (AD 161)



- 2 Why was it important in antiquity to have funeral-rites?
- 3 Does the soul's separation from the body make death easier or more difficult for ancient philosophers to handle?

[TURN OVER

- 4 **Either** In what sense does ‘a beautiful death’ need a witness to be ‘beautiful’?  
**Or** To what extent was ‘a beautiful death’ the preserve of Greek men?

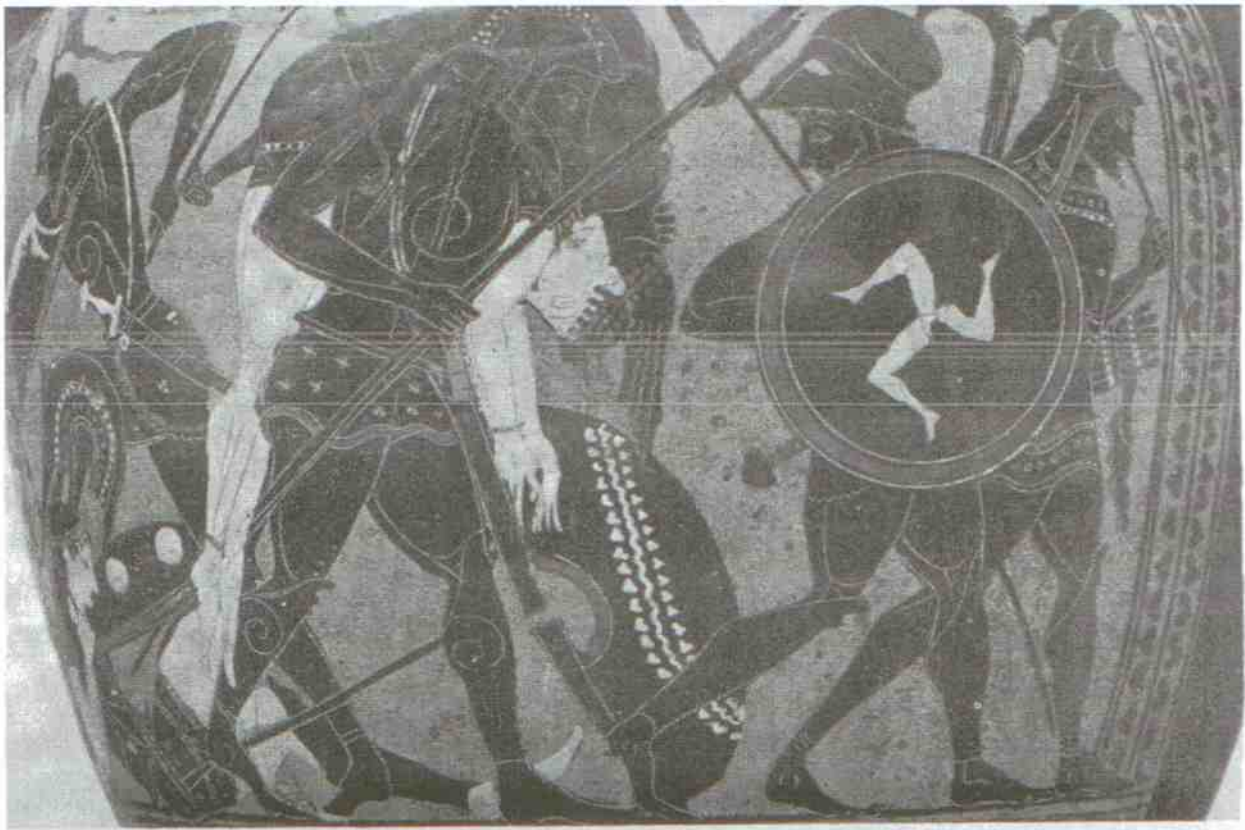
You may, if you wish, use **one or more** of the following texts or images in your answer.

- (a) Homer, *Iliad* 22. 367–75

Ἦ ῥα, καὶ ἐκ νεκροῖο ἐρύσσατο χάλκεον ἔγχος,  
καὶ τό γ' ἀνευθεν ἔθηχ', ὁ δ' ἀπ' ὤμων τεύχε' ἐσύλα  
αἵματόεντ'· ἄλλοι δὲ περιδρομον νῆες Ἀχαιῶν,  
οἳ καὶ θηήσαντο φυὴν καὶ εἶδος ἀγῆτον 370  
Ἔκτορος· οὐδ' ἄρα οἷ τις ἀνουτητί γε παρέστη.  
ὦδε δέ τις εἶπεσκεν ἰδὼν ἐς πλησίον ἄλλον·  
“ὦ πόποι, ἦ μάλα δὴ μαλακώτερος ἀμφαφάασθαι  
Ἔκτωρ ἢ ὅτε νῆας ἐνέπρησεν πυρὶ κηλέω.”  
ὥς ἄρα τις εἶπεσκε καὶ οὐτήσασκε παραστάς· 375

He spoke, and from the corpse drew out his spear of bronze and laid it aside, and set about stripping from the shoulders the blood-stained armor. And the other sons of the Achaeans ran up around him, and gazed on the stature and wondrous beauty of Hector, nor did any approach but dealt him a wound. And one would turn to his neighbour and say: “Well now! Surely softer is Hector to handle now than when he burned the ships with blazing fire.” Thus would one speak, and coming up would deal a wound.

- (b) Hydria showing Achilles and Penthesilea (?) (c. 510 BC)





(c) Lucan, *Pharsalia* 8.663–73

At Magni cum terga sonent et pectora ferro,  
 Permansisse decus sacrae venerabile formae  
 Iratamque deis faciem, nil ultima mortis 665  
 Ex habitu voltuque viri mutasse fatentur,  
 Qui lacerum videre caput. Nam saevus in ipso  
 Septimius sceleris maius scelus invenit actu,  
 Ac reteggit sacros scisso velamine voltus  
 Semianimis Magni spirantiaque occupat ora 670  
 Collaque in obliquo ponit languentia transtro.  
 Tunc nervos venasque secat nodosaque frangit  
 Ossa diu: nondum artis erat caput ense rotare.

But those who saw the severed head of Magnus admit that, when the steel clashed on his back and breast, the majestic beauty of those sacred features, and the face that frowned at Heaven, suffered no change: and that the utmost death could do made no alteration in the bearing and countenance of the hero. The head was severed: for savage Septimius, in the very doing of his crime, devised a crime still worse. He slit the covering and unveiled the sacred features of the dying man; he seized the still breathing head and laid the drooping neck across a thwart. Next, he severed the muscles and veins and hacked long at the knotted bones: it was not yet a knack to send a head spinning with a sword-cut.

(d) Ludovisi Gaul group (Roman adaptation of Hellenistic original)



[TURN OVER for continuation of Question 4

(e) Virgil, *Aeneid* 11.816–35

illa manu moriens telum trahit, ossa sed inter  
 ferreus ad costas alto stat uolnere mucro.  
 labitur exsanguis, labuntur frigida leto  
 lumina, purpureus quondam color ora reliquit. 820  
 tum sic exspirans Accam, ex aequalibus unam,  
 adloquitur, fida ante alias quae sola Camillae,  
 quicum partiri curas, atque haec ita fatur:  
 “hactenus, Acca soror, potui; nunc volnus acerbum  
 conficit et tenebris nigrescunt omnia circum.  
 effuge et haec Turno mandata nouissima perfer: 825  
 succedat pugnae Troianosque arceat urbe.  
 iamque vale.” simul his dictis linquebat habenas,  
 ad terram non sponte fluens. tum frigida toto  
 paulatim exsoluit se corpore lentaque colla  
 et captum Leto posuit caput, arma relinquens, 830  
 uitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras.  
 tum uero immensus surgens ferit aurea clamor  
 sidera: deiecta crudescit pugna Camilla;  
 incurrunt densi simul omnis copia Teucrum  
 Tyrrhenique duces Euandrique Arcades alae. 835

She, with dying hand, tugs at the dart; but between the bones the iron point  
 stands fast beside the ribs within the deep wound. Bloodless she sinks; her eyes sink,  
 chill with death; the once radiant hue has left her face. Then, as her breath fails, she thus  
 accosts Acca, a maiden of equal years and true to Camilla beyond all else, sole sharer of  
 her cares, and thus she speaks: “Thus far, sister Acca, has my strength availed; now the  
 bitter wound o’erpowers me, and all around grows dim and dark. Haste away, and bear  
 to Turnus this my latest charge, to take my place in the battle, and ward the Trojans  
 from the town. And now farewell!” With these words she dropped the reins, gliding  
 helplessly to earth. Then, growing chill, she slowly freed herself from all the body’s  
 bonds, drooped her nerveless neck and the head which Death had seized, letting fall her  
 weapons: and with a moan life passed indignant to the Shades below. Then indeed a  
 boundless uproar rose, striking the golden stars: Camilla fallen, the fight waxes fiercer;  
 on they rush in crowds together, all the Teucric host, the Tyrrhene chiefs, and  
 Evander’s Arcadian squadrons.



(f) Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienna in Eusebius' *History of the Church* 5.1.37

καὶ ὁ μὲν Μάτουρος καὶ ὁ Σάγκτος αὐθις διήεσαν ἐν τῷ ἀμφιθεάτρῳ διὰ πάσης κολάσεως, ὡς μηδὲν ὄλως προπεπονθότες, μᾶλλον δ' ὡς διὰ πλειόνων ἤδη κλήρων ἐκβεβιακότες τὸν ἀντίπαλον καὶ περὶ τοῦ στεφάνου αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀγῶνα ἔχοντες, ὑπέφερον πάλιν τὰς διεξόδους τῶν μαστίγων τὰς ἐκεῖσε εἰθισμένας καὶ τοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν θηρίων ἐλκηθμοὺς καὶ πάνθ' ὅσα μαινόμενος ὁ δῆμος, ἄλλοι ἀλλαχόθεν, ἐπεβόων καὶ ἐπεκελεύοντο, ἐπὶ πᾶσιν τὴν σιδηρᾶν καθέδραν, ἐφ' ἧς τηγανιζόμενα τὰ σώματα κνίσσης αὐτοὺς ἐνεφόρει. οἱ δ' οὐδ' οὕτως ἔλγηγον, ἀλλ' ἔτι καὶ μᾶλλον ἐξεμαίνοντο, βουλόμενοι νικῆσαι τὴν ἐκείνων ὑπομονήν, καὶ οὐδ' ὡς παρὰ Σάγκτου ἕτερόν τι εἰσήκουσαν παρ' ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς εἰθιστο λέγειν τῆς ὁμολογίας φωνήν.

“Οὗτοι μὲν οὖν, δι' ἀγῶνος μεγάλου ἐπὶ πολὺ παραμενούσης αὐτῶν τῆς ψυχῆς, τοῦσχατον ἐτύθησαν, διὰ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ἀντὶ πάσης τῆς ἐν τοῖς μονομαχίαις ποικιλίας αὐτοὶ θέαμα γενόμενοι τῷ κόσμῳ

Maturus and Sanctus passed again through all torture in the amphitheatre as though they had suffered nothing before, but rather as though, having conquered the opponent in many bouts, they were now striving for his crown, once more they ran the gauntlet in the accustomed manner, endured the worrying of the wild beasts, and everything which the maddened public, some in one way, some in another, were howling for and commanding, finally, the iron chair on which the roasting of their own bodies clothed them with its reek. Their persecutors did not stop even here, but went on growing more and more furious, wishing to conquer their endurance, yet gained nothing from Sanctus beyond the sound of the confession which he had been accustomed to make from the beginning.

“Thus after a long time, when their life still remained in them through the great contest, they were at last sacrificed, having been made a spectacle to the world throughout that day as a substitute for all the variations of gladiatorial contests

5 How was a Roman man meant to mourn?

You may, if you wish, use **one or more** of the following texts and images in your answer:

(a) Portrait of Polydeuces (c. AD 135–170)



(b) Extract from Pliny, *Epistle 4.2*

Amissum tamen luget insane. Habebat puer mannulos multos et iunctos et solutos, habebat canes maiores minoresque, habebat luscinias, psittacos, merulas; omnes Regulus circa rogam trucidavit. Nec dolor erat ille, sed ostentatio doloris.

Conuenitur ad eum mira celebritate. Cuncti detestantur, oderunt et, quasi probent, quasi diligant, cursant, frequentant, utque breuiter, quod sentio, enuntiem, in Regulo demerendo Regulum imitantur. Tenet se trans Tiberim in hortis, in quibus latissimum solum porticibus immensis, ripam statuis suis occupauit, ut est in summa auaritia sumptuosus, in summa infamia gloriosus. Vexat ergo ciuitatem insaluberrimo tempore et, quod uexat, solacium putat.



However, he now expresses his concern for the loss of this youth in a most outrageous manner. The boy had a great number of little coach and saddle horses; dogs of large and small sorts together with parrots, black-birds and nightingales, all these Regulus slew round the funeral pile of his son, in the ostentation of an affected grief.

He is visited upon this occasion by a surprising number of people, who, though they all detest and abhor him, yet are as assiduous in their attendance upon him as if they were influenced by real esteem and affection; and, to speak my sentiments in few words, endeavour, in courting his favour, to follow his example. He is retired to his gardens across the Tiber; where he has covered a vast extent of ground with huge porticos, and crowded all the shore with his statues: for he blends prodigality with covetousness, and vain glory with infamy. By his continuing there, he lays society under the great inconvenience of coming to him at this unwholesome season; and he seems to consider the trouble he puts to them to as a matter of consolation.

(c) Seneca, *Epistle* 99.1–3

Epistulam, quam scripsi Marullo, cum filium paruulum amisisset et diceretur molliter ferre, misi tibi, in qua non sum solitum morem secutus nec putavi leniter illum debere tractari, cum obiurgatione esset quam solacio dignior. Adflicto enim et magnum uulnus male ferenti paulisper cedendum est; exsatiat se aut certe primum impetum effundat; hi, qui sibi lugere sumpserunt, protinus castigentur et discant quasdam etiam lacrimarum ineptias esse.

“Solacia expectas? Conuicia accipe. Molliter tu fers mortem filii; quid faceres, si amicum perdidisses?”

I enclose a copy of the letter which I wrote to Marullus at the time when he had lost his little son and was reported to be rather womanish in his grief—a letter in which I have not observed the usual form of condolence: for I did not believe that he should be handled gently, since in my opinion he deserved criticism rather than consolation. When a man is stricken and is finding it most difficult to endure a grievous wound, one must humour him for a while; let him satisfy his grief or at any rate work off the first shock; but those who have assumed an indulgence in grief should be rebuked forthwith, and should learn that there are certain follies even in tears.

“Is it solace that you look for? Let me give you a scolding instead! You are like a woman in the way you take your son’s death; what would you do if you had lost an intimate friend?”

(d) Statius, *Silvae* 5.1.196–221

At iuuenis magno flammatus pectora luctu  
 nunc implet saeuo uiduos clamore penates,  
 nunc ferrum laxare cupit, nunc ardua tendit  
 in loca—vix retinent comites—, nunc ore ligato  
 incubat amissae mersumque in corde dolorem 200  
 saeuus agit, qualis conspecta coniuge segnis  
 Odrysius uates positus ad Strymona plectris  
 obstupuit tristemque rogum sine carmine fleuit.  
 ille etiam erecte rupisset tempora uitae,  
 ne tu Tartareum chaos incommitata subires, 205  
 sed prohibet mens fida ducis mirandaque sacris  
 imperiis et maior amor.

Quis carmine digno  
 exsequias et dona malae feralia pompae  
 perlegat? omne illic stipatum examine longo 210  
 uer Arabum Cilicumque fluit floresque Sabaei  
 Indorumque arsura seges praereptaque templis  
 tura Palaestinis, simul Hebraei que liquores  
 Coryciaeque comae Cinyreaeque germina; et altis  
 ipsa toris Serum Tyrioque umbrata recumbit 215  
 tegmine. sed toto spectatur in agmine coniunx  
 solus; in hunc magnae flectuntur lumina Romae  
 ceu iuuenes natos suprema ad busta ferentem:  
 is dolor in uultu, tantum crinesque genaeque  
 noctis habent. illam tranquillo fine solutam 220  
 felicemque uocant, lacrimas fudere marito.

But the heart of her spouse was ablaze with passionate grief; now he fills the bereaved home with frenzied crying, now would fain set free the steel, now climbs to lofty heights—scarce can his friends restrain him—now broods o'er his lost one with mouth joined fast to mouth, and savagely excites the grief that is hidden in his heart: even as the Odrysian bard seeing his wife's corpse fell dazed and horror-struck, and flinging down his quill on Strymon's bank in songless sorrow mourned the pyre. He too had courageously cut short the term of life, that thou shouldst not go unaccompanied to Tartarean gloom, but loyalty to his Prince forbids, loyalty that roused the wonder of the Sacred Monarch, and a yet greater love.

Who could recount in worthy song the obsequies and funeral gifts of that unhappy train? There heaped together in long array is all the liquid wealth of Arabian and Sicilian springs, Sabaeian blooms and Indian produce destined for the flames, and incense, spoil of Palestinian shrines, Hebrew essences withal and Corycian petals and Cinyrean buds; she herself reclines on a lofty couch of silk 'neath the shade of a Tyrian awning. But in all the concourse none looks but at the husband, on him is bent the gaze of mighty Rome, as though he were bearing youthful sons to burial: such grief in his looks, such darkness upon his hair and eyes. Her call they happy in her quiet and peaceful end, 'tis for the husband their tears are shed.



6 What did the language of sexual desire bring to ancient expressions of commemoration and loss?

You may, if you wish, use **one or more** of the following texts or images in your answer.

(a) Kore of Phrasikleia from Merenda in Attica (c. 550 BC)



[TURN OVER for continuation of Question 6

(b) Martial, *Epigrams* 5.37

Puella senibus uoce dulcior cyncis,  
 agna Galaesi mollior Phalantini,  
 concha Lucrini delicatior stagni,  
 cui nec lapillos praeferas Erythraeos  
 nec modo politum pecudis Indicae dentem 5  
 niuesque primas liliumque non tactum;  
 quae crine uicit Baetici gregis uellus  
 Rhenique nodos aureamque nitelam;  
 fragrauit ore quod rosarium Paesti,  
 quod Atticarum prima mella cerarum, 10  
 quod sucinorum rapta de manu gleba;  
 cui comparatus indecens erat pauo,  
 inamabilis sciurus et frequens phoenix:  
 adhuc recenti tepet Erotion busto,  
 quam pessimorum lex amara fatorum 15  
 sexta peregit hieme, nec tamen tota,  
 nostros amores gaudiumque lususque.  
 et esse tristem me meus uetat Paetus,  
 pectusque pulsans pariter et comam uellens:  
 'deflere non te uernulae pudet mortem? 20  
 ego coniugem' inquit 'extuli et tamen uiuo,  
 notam, superbam, nobilem, locupletem.'  
 quid esse nostro fortius potest Paeto?  
 ducentiens accepit et tamen uiuit.

A girl, sweeter-voiced than aged swans, softer than a lamb of Phalantine Galaesus, daintier than a shell of the Lucrine pool, to whom you would not prefer Erythrean pearls or freshly polished tusk of Indian cow or new-fallen snow or untouched lily; whose hair surpassed the fleece of a Baetic flock or Rhine knots or the golden dormouse; whose breath was fragrant as a Paestan rose bed or new honey of Attic combs or ball of amber snatched from the hand; compared to whom the peacock was ugly, the squirrel unlovable, the phoenix commonplace: Erotion lies still warm on her new-lit pyre, whose life the harsh decree of the wicked Fates ended in her sixth winter still uncompleted, my love, my joy, my play-fellow. And my friend Paetus tells me I must not grieve, beats his breast and tears his hair: "Are you not ashamed to weep for the death of a little slave girl? I have buried my wife, and yet I go on living—a wife well-known, proud, noble, rich." What can be braver than our Paetus? He has come into twenty millions, and yet he goes on living!



(c) Loculus slab from Tomb II, Isola Sacra (ca. AD 152–60)



7 **Either** (a) 'Socrates was opting out, while Perpetua and friends were opting in'. Is this a valid distinction to draw in describing their deaths?

**Or** (b) 'For the Christians of the Roman Empire, death was nothing more than a step towards resurrection'. Do you agree with this assessment?

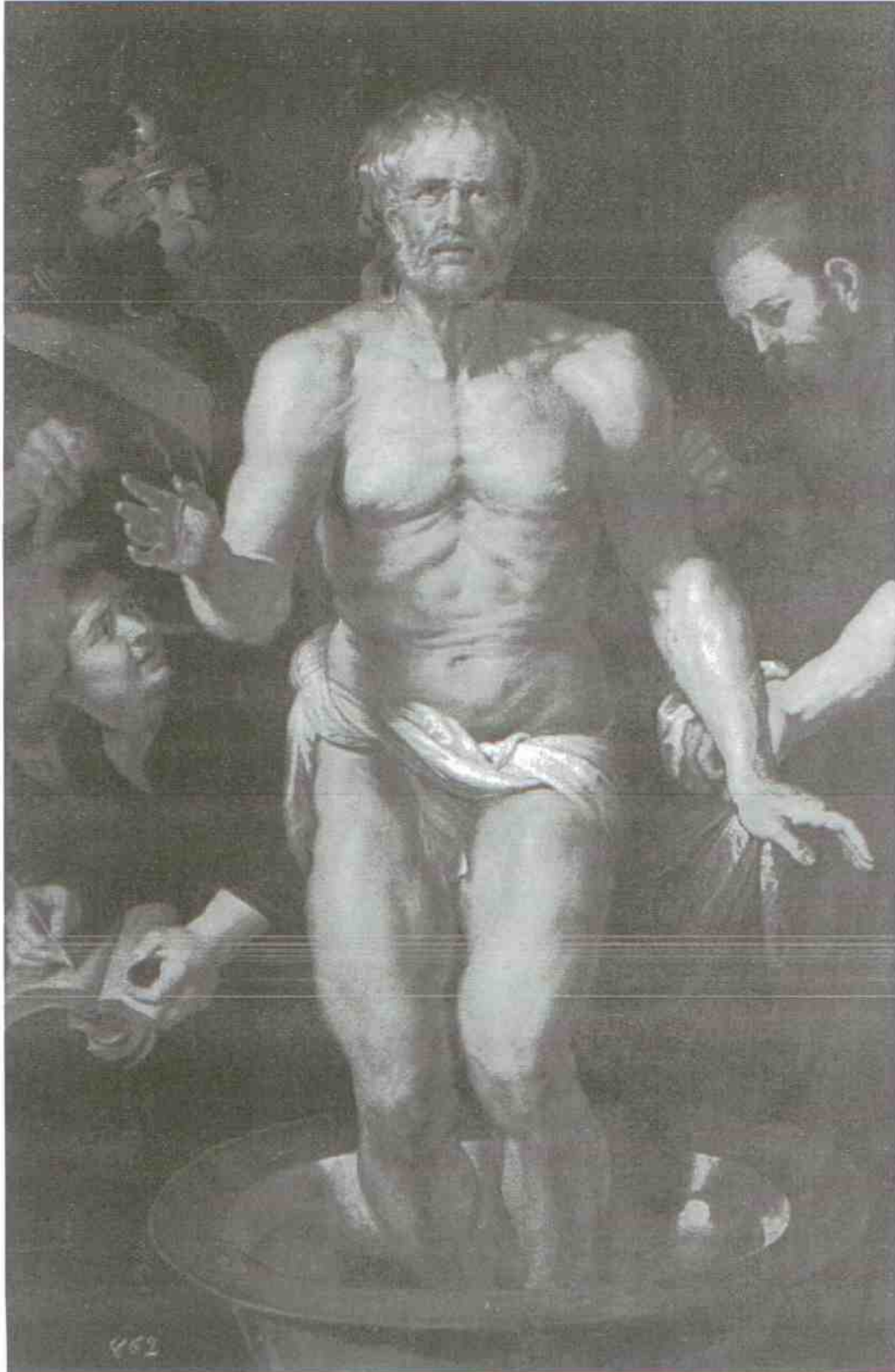
8 Was the ancient afterlife different from ancient real life? You may, but need not, limit your answer to either Greece or Rome.

[TURN OVER

9 In what ways do modern representations help us to understand death in antiquity?

You may, if you wish, use **one or more** of the following texts and images in your answer:

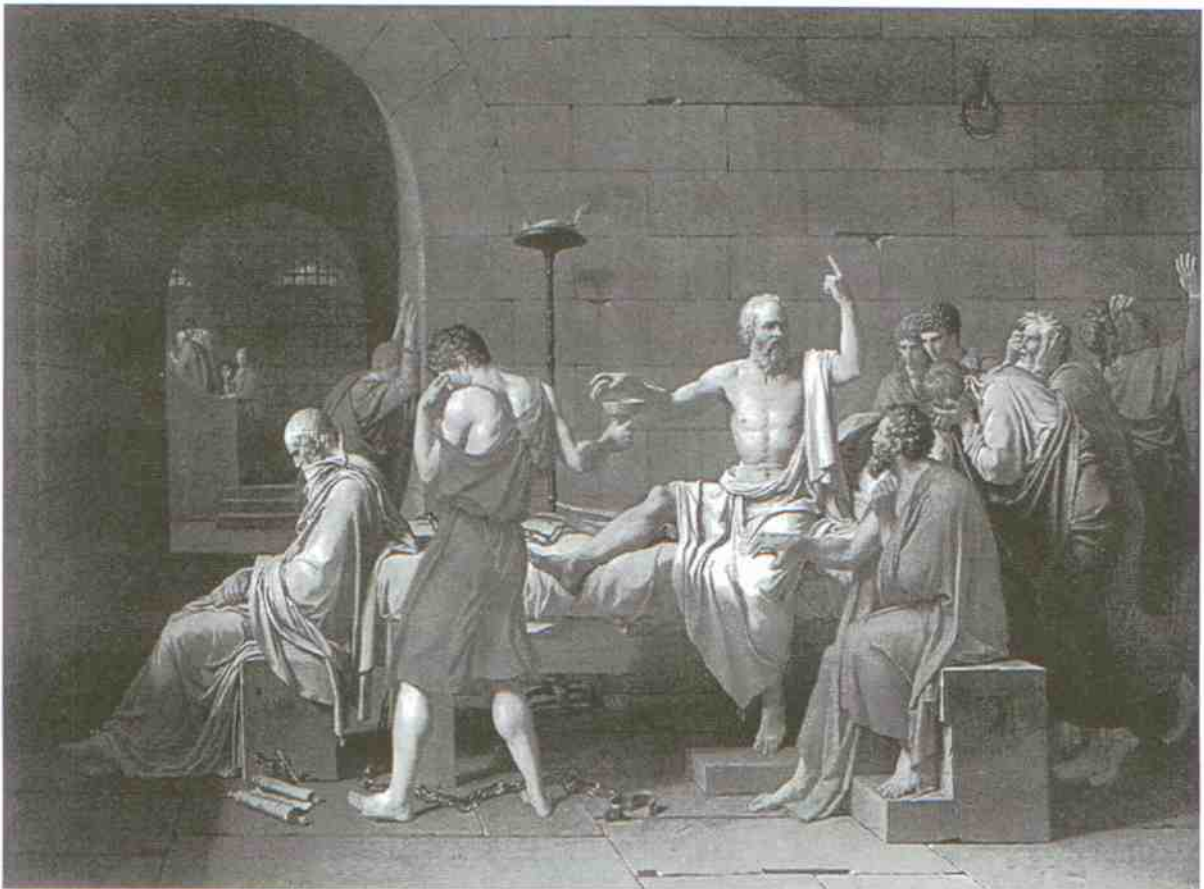
(a) Peter Paul Rubens, *The Death of Seneca* (c. 1608)



(b) Simeon Solomon, *Habet!* (1865)



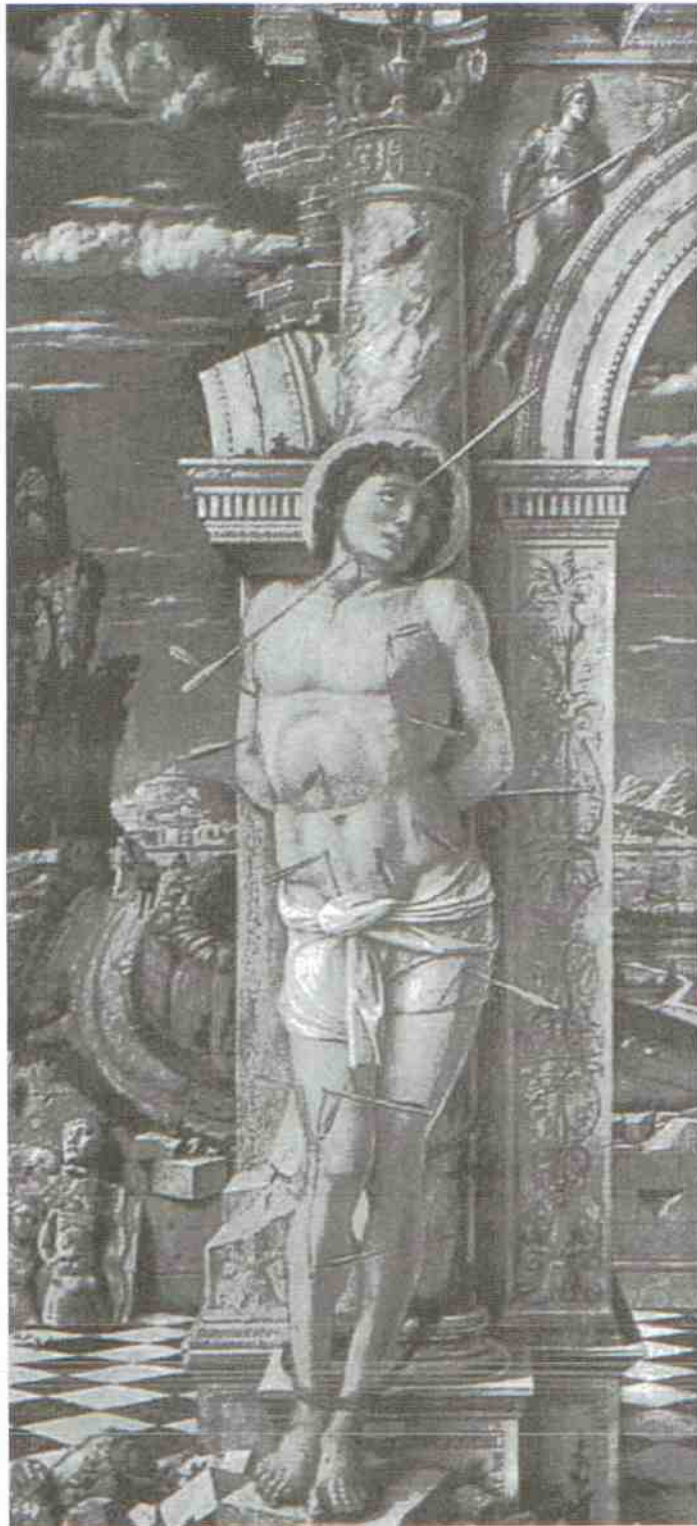
(c) Jacques-Louis David, *The Death of Socrates* (c. 1787)



[TURN OVER for continuation of Question 9



(d) Andrea Mantegna, *St Sebastian* (1457–9)



10 Today many of us hope for a sudden and painless death. Is this something that the ancients wanted?

END OF PAPER