

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

J199

For first teaching in 2017

J199/23 Summer 2023 series

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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. 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.

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Paper 23 series overview

There was a wide range of marks for the paper. Many responses were a delight to read, showing a superb understanding of the ancient world and demonstrating the ability to give more than one point of view and to justify a response with evidence. However, there were a number of question papers with many blank spaces where candidates had made no attempt to respond to the questions at all.

Some candidates were writing in the white space between the questions if they had filled the lines, rather than on additional answer space, which made it very difficult for the examiner to see what the candidate had written. In addition, if candidates have used the extra space, they must flag this up to the examiner by writing 'see extra space'.

There were a great many good responses to the 8-mark questions showing that good technique had been honed. Many candidates scored less well on the 15-mark questions reflecting the need for them to get more accustomed to writing in sufficient depth to access the higher levels.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● understood the set texts confidently ● could differentiate between Athenians, Spartans and Romans ● provided detailed examples ● chose and copied out suitable quotations from set texts ● picked out specific visual details from material sources ● referred to all relevant set sources in 15-mark questions ● in 8-mark questions included reference to the source and their own knowledge ● read the questions carefully. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● did not understand the set texts properly ● confused Athenians, Spartans and Romans ● did not write detailed responses ● did not use quotations or chose unsuitable ones ● did not look at material sources carefully or did not understand them ● included too narrow a range of factual knowledge in 15-mark questions ● in 8-mark questions, referred to the source alone or only their own knowledge ● showed a lack of understanding of some questions.

Section A overview

The majority of candidates wrote with obvious enthusiasm about the things that they had been taught and teachers had clearly inspired a love of the subject. There were candidates who demonstrated a pleasing ability to analyse visual sources. Some candidates seemed to get confused between Spartans, Athenians and Romans.

Question 1 (a)

Study Source A

1 (a) How many generals were there in the Athenian military service?

..... [1]

Some candidates were able to give the correct number, although the majority of candidates gave the wrong number. A common mistake was to give the number '2', possibly confusing the Athenian generals with the Spartan kings.

Question 1 (b) (i)

(b) (i) Give **one** way in which an Athenian man would have been assigned to his role in the army.

.....
..... [1]

The majority of candidates were able to identify wealth as a factor. 'Election' was also accepted by the examiners but 'status' was not specific enough to receive a mark.

Question 1 (b) (ii)

(ii) How was this good **or** bad for Athens?

.....
..... [1]

Some candidates gave a reason but neglected to say whether the reason they were giving was good or bad for Athens. This meant that the response could not be given the mark.

Question 1 (c)

(c) What was the battle formation used by the heavy infantry?

.....
..... [1]

The majority of candidates answered this question correctly. However, there were some candidates who confused the Athenian army with the Roman army, answering *testudo*.

Question 1 (d)

(d) Give **two** ways in which the Athenians made the formation so effective in battle.

1
.....
2
..... [2]

The majority of candidates gave successful responses. Occasionally candidates mixed up Athenians with the Spartans in the Tyrtaeus poem, saying that the youngest went at the front.

Question 2 (a)

Study Source B

2 (a) Who is the figure labelled Z?

..... [1]

Athene and Aphrodite were offered quite frequently, although the majority of candidates responded correctly. The use of the Greek name 'Nike' was prevalent and received the mark along with 'Victory' and 'Victoria'.

Question 2 (b)

(b) What makes this image appropriate for the celebration it commemorates?

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

Many sensible responses were given here, with lots of accurate references to the Dacian campaign.

Question 3

Study Source C

3 Identify **two** features of the scene and suggest what each might tell us about how Trajan wanted the Romans to view the Dacians.

1

.....

2

.....

[4]

The majority of candidates had this scene backwards, thinking that the men were the Dacians rather than the women, and struggled to make two valid points about the scene even when they did recognise what was going on. Good responses picked out specific details such as the woman grabbing the man by the hair and the one threatening him with the torch.

Exemplar 1

1 ^{Dacian women} The ~~Romans~~ are presented as ~~relaxed~~, ~~this~~ as attacking the Roman soldiers, this depicts them as violent and aggressive

2 The Roman soldiers have been stripped naked showing that the Dacians Trajan wanted to depict the Dacians as immoral and brutal

[4]

Exemplar 1 demonstrates how the candidate has chosen two separate details from the source and made a discrete point about each one, and therefore was awarded 4/4.

Question 4 (a)

Study Source D

4 (a) Name **two** pieces of Roman military equipment shown on the coin.

1

2

[2]

The majority of candidates were able to recognise two items from the coin.

Question 4 (b)

(b) State how **one** of them was used.

.....

..... [1]

There was some confusion between the eagle and the standard and the difference between them, but good knowledge was shown of how the trireme was used for ramming.

Question 5

Study Source E

5 Identify **three** of the labelled office holders in a Roman legion and state how each was important to the legion.

1

.....

2

.....

3

.....

[6]

Responses to this question were mixed. Some candidates knew the names but not the roles or vice versa. A few candidates gave accurate details and the correct names. The majority of candidates gave responses that were very vague, for example 'x was in charge'.

Question 6

Study Source F

- 6 What factors contributed to the Greek victory at Salamis? Use **Source F** as a starting point and your own knowledge in your answer. [8]

The responses to this question were interesting to read, with the majority of candidates demonstrating a fair knowledge of Salamis. Candidates had revised the details very well, mentioning Artemisia for example. The source was used well. Some of the less successful responses confused Salamis with Plataea, Actium or Thermopylae.

Question 7

- 7 'Sparta had the perfect system for creating an unstoppable fighting force.' How far do you agree with this statement? Justify your response. [15]

This was by far the most popular choice of the essay questions. Plenty of basic knowledge was shown but to access the higher levels of the marking grid, candidates needed to go into more detail. For example, most responses mentioned the *agoge* but not all of them discussed what it actually was. The *krypteia* and *syssitia* were often missed out and very few responses included helots or *perioikoi*. There were some very successful responses too, going into detail about all aspects of Spartan society and linking them carefully to the question, as well as giving both sides of the argument.

Question 8

- 8 'Romans won battles because they always had more soldiers than everyone else.' How far do you agree with this statement? Justify your response. [15]

Very few candidates answered this essay question. Some candidates who opted for it did not seem to have realised that they could use any aspect of the Roman army and link it to the question as a counter argument to the statement. There were some brilliant responses looking at recruitment, equipment, training and retention as well as the battlefield tactics and the ballista and onegar.

OCR support



Candidate exemplars are available on the [GCSE Classical Civilisation](#) pages on Teach Cambridge so that students can see what is expected of them for 15-mark questions.

Section B overview

There were numerous examples of candidates writing animatedly about the set texts and expressing opinions passionately, showing that teachers have instilled in them a love for the literature and cultures covered by the specification.

There was some confusion between literature and history as well as some misunderstanding of the set texts or mistaking one for another. The level of reading comprehension reflected in some of the responses about the sources printed on the insert suggests a good many insecure literacy skills.

Question 9 (a)

Study Source G

9 (a) Who was 'Almighty Zeus' daughter' (line 1)?

..... [1]

The majority of candidates were able to name Athene.

Question 9 (b)

(b) What sort of 'fine handiwork' (line 6) were ancient Greek women usually shown doing?

.....
..... [1]

On the whole, this question was well answered with some reference to needlework/textiles. Common misconceptions had the women making pottery or weapons.

Question 9 (c)

(c) How do the different weapons used by Hector and Paris draw attention to their contrasting characters?

.....
.....
.....
..... [2]

The majority of candidates were able to identify the bow and spear and could see the difference in the fighting methods.

Question 9 (d)

(d) Give two ways in which Homer makes this passage a vivid description.

1

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

[4]

On the whole, candidates were good at selecting vivid quotations but not always successful in explaining why what they had picked was vivid. Quite a few picked out 'the sounds of war echo through Troy' but thought that it was a metaphor. The most successful responses included well-chosen quotations and showed a good understanding of the meaning of the words and their effect.

Exemplar 2

1 "the sounds of war echo through Troy" show that the battle is loud and scary, the sensory language creates a vivid description

2 the description of the "spear-blade glistening" creates a vivid image because it ~~is~~ ~~as if the reader~~ allows the people watching to imagine the horrors of war

[4]

Exemplar 2 demonstrates how the candidate received 2 marks for the first point but only 1 mark for the second point as the explanation was not specific enough.

Question 10 (a)
Study Source H

10 (a) 'So I was alone ... by the altars': (lines 1–8) what impressions of Helen does this part of the speech create?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
..... [4]

Candidates gave really good responses to this question. Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the source and its context, with some making excellent use of quotations to illustrate points, while others made points which demonstrated understanding.

Question 10 (b)

(b) 'Priam has been put to the sword': (line 15) who killed Priam?

..... [1]

The majority of candidates were able to name Pyrrhus or refer to him as the son of Achilles.

Question 10 (c)

(c) Give **three** ways in which Virgil shows how angry Aeneas is with Helen.

- 1
-
- 2
-
- 3
-

[6]

As with Question 9(d), candidates picked out quotations well but often did not explain them properly. There was a tendency to repeat points, for example about fire imagery, and some misunderstanding about which fires were real and which were metaphorical. There were some very good responses that included three well-chosen quotations with appropriate analysis.

Exemplar 3

1. He says that 'fire blazed in my spirit', the metaphor showing how truly angry he is as he said I see it, the deepest part of him is on fire, flaming with rage at Helen.

"..."

Exemplar 3 demonstrates how the candidate gained marks for identifying the metaphor, quoting it and explaining it.

Question 11 (a)

Study Source I

11 (a) Give **two** types of male characters depicted by Horace in the poem.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

The majority of candidates were able to pick out two types from the source, although a few candidates misunderstood and thought they were supposed to name the characters.

Question 11 (b)

(b) Choose **one** of the male characters and state why you think Horace approves or disapproves of him.

.....

..... [1]

The majority of candidates gave good responses, but some did not explain whether they thought Horace approved or disapproved. There was some confusion with Tyrtæus.

Question 12

Study Source J

12 How do the authors you have studied depict the effects of war on non-combatants? Use **Source J** as a starting point and your own knowledge in your answer.

[8]

This question inspired some brilliant responses, which were really thoughtful, however, there were some candidates who struggled to move beyond war being bad for non-combatants. Many responses looked at Creusa and Andromache. The best responses also looked at Priam, Hecuba and the wider role of women and included the warriors' families in Horace and Tyrtæus too. There was a minority of candidates who did not seem to have understood what non-combatant means.

Question 13

13 How far do you agree that Hector is an ideal hero in the *Iliad*? Justify your response. **[15]**

Some really in-depth knowledge about Hector's role in the *Iliad* was displayed in response to this question. Some candidates brought in his appearance in the *Aeneid* which was outside the remit of the question. There was good knowledge of *kleos*, *aidos* and *timé* shown with the majority of candidates using a wide range of examples from the text, although some responses were a little too brief. This could possibly be a time problem as this is the last question. There was some interesting discussion of the difference between an ancient hero and a modern one.

Question 14

14 How important are the themes of fear and courage in the texts you have studied? Justify your response and refer to at least **two** authors. **[15]**

This question was slightly less popular than Question 13. Candidates demonstrated really good knowledge, although some candidates listed many examples of fear and courage, but did not discuss their importance. Candidates who explored fear and courage in all of the set texts and offered a solid counter argument about something else being more important got the best marks. Some candidates discussed how these themes allowed authors to highlight what 'a hero' is.

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