

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

H408


For first teaching in 2017


H408/31 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper 31 series overview	4
Section A overview.....	5
Question 1	5
Question 2	5
Question 3	7
Question 4	7
Question 5	10
Section B overview.....	13
Question 6	13
Question 7	15


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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 31 series overview

This topic is a new one to the A Level Classical Civilisation specification. It has proven to be a very popular topic with both teachers and candidates. There were some really impressive answers, especially on the high tariff questions, where candidates were able to employ the prescribed sources, material studied in other components, secondary sources and scholarship to good effect. There were different approaches to tackling the paper; generally, it was felt that those who were the most successful were those who tackled the questions in numerical order. Some of those who did the questions in a different order forgot to go back and make sure that every question had been answered. Timing was also an issue for some candidates.

	AfL	Candidates should be encouraged to time their answers very carefully to make sure that they allow sufficient time to answer the high tariff questions.
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Section A overview

Candidates generally had a good knowledge and understanding of the cult of Eleusis, the Panathenaia and the importance of Greek sanctuaries. The knowledge was not always employed in the most useful manner to address the questions, especially the evaluative elements.

Question 1

Source A: Red-figure plaque depicting the cult of Eleusis

- 1 Name **two** goddesses depicted on the plaque in **Source A**. [2]

Most candidates were able to identify the two goddesses as Demeter and Persephone or Kore. A few identified the goddesses and Juno, Minerva and Dionysus.

Question 2

- 2 Evaluate how useful the plaque in **Source A** is as a source of information about the Eleusinian Mysteries. [10]

Most candidates were able to say something useful about one or more of the following points: the party atmosphere, the depiction of men and women, the procession and the torches. Some answers focused a little too much on what is not depicted. Not all candidates seemed comfortable with the interpretation or reading of a visual source and there was much description – either of the plaque itself or what took place in the Eleusinian Mysteries – without making it specific to the question posed and reference to precise aspects of the plaque. There was some good use of technical terms, but sometimes *hierophant*, *dadouchos*, *myst* and *mystagogue* were confused. There were quite a few references to the 'Eleusinian Fields' in the underworld and the plaque often became the plague.

Exemplar 1

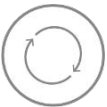
2		<p>The plaque in source A is an interesting source of information about the Eleusinian Mysteries as well as a work of art in its own right. However the usefulness of it solely as a source of information is debatable for two reasons: the content and the form. The plaque itself depicts several deities and mortals in a variety of positions doing different things, some are even different sizes. We see two goddesses sitting sitting, facing the opposite direction to that of which all the smaller (presumably mortal) standing standing figures are facing. There are a few notable points here;</p>
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This answer makes too many generalisations without getting down to specific evidence from the plaque.

Exemplar 2

2		<p>This source is useful in informing us about the rites of the Eleusinian Mysteries. There are several people in the image holding torches which suggests that this image is occurring in the dark. This could suggest that the Mysteries includes some involvement with the Underworld due to the darkness of it. However we cannot be sure of this because the Mysteries were very secretive and thus we they were never explicitly explained, including this source.</p>
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This answer gets straight to the point by selecting a piece of evidence from the plaque and making a comment relevant to the question.

	AFL	<p>Candidates should answer the question directly and not waste time writing lengthy introductions.</p> <p>Candidates should be encouraged to stay focused on the evaluative element of the question.</p>
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Question 3

Each year, worshippers proceeded along the Panathenaic Way and ended their procession on the Athenian Acropolis.

3 Name **three** buildings on the Athenian Acropolis.

[3]

While many candidates could identify two buildings on the Athenian Acropolis, most found it difficult to name a third building. Some struggled to understand what was meant by the term 'building', with a number giving the statues of Athena Parthenos and Athena Promachos as their answer. Buildings from the sanctuaries of Delphi and Olympia were also much in evidence.

Question 4

4 Explain why the Panathenaia was important to Athenians.

[10]

While many candidates showed good understanding of a range of reasons as to why the Panathenaic festival might have been important to the Athenians, there was a tendency to veer away from the question. In such cases, answers tended to discuss how we can tell it was important to the Athenians, or indeed just describing the festival, the making of Athena's peplos and various competitions at the festival.

A significant minority misunderstood the term 'Panathenaia' and thought that it referred to the Acropolis or the Parthenon and answered as though it were a physical place. There was some excellent use of scholars in this question, but it was not required.

Exemplar 3


4	<p>The Panathenaea was summarily very important to Athenians for many reasons, for religious purposes for the the religious purposes, for social purposes and also for a sense of local pride. The Panathenaea was the second largest panhellenic games in the ancient world and it provided sporting as well as artistic competitions; already a reason it was important was because of the variety of sporting and artistic - meaning there was something for everyone, bringing people together! The overall purpose was to worship the gods - although the severity of this has been debated, with scholars using both evidence of rules (such as no alcohol) and overall festivities to contradict each other. This overriding purpose</p>
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This response takes too long to make a relevant point. The answer is too general – mentioning gods rather than Athena – and states that the festival is Pan-Hellenic.

Exemplar 4

4.	<p>Firstly, the Panathenaia was important to the Athenians in order to celebrate Athena's birthday. Even though the greater Panathenaia happened every four years, the lesser parath Panathenaia occurred every year, which celebrated Athena. This is seen through the Parthenon frieze as all the gods came to see the festival and the celebration dedicated to Athena.</p>
	<p>Secondly, the Panathenaia was important to honour Athena as the & patron goddess of Athens. This is seen through the west pediment of the Parthenon which depicts the fight box of patronage between Poseidon and Athena. This means that the Panathenaia was put on in order to honour and thank Athena for protection as the Hymnic hymn:</p>
	<p>To Athena states that she is the "guardian of the city" which shows that it is the Panathenaia was important to show the Athenians' gratitude.</p>

This is a very efficient response which makes a point and then explains the relevance of it to the question. Many answers to Question 4 were very long – often at the expense of one of the higher tariff questions.

	<p>Misconception</p>	<p>The Panathenaea was often regarded as a Pan-Hellenic.</p>
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Question 5

- 5* 'The only function of Greek sanctuaries was to provide a space for public worship.' Discuss to what extent you think this is true. You may use your knowledge of the Athenian Acropolis as a starting point in your answer. [20]

This was a broad question which allowed for a variety of approaches and the length and detail were, in many cases, equal to or more than the 30-mark essay question, which may have had implications for timing.

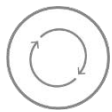
There was some impressive use of supporting classical evidence from a wide variety of source (archaeology, art, literature, inscriptions, artefacts etc.) and the best answers used these consistently. Those who discussed Eleusis, Epidaurus and Dodona tended to appreciate the more personal aspects of worship which could be experienced at these sites.

Some responses applied quite a limited description to events and were quick to categorise aspects of the sanctuaries as *one thing* only – e.g. sporting, entertainment, religious, political, propaganda. So, the dramatic festivals in Athens were regarded as being for entertainment and the athletic contests at Olympia were used as evidence that it was a site of competition and sport and, therefore, these were *not* religious sites. Better answers appreciated the multi-faceted nature of the different sanctuary sites. Lengthy descriptions of buildings at the three prescribed sanctuaries scored well under AO1, but not under AO2. Several answers focused on the Athenian Acropolis alone and limited the material available and the subsequent evaluation.

Exemplar 5


5	<p>The Athenian Acropolis mainly catered for public worship, but also had connections with politics. However the close link between religion and politics means that the ^{the political aspects} can be classified as religious too. The Parthenon contained the chryselephantine statue of Athena, sculptured by Phidias, illustrating how Athena was honored and appreciated. Pausanias Description of Greece comments that the statue was "made of ivory and gold", insinuating the high regard Athena was kept in by the people as the two most expensive materials were used to create this for her, reinforcing the religious function of the Parthenon on the Acropolis. Herodotus Histories also notes that in the Erechtheion there is "an olive tree", a symbolic reference to Athena and the patronage battle. This could likely be commemorating Athena's victory, showing how the Acropolis was designed for public worship. However the</p>
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This response has a clear structure. Using the Athenian Acropolis as a starting point, the answer refers to the Athena Parthenos statue, with reference to Pausanias, to highlight the religious nature of the sanctuary. The answer deals with other areas of the Acropolis before moving on to other sanctuaries.

	AfL	<p>Candidates should read the question carefully. Where a question advises that a source may be used as a starting point, this means that they should include material beyond the source.</p> <p>Candidates should be aware that the structure and clarity of their response are considered in questions with an *.</p>
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Section B overview

Question 6 [59%] was more popular than Question 7 [41%], but the latter tended to be marginally better answered. Most candidates would have benefited from using more examples from literature, the prescribed sources and material culture to back up their points in the essay questions. There were very few essays where candidates did not make use of scholarship in their argument. On occasion, quotations from scholars were used at the beginning of every paragraph, hindering the flow of the argument and making rather a bitty, almost bullet-style response. The best answers displayed good understanding of the subject and personal and perceptive critical thinking.

	Misconception	<p>Greeks and Athenians were often used interchangeably.</p> <p>Women were often referred to as citizens. Examiners, however, felt that this was a candidate's way of distinguishing free-born women from female slaves.</p> <p>Some responses stated that the priestess of Athena Polias was the most important priestess for Greeks.</p>
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Question 6

- 6* 'The Greeks worshipped their gods and goddesses out of fear of what would happen if they did not do this.' Explain how far you think this is true. Justify your response. **[30]**

This essay was approached in a variety of ways with some very perceptive ideas evident. There was good discussion on the distinction between fear of divine punishment and fear of state/civic punishment and many students used this as an opportunity to discuss Socrates and his fate, although not always very convincingly. Discussion of pre-Socratic philosophers was also interesting, but too often the different contexts of these philosophers and Socrates was not fully appreciated. Better responses examined more personal aspects of worship such as the worship of Asclepius at Epidauros and Kos.

Some candidates made effective use of classical sources studied in other components, especially the *Odyssey* and the *Bacchae*. At times, the use of sources such as Hesiod, the Homeric hymns and sculpture seemed more impressive than the use of classical ideas.

Exemplar 6

		<p>It is also possible that the Greeks did not worship the gods out of fear but simply because it was so deeply embedded in society that it was inescapable. In ancient Greece, religion was not separate from civic life but was very much a part of it. For example the father or eldest male figure acted almost like a priest in the home, overseeing all the rituals. In addition, the 'king ruler' known as the archon basileus had control over the religious calendar as well as being the most senior magistrate in charge of religious proceedings. Zaidman described this by saying that religion does not just gloss over civic life but impregnates each aspect of it. Therefore it is possible that the Athenians continued to worship the gods and goddesses because of their prominence in society, not necessarily due to fear.</p>
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In the exemplar above the candidate has employed the use of modern scholarship successfully to support the point being made about religion being deeply embedded in every aspect of life for the Greeks.

Question 7

- 7* 'Men and women's experience of Greek religion was the same.' Assess how far you agree with this statement. Justify your response. **[30]**

There were many very stimulating and insightful responses to this question, with some interesting reflections on how religion matches up with broader societal treatment of women and the relative lack of evidence for women's religious experience.


There were conflicting ideas about whether women could consult the Pythia or attend festivals. The better answers acknowledged that the evidence was inconclusive about some issues, for instance attending performances of plays. References to priestesses were good – for example, the priestess of Athena Nike and the priestess of Hera at Argos. The prescribed sources, especially the Pythia and sacrifice pots, were used to support the answers in an appropriate way. There was reference to artefacts beyond the prescription, for example the dedication to Artemis by Nikandre. It was interesting to note that some candidates made better use of the Ninnion tablet in this question than they did in Question 2.

While some answers engaged excellently with the views of scholars and gave a considered response in support/opposition to them, some also used scholars' views at the expense of expressing an opinion.

Exemplar 7

7	PLAN
	<p>Brannonimia compulsory</p> <p>lykathos megaron WOMEN</p>
	<p>ARCHON BASILEUS - Plutarch Moralia Fathers Role - Plutarch Moralia (oikos level) - tends to base ✓ hold cults ✓</p> <p>Thesmophoria = Anisophones lyoniorata - Anisophones (oikos level)</p>
	<p>married → Heeding cults → equal (H+T) Mystery cults → equal DK+M2 Oracular cults → not equal, only men → Anephoroi Rituals + Priest → only men, women prepared feast Odyssey Philosophy → men only seems to be radical Sovereignty + Rel → inward = herald = open system Kredit = western currency Zaidner + P = Patis leantelis = civility</p>
	<p>Men and women's experience of greek religion can be considered highly different as each had different expectations and were thought to have very individualistic roles therefore it was likely that their personal experiences were different.</p>
	<p>At oikos level it is clear to see that the fathers role was dominantly & more saturated with responsibility than that of any other family member. So much so that in Plutarch's 'Moralia' he compares the Archon father parallel to that of the Archon Basileus as he is not needed.</p>

This exemplar shows how a candidate planned the response and included scholars and sources as part of the plan. This made for a very successful essay. The introduction is short and to the point and helps the candidate move quickly to the meat of the response.

	AfL	Candidates should be encouraged to make a brief plan before beginning to write the essay.
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