

## **A LEVEL**

*Examiners' report*

# **CLASSICAL CIVILISATION**

**H408**

For first teaching in 2017

## **H408/33 Summer 2019 series**

Version 1

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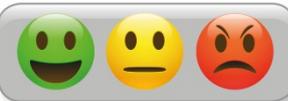
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## Introduction

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 33 series overview

H408/33, Politics of the Late Republic, is one of four available components in OCR's A Level Classical Civilisation Component Group 3: Beliefs and Ideas.

The examination aims to assess candidates' knowledge and understanding of, and engagement with classical literature and ideas about principle and pragmatism in the politics of Rome in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE.

To do well in the extended responses, candidates were required to deploy detailed knowledge in the service of insightful discussion of the issues raised by the questions.

Candidates who did well in this paper were those who were able to make mature judgements, based on sound factual knowledge, about the political careers of Cicero, Cato, Pompey, Caesar and others, and the parts they played in the events of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE.

Generally, candidates were well prepared to discuss Cicero's consulship, especially the Catilinarian conspiracy and the events which led to the Civil War, especially Caesar's deteriorating relationship with the senate. Less convincing were candidates' understanding of the differences between patronage and *amicitia*, or their ability meaningfully to discuss Cicero's promotion (or not) of literary style over the factual content of his work.

It should be noted that while this examination is not designed to test candidates' mere recall of events and their dates, nevertheless, when discussing matters such as politicians' careers or the causes of the fall of the Roman republic, causes and consequences are seldom sensibly discussed without due observance of correct chronology.

## Section A overview

Section A consisted of 5 marks' worth of fact- and knowledge-based questions; two short extended writing questions, for 10 marks each, in response to a literary passage and a stimulus sentence; and a longer discussion (20 marks) of the social and political values of Roman politicians.

### Question 1

Source A: Cicero's letter to Caelius in 50 BC *Fam.2.11*

- 1 Where was Cicero when he sent the letter in **Source A**, and what was he doing there? [2]

### Question 2

- 2 Why would Caelius want panthers (line 9)? [1]

Questions 1 and 2 were generally well done: nearly all candidates knew that Cicero was acting in his capacity as proconsular governor at this time. There was confusion, although, about his whereabouts, compounded, perhaps, by the near homophones (in English), Sicily and Cilicia. Examiners did not penalise misspellings of the latter, as long as, in their judgement, the former was not intended. Candidates who had studied this letter in preparation for the examination knew that Caelius wanted panthers to boost his political standing.

### Question 3

- 3 What image of Cicero does the letter in **Source A** provide? Explain your answer with reference to **Source A**. [10]

Question 3 was, on the whole, done well. Candidates should be aware that marks are given according to level descriptors (published in the mark scheme), which consider both AO1 and AO2 aspects of their responses. Answers which merely quoted from the letter, without proper explanation of how Cicero's words provided an insight into his character, were not likely to be well rewarded. Likewise, discussion of the details of how Cicero came to be in Cilicia, or how he performed on the battlefield when there, were not relevant to this question. The best answers looked beyond 'Cicero is bored' or 'Cicero is anxious', picking up on humour of Cicero's joke about the panthers, and his reluctance to exploit the province. It should be noted that Cicero would in fact send no panthers to Caelius: many candidates took his remarks here at face value, citing them as evidence that Cicero was helpful, whereas higher-scoring candidates recognised that in truth he was being somewhat disingenuous here.

### Exemplar 1a

		<p><i>Within the first paragraph especially, there is a low mood brought upon by Cicero as he tries to warn about the war, explains how he misses his home and his friends. Overall, Cicero doesn't seem</i></p>
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In Exemplar 1a, the candidate merely summarises the text, rather than quoting evidence to support a reasoned conclusion about the character of the author. Exemplar 1b is much closer to what is required.

Exemplar 1b

		politically insignificant in Cicero. We also get the impression that
		Cicero is a rather proud man who can be perceived as arrogant.
		When he writes 'I have gained fame to such an extent I do not
		desire it' it comes across that he believes he should play a much more
		important role than what he is doing at that period of time. Cicero

Question 4

Cicero's political career was not a typical one for a member of the Roman elite.

- 4 State **two** ways in which Cicero's career was not typical. [2]

Nearly all candidates knew that Cicero was a *novus homo*; although many other facts about Cicero's career were presented, not all of these could be considered atypical of a political career at Rome at this time, for example, the fact that Cicero had been consul in 63 BCE, while almost uniquely true, was not considered a creditworthy response to the question

Question 5

- 5 Explain to what extent Cicero's actions remain consistent with his political ideals during his career. [10]

This question required knowledge not only of Cicero's actions in the course of his political career, but also of his guiding principles; furthermore, for the highest marks, this knowledge needed to be used as the basis of a judgement about the extent to which the former were in line with the latter. The most successful candidates were those with a clear idea of Cicero's ideals and a good knowledge of his actions. Where such knowledge was accurate, sound judgements were almost certain to follow. Often, however, either candidates were unclear about Cicero's principles, beyond a sometimes hazy recollection of his policy after 63 BCE of *concordia ordinum* (although often imagined having been a lifelong principle); or their knowledge of his actions was patchy; or both. Responses could therefore tend towards the narrative, where votes and speeches were recited without reference to consistency, or some ill-informed opinions were expressed about Cicero's consistency, based on little evidence.

## Exemplar 2

5	<p>During the 50's BC Cicero was very much under the control of the triumvirate. This very much went against what he had spent so long prior to this occasion believing in. He was extremely anti corruption. However, after the conference at Luca in 56 BC he was <del>mainly</del> just a puppet that the triumvirate controlled. The three</p>
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Exemplar 2, the opening sentence of a response, demonstrates the problem caused by starting *in medias res*: without a chronological approach, it is difficult to establish an argument about consistency. Furthermore, 'anti-corruption' is rather vague, and unsubstantiated here by any evidence; and while it is true that Cicero had been against the triumvirate since 60 BCE, this was not, mainly, for moral reasons to do with corruption.

## Question 6

- 6\* 'Without patronage and *amicitia*, a politician in the late Republic could not be successful.' Assess how true this is in the cases of Cicero and Cato. Justify your response. You may use **Source A** and/or your knowledge of the careers of Cicero and Cato as a starting point. [20]

As with Question 5 above, some breadth of knowledge, as well as depth, was required for a successful response to this question. Higher level marks were accessed by candidates who were able to distinguish between patronage and *amicitia*, and who knew details of the greater or lesser extent to which both Cicero and Cato sometimes did (and sometimes did not) depend on these institutions. A clear understanding, too, of what does and does not count as 'success' in a political career was also important, and where this was deemed not to have depended on patronage or *amicitia*, some other explanation was provided. Too many candidates were content to conflate patronage and *amicitia* into a single, rather loose idea, often simply synonymous with bribery. Candidates who understood the need to develop an argument sometimes then made too easy a link between patronage/*amicitia* and success, suggesting, for example, that Cato's suicide and Cicero's proscription were proof of the fact that bribery was necessary for political success. Better responses offered more nuanced interpretations of the facts.

Exemplar 3

6	<p>For all Roman politicians, patronage and <i>amicitia</i> played a key role in success, however, it was crucial for some <sup>more</sup> <del>more</del> than others. Cicero and Cato both relied on these means at points in their careers, however, Cicero was <del>sometimes</del> successful without these on many occasions.</p>
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Exemplar 3 demonstrates the proper approach to a question of this nature. The candidate went on to fulfil the promise of these introductory marks and to achieve a high-level mark.

	<p><b>Misconception</b></p>	<p>One issue that was seen across the cohort was a general confusion in the use of technical vocabulary such as ‘patrician’, ‘plebeian’, ‘noble’ and ‘aristocrat’. This led to particular problems with the discussion of Cato’s attitude to patronage and <i>amicitia</i>.</p> <p>Patricians were members of those families who traced their ancestry back to the ‘founding families’ of 753 BCE and after. These included, for example, one branch of the <i>gens Antonius</i> (Cicero’s co-consul in 63 BCE was a patrician, although Marcus Antonius came from the plebeian side of the family). The Plebeian class included the majority of politicians in the late republic, including Cato the Younger, his great-grandfather Cato the Elder (also a <i>novus homo</i>), Cicero, Pompey, and others. The term ‘noble’ describes senatorial aristocrats, that small band of leading (but not necessarily founding) families, a mixture of patrician and plebeian, who controlled the junior magistrates. The office of Tribune of the Plebs was open only to plebeians, such as Cato (in 62) and Clodius, formerly ineligible as the patrician Claudius (in 58).</p> <p>With specific reference to this question, it should be noted that little of this has much to do with material wealth: patricians could be (relatively) poor; plebeians could be rich. This will have implications for discussions of various politicians’ use of patronage and <i>amicitia</i>.</p> <p>For a more thorough treatment of these important details, see e.g. Marin, <i>Blood in the Forum</i>, 10-12.</p>
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## Section B overview

Section B offered optionality in the form of a choice between two topics for discussion for 30 marks.

For AO2 marks in this section, the marking grid refers to 'secondary sources, scholars and/or academic works'. In the first instance, the overall quality of the response determined the level in which it was placed. Thereafter the position within that level was adjusted depending on the candidate's use of modern scholarship and quality of written communication.

Examiners acknowledged all references in candidates' responses to secondary and/or modern scholarship, also that not all of these necessarily supported the points being made in any meaningful way; and while it was good to see that scholarship was drawn from a wide variety of sources, from the traditional studies of the period to more recent blogs and podcasts, it can be agreed that not all of these carry an equal weight of authority. Just as less is sometimes more, so more can sometimes be less.

### Question 7

*Use classical sources, and secondary sources, scholars and/or academic works to support your argument. You should also consider possible interpretations of sources by different audiences.*

- 7\* 'In both his oratory and his correspondence Cicero cared more about the form and style of his writings than about facts and truth.' Discuss to what extent you have found this to be the case. **[30]**

Many candidates avoided this question in favour of Question 8 below. The most successful responses displayed detailed knowledge of both the content and the style of both Cicero's oratory and his correspondence; furthermore, they were able to offer sound judgements, based on this knowledge, of Cicero's attitude to effects and/or facts. Many candidates were more or less familiar with *in Verrem* 1, and indeed with some of the stylistic devices employed by Cicero in that work; few, even though, devoted attention to the 'facts and truth' recorded in the speech. The same is true of the *pro Roscio*, although this was less often referenced. The *Philippics*, too, were sometimes mentioned, but seldom with any real basis of knowledge beyond the fact that these were rhetorically effective. Few letters were known: *ad Fam* 2.11 (Source A on the question paper) was sometimes used, but few candidates were able to draw much benefit from it in service of an argument relevant to this question.

## Exemplar 4a

		<p>Firstly, in Cicero's oratory in the case of Pro Roscius<sup>in 80BC</sup> suggests that he may well have ignored the facts in order to use exaggerated and persuasive language in order to further his career. For example, he consistently repeated the phrase "Qui Bono," or "Who benefits," to suggest what he thought of the accusations of sexus Roscius killing his father. This successfully</p>
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Exemplar 4a demonstrates detailed knowledge of one of the literary sources under discussion, to which is later added a similar level of detail about several of Cicero's letters. In Exemplar 4b, an argument is developed throughout the essay, arriving at a reasoned conclusion.

## Exemplar 4b

		<p>To conclude, in Cicero's oratory, it seems as though he often favoured drama and style in his speeches, over the truth, to make a big public statement. However in his private letters, Cicero is often much more truthful when he feels as though he doesn't have to make a huge, powerful impression, as he may have felt in his oratory</p>
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## Question 8

- 8\* 'The attitudes of a few individuals, rather than a flawed system of government, led to the downfall of the *res publica*.' Assess how true you consider this statement to be by discussing **at least two** individuals. [30]

By far the more popular of the two optional questions in Section B, this was often done well. Centres clearly recognise this as one of the fundamental questions of the age, and it seems that much time has been devoted to its discussion in classrooms up and down the country. The actions of Caesar and Cato between 60 and 44 BC were well rehearsed, often in impressive detail. The best essays always and everywhere strove to link these actions and their subsequent consequences to the downfall of the *res publica*; some candidates found it difficult to avoid falling into a largely narrative approach, simply 'retelling the story' without analysis. Generally speaking, although, details of the contribution of other figures, or of the system of government were less well known. This tended to undermine the chances of an informed weighing-up of evidence when considering where fairly to lay the blame for the fall of the *res publica*.

Exemplars 5a and 5b below demonstrate contrasting treatments of Cato's contribution to the fall of the *res publica*. The difference between the analysis of detailed knowledge and rather inaccurate narrative is clear.

## Exemplar 5a

		However, Cato's attitude was disruptive and could come across as bad or negative, he did this because of his stoic belief, and wanted to show people his beliefs so although it was his attitude that caused the downfall, it's because he was trying to show the senate on the Empire storm so it could also be seen as the <del>Empire's</del> <sup>Empire's</sup> fault for being closed minded of other lifestyles rather than the general Roman one.
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## Exemplar 5b

8	3	<p>through people. This lack of compromise led to him rejecting Pompey, Crassus and Caesar. In 59 BC we see him deny Pompey's request for land for his veterans as well as ratification for his treaties in the east. He also denies Crassus of tax rebates in Asia, and refuse Caesar of military triumph for <del>his</del> his victories within Spain. This hostility he showed to the 3 political players ultimately led them to coal together and form the first triumvirate or 'beast with three heads' as Velleius describes. For this reason it can be argued that Cato plays a roll in the downfall of the Republic.</p>
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