

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **CLASSICAL CIVILISATION**

**H408**

For first teaching in 2017

**H408/24 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 24 series overview

Examiners found this year's scripts a pleasure to mark and were delighted by the interest and enthusiasm displayed by candidates for the material they had studied for this component. The marks seemed to cover virtually the whole mark range, but interestingly there were fewer really high scoring scripts and far fewer really weak scripts.

To improve their performance, candidates needed to respond to the question as it is written and not offer their own version of a question or adapt it to a version of the question they have written during their studies. It was interesting to note the number of phrases from previous questions which kept cropping up in responses, whether they were relevant or not. It is also important for candidates to offer details of specific pieces of sculpture, pots etc. and not offer passing remarks or simply name drop artists or pieces of art. Examiners were pleased to note that candidates had studied material beyond the specification (not required but will always gain marks) to make sense of the idea of development in a particular medium of art and that there was some evidence of reading beyond the OCR endorsed book.

The majority of candidates seemed to manage their time well and there were fewer candidates than last year who left out questions or did not complete the paper. Examiners noted in a few papers that did not demonstrate any evidence of essay planning for the 20-mark and 30-mark questions. There was, however, more evidence of planning for the 10-mark questions. The majority of candidates did not follow the rubric of starting their responses on a new sheet of the answer booklet.

Planning and writing in paragraphs can help candidates to order the points they want to make and help the examiner to follow the argument more effectively. It was common to have one paragraph responses for the extended writing questions. The ability to write quickly, concisely and with depth comes with practice and planning can really help in this regard.

Fewer candidates used diagrams this year, but where they were used, they did enhance the response.

Finally, legibility and quality of written communication continues to deteriorate. There was a great deal of challenging handwriting in this examination series. It is difficult for examiners to award marks for material or keywords which they cannot read.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read the questions carefully</li> <li>• followed the rubrics of the questions carefully</li> <li>• had a good knowledge of the material on the specification</li> <li>• used specific details to address the topic of the question</li> <li>• engaged with the scholars cited within the essay</li> <li>• came to a reasoned conclusion in the high tariff questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• did not read the questions carefully enough</li> <li>• did not address all aspects of a question</li> <li>• had a lack of knowledge of the material on the specification</li> <li>• name dropped statues or pots but did not provide details</li> <li>• did not engage with scholars effectively</li> <li>• assigned pieces of art to the wrong medium</li> <li>• spent time writing out the question or writing introductions for the 10-mark questions</li> </ul>

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• spent too long on the 20-mark question to the detriment of the 30-mark question.</li></ul>

## Section A overview

The low tariff questions were well answered by the majority of candidates, but they represented something of a challenge for others. The responses to the 10-mark questions were enjoyable and interesting to read, even when the question was not directly addressed.

Candidates needed to be aware of the timing for the questions in this section so that they allowed themselves enough time to respond to the 30-mark essay question in greater depth. Candidates who answered the questions in the numerical order tended to score more evenly.

### Question 1

- 1 What is the technical name given to the type of statue shown in **Source A**? [1]

The majority of candidates misread the question and gave the name of the statue, rather than the technical name given to the type of statue. Other candidate misspelt 'kore/korai' such that their response was ambiguous.

### Question 2

- 2 What was the purpose of this type of statue? Make **one** point. [1]

The majority of candidates could give one function of this type of question.

### Question 3

- 3 Explain to what extent you find the statue in **Source A** aesthetically pleasing.

Use specific references to **Source A** to support your answer. [10]

There was quite a lot of negative feeling towards the Berlin Standing Goddess expressed in the responses to this question, without any attempt to find anything to appreciate. Whether arguing in favour or against, however, the best responses described her appearance in detail before offering an opinion on the effect created. The majority of candidates worked their way through a list of attributes (e.g. pose, drapery, facial features), but did little more than make statements like 'the pose is rigid and therefore not aesthetically pleasing' or 'the face has archaic features therefore the statue is not aesthetically pleasing'. There were references to terms such as symmetry or polychromy, but it was not always clear that the terms were fully understood.

Responses which gained more marks, made points which were related directly to the question and provided specific references to Source A to support the response.

## Exemplar 1

use of the Archaic smile is aesthetically pleasing as it adds emotion and vitality to the statue. In addition, she wears a necklace and there are holes in her ears for adding earrings. The depiction of jewellery such as her necklace and bracelet is very aesthetically pleasing as it adds delicate detail. Additionally, the added jewellery would likely be gold ~~gold~~ which would add an interesting change of texture to the statue. Furthermore, the use of paint on the statue adds to its aesthetic. The use of red paint is very striking. The meander painted onto the folds of her ~~dress~~ chiton and the brim of her ~~polo~~ polos are also aesthetically pleasing, the vibrant geometric patterns are eye-catching and add texture to the statue. ~~It~~ In addition, the sculptor uses symmetry. The Berlin Standing Goddess is completely symmetrical from the back which is very aesthetically pleasing. The symmetry in the front is only broken by her asymmetrical hands which add contrast. This breaks the monotony of

Exemplar 1 offers one paragraph from a response which mentions the addition of accessories such as the necklace and earrings. The candidate goes on to discuss the colour and the patterns on the dress and hat. There is also mention of the hands breaking the overall symmetry of the statue which was mentioned in very few of the responses.

## Question 4

4 Identify figures **X**, **Y** and **Z** shown in **Source B**.

[3]

Figure X, Ares, was the most well-known of the three gods, followed by Figure Z, Zeus. Figure Y was variously identified as Aphrodite, Artemis, Eos, Hera, Herakles and Thetis.

## Question 5

5 Analyse the content and composition of the scene in **Source B**.

Make close reference to specific elements of the scene to support your answer.

[10]

There were some good responses to the question about this section of the frieze from the Siphnian Treasury, even when candidates were in some doubt as to the subject matter and the identity of individual deities. This was because candidates were able to comment effectively on the use of space, shapes and patterns within this section of frieze. As with Question 3, responses which reached the higher levels of the grid went further than just working through a checklist.

Many candidates spent a good portion of their response discussing other sections of the frieze from the Siphnian Treasury which was not required in this question. There were other candidates who ignored the question posed and approached it in the same way as Question 3.

Some candidates displayed good understanding of 'composition' and demonstrated strong visual analysis skills of the compositional elements.



## Exemplar 2

In terms of composition, this is a fairly repetitive scene. The figures mostly create a repetitive pattern of right angles. This repetition of straight lines is only broken by Ares' shield at the back. This circular line breaks the symmetry of the frieze. Additionally, the drapery adds contrast to the composition. The sculptor used a variety of textures on the drapery to create some flow. The softened lines of the drapery breaks the harsh lines created by the chairs and the backs of the gods. Furthermore, the lines of the outstretched arms parallel each other, creating strong diagonal lines. The figure of Zeus at the front of the line mirrors the figure of Ares at the back as they're slightly apart from the three middle figures, and their front arm adopts the same pose. Overall, this scene is full of Archaic tropes, symmetry and strong ~~horizontal~~ horizontal and verticals.

Exemplar 2 shows the final paragraph of a response in which the candidate discussed what could be seen in this panel of the frieze and went on to discuss the repetition, the strong horizontals and verticals and the softening of the strong lines by the diagonals of the arms and the drapery of the deities.

### Assessment for learning



Candidates should be advised that the 10-mark questions are based on the image on the paper, not on the whole of a frieze or pot.

Some candidates are still writing introductions for the 10-mark questions. These are not needed and waste valuable time in an examination.

A small number of candidates chose to write their responses in bullet points. Continuous prose is the best way to make a point and develop it when dealing with an image question.

## Question 6\*

**6\*** Evaluate how effectively sculptors of free-standing sculpture and architectural sculpture depicted female figures.

You may use **Source(s) A and/or B** as a starting point in your answer.

**[20]**

This was a question designed so that candidates could choose a range of examples from their study of Greek Art. The question demanded careful reading to respond to it successfully. Responses required examples from both free-standing and architectural sculpture and an assessment of how effective these depictions were. The images in Sources A and/or B could be used as a starting point.

Some candidates wrote exclusively about Sources A and B. Others did not include any material from architectural sculpture. Yet candidates transposed scenes from vase-painting into friezes or metopes (the wedding of Peleus and Thetis or Achilles and Penthesilea).

There were, however, some superb responses where a very competent knowledge and understanding of the development of the depiction of female figure was shown. In such responses there was thorough description of female figures from free-standing sculpture (some from beyond the specification such as Kore 674 and Kore 675, Hestia and Amazons – although this knowledge was not required).

Candidates struggled to produce as wide a range of examples from architectural sculpture. The most common example used was Medusa from the temple of Artemis on Corcyra. Depictions of Athena from a variety of temples were also used, but not always accurately.

Some candidates clearly had a wide range of knowledge about different depictions of women, but they did not always use their knowledge to good effect because they concentrated on elements such as women as victims or the sexualisation of women. The effectiveness of the depiction often got lost in the discussion.

### Misconception



During the Archaic period depictions in sculpture were limited to men.

The Berlin Standing Goddess was the first free-standing statue of a woman.

Misconception or confusion: between Aphrodite of the Agora and Aphrodite of Knidos.

## Section B overview

Question 8 on bravery and heroism in vase-painting was significantly more popular than Question 7 on the pedimental sculpture. The most successful candidates really engaged with the quotations, especially the vase-painting quotation and were able to use a range of pediments and pots to support their arguments. Many candidates were able to mention specific pots or statues or tell the story of a scene, but there was not the level of detail to raise responses into the top levels.

This year fewer candidates were able to quote, paraphrase or 'name-drop' scholars. Woodford and Spivey were the most quoted of the scholars, with Woodford's 'a decorative delight' the most quoted opinion, although, she does seem to have said this about many different pots.

### Question 7\*

**7\*** 'Towards the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, sculptors had overcome the challenges of filling the pedimental space effectively.'

Assess how far your study of pedimental sculpture supports this opinion. In your answer, you must include reference to specific pediments. **[30]**

This question was less popular than the vase-painting question and the material was generally not as well-known. The responses tended towards the narrative/descriptive rather than the comparative because few candidates took time to discuss the challenges of the pedimental space and the methods adopted in different time periods to tackle those challenges.

Occasionally, candidates used diagrams to show the shape of a pediment and how the space had been used within a named pediment. More detail of individual figures within specific pediments would have made arguments more convincing. Where the Parthenon was referenced, several candidates chose to describe the figures of Athena and Athena/Poseidon on the two pediments, which (given the lack of extant material) was far less convincing than focusing in on. For example, the reclining goddesses, the Dionysus/Herakles figure, Hebe, Iris or the river god Ilissos.

As with Question 6, there were times when vase-paintings became pediments, for example, the Temple of Zeus west pediment depicting Herakles and the Amazons.

## Exemplar 3

Another way that sculptors at the end of the 5th century used the space of the pediments well is with the central piece of each side of the Parthenon, in Athens', pediment. On the ~~South~~ side, you have Athena leaning and ~~propped~~ out of Zeus' head leaning and ~~empty~~ filling space and you have Zeus superior by this, taken aback. The both fill the central space well, however the sculptors also added in a winged Nike in the top centre to really fill in the space. Robin Osborne says "Sculptors in the 5th century ~~used~~ managed to use space well". I heavily agree with Robin as the sculptors added in the central piece of the ~~Nike~~ <sup>Nike</sup> and the olive tree on the ~~west~~ <sup>west</sup> side of the pediments very effectively filled up the space on both sides of the pediments.

Exemplar 3 is a paragraph from a response which briefly addresses the central space of both the east and west pediments of the Parthenon and, for good measure, includes a quotation from Robin Osborne.

### Misconception



Some candidates wrote with great conviction about the depiction of the central section of the east pediment of the Parthenon as although the statues from that section were extant.

## Question 8\*

8\* 'Greek vase-painters were only interested in depicting scenes of bravery and heroism.'

Assess how far your study of Greek vase-painting supports this opinion. In your answer, you must include reference to specific pots and painters. **[30]**

This was by far the more popular of the 30-mark essays. There were some excellent responses, which offered wide ranging examples and nuanced interpretation, showing that vases can offer multiple interpretations. Less successful candidates categorised vases as brave/heroic or not dependant on subject matter/title alone, rather than examining detail of composition/characterisation and considering how the material had been treated by the artist.

Scholars, where included, tended to be well used, more so than in Question 7.

### Assessment for learning



Candidates should refer to the opinions of at least two different scholars and be prepared to engage with those opinions. A quotation is not necessary. Close reference to scholars' views is sufficient.



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