

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **CLASSICAL CIVILISATION**

**H408**

For first teaching in 2017

**H408/24 Summer 2024 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 reported that candidates had managed their time really well this year and the vast majority had completed the paper and attempted all the questions. The knowledge displayed, particularly of free-standing sculpture and vase-painting, was very sound and most could deploy a range of specific examples from the specification. The level of detail offered was the discriminating factor in awarding marks.

As usual, free-standing sculpture was the most popular medium. Candidates were able to display a level of interest and enthusiasm, even for archaic pieces, in their writing about 4<sup>th</sup> century sculpture and an array of 5<sup>th</sup> century sculpture. This was generally not matched in their writing about architectural sculpture.

Evidence of planning on scripts was very sparse. Planning the 20-mark and 30-mark questions can really help a candidate to focus on what is required in a particular question and enable them to order their ideas and marshal relevant material. This allows examiners to follow the argument being presented. There were many scripts with additional thoughts/ideas and an array of different symbols to draw the examiner's attention to them. Most candidates ignored the rubric about starting their answers on a new sheet of the answer booklet.

There were more candidates who used diagrams this year to illustrate their answers. Such diagrams invariably enhanced the quality of response, especially when discussing composition in Question 3 or poses in Question 6 and Question 7.

Finally, legibility and quality of written communication proved to be very challenging this year. Handwriting and paragraphing, in particular, seemed to have deteriorated since the last examination series. Examiners cannot follow or assess work effectively if they cannot read key words or phrases.

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, e.g. in Questions and Question 8</li> <li>• had a good knowledge of the material on the specification and the timeframes</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 or changed the focus of the question</li> <li>• had a superficial 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 or did not include scholars at all</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> <li>• spent too long on the 20-mark question to the detriment of the 30-mark essay</li> <li>• did not understand the dating of particular centuries.</li> </ul>

## Section A overview

It was pleasing to see that the lower tariff questions were more successfully answered than in previous years. The 10-mark questions were generally tackled with enthusiasm and a good deal of knowledge. There were some responses, however, where it felt that candidates were looking at the images for the first time.

Some candidates are still spending too much time on the 10-mark questions, to the detriment of their 20 and 30-mark answers. 10-mark questions do not need an introduction and lots of material from elsewhere. Some 10-mark questions, however, do need a conclusion.

### Question 1

#### Source A

A red-figure volute krater from c. 490 BC

Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions

1 Who painted the pot shown in **Source A**?

[1]

Not all candidates were able to identify the painter of the volute krater as the Berlin Painter. A variety of other painters was offered including Sophilos, Kleitias, Exekias and the Pan Painter.

### Question 2

2 Identify the warrior who is depicted in the narrative friezes on both sides of this pot.

[1]

The majority of candidates correctly identified Achilles. Some gave the names of Hector and/or Memnon in addition. A small number of candidates thought that Herakles was depicted on the pot.

## Question 3

**3** Analyse the content and composition of the narrative frieze shown in **Source A**.

Make close reference to the narrative frieze in **Source A** to support your answer.

**[10]**

Candidates were generally very good at describing what they could see in the frieze – the number of figures, the level of detail and the overall narrative. Better answers discussed and analysed the compositional elements such as the use of diagonals, the contrasting shapes, mirroring and the use of spotlighting. Weaker responses could use the terms but did not exemplify them with specific reference to the frieze. Some seemed to get the terms horizontal, vertical and diagonal mixed up.

Several candidates focused their answers on a discussion of the Achilles/Memnon scene on the other side rather than on the narrative frieze depicted on the question paper. There was quite a lot of confusion about the deities shown on the frieze, with many thinking that Thetis and Eos were the two figures displayed. Most could not identify Apollo, thinking that he was a female character. Greater use could have been made of the dipinti and red-figure techniques.

## Exemplar 1

		In addition to this, Athena and Apollo are present on the neck of the vase and flank the two warriors. <del>The narrative is emphasised further by the</del> The gods have been strategically placed <del>in</del> on the sides of
		the hero that they favour. Furthermore, they both extend their arm towards the scene <del>emph</del> bringing the viewer's attention back to the centre. The outcome of the fight is displayed by the actions of the immortals too. For example, whilst Athena's bent knees indicate that she is walking towards Achilles, Apollo's feet face the opposite direction of Hector as he walks away. However, his head turns back towards the fight bringing our attention back once more. The subtle signs <del>in variation</del> of the gods has been successful at reinforcing the narrative but also at keeping our attention on the <del>tenor</del> fight in the centre.

Exemplar 1 above offers a short paragraph on the contribution of Athena and Apollo to the content and composition of the narrative frieze.

Here the candidate focuses on the importance of the deities, Athena and Apollo, to the composition. They flank the warriors, extending their arms towards the scene bringing the viewer's attention back to the centre. The candidate goes on to discuss the poses of the gods and how they reinforce the narrative and keep the viewer's attention on the central figures.

### Misconception



Some candidates seemed to lack an understanding of the difference between incision and brushwork.



**Source B**

**Two pieces of architectural sculpture depicting dying warriors**

**Figure 1**

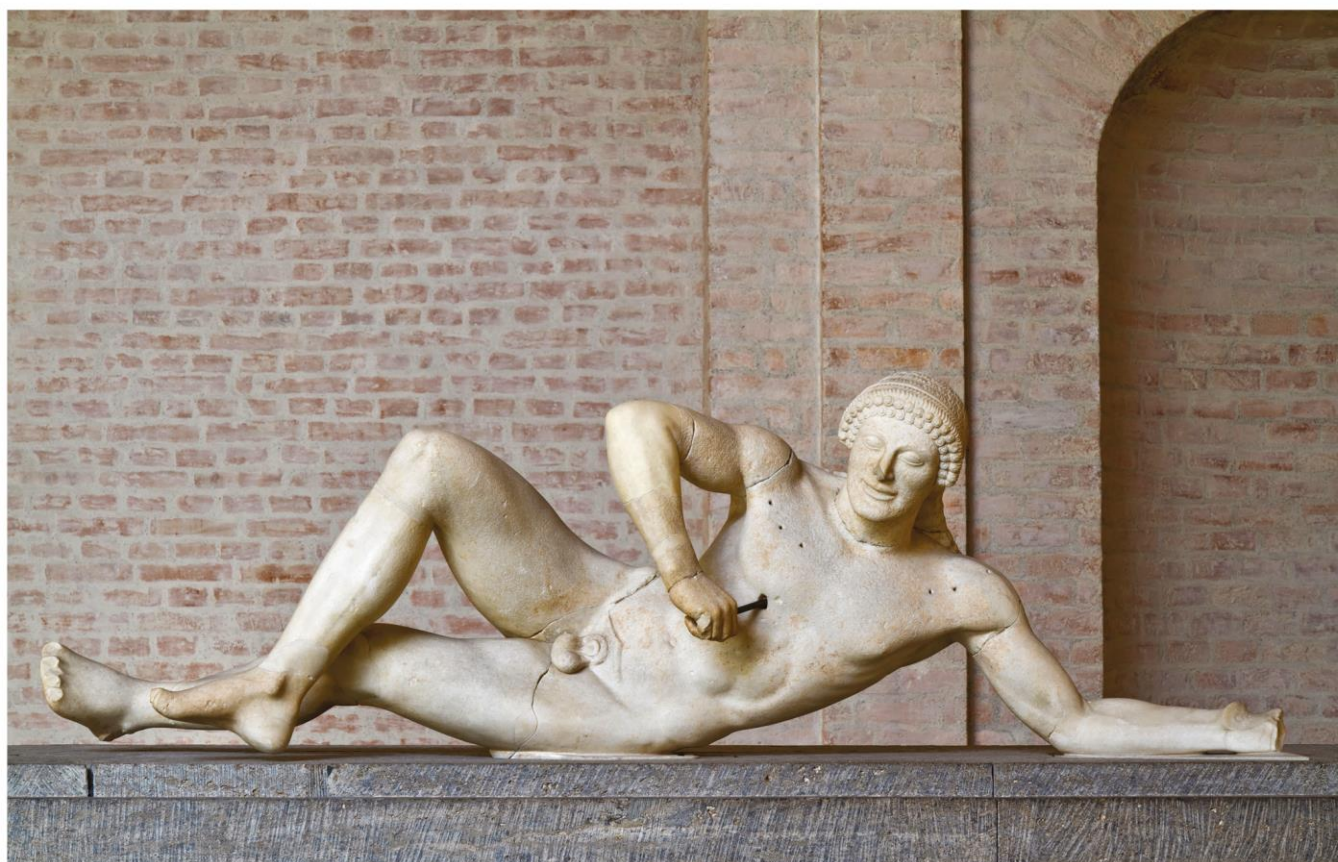




Figure 2



## Question 4

- 4 On which part of a temple would the type of sculpture shown in **Source B** be found? [1]

All candidates knew the type of sculpture would be found on the pediment.

## Question 5

- 5 Identify the name **and** location of the temple from which these figures come. [2]

Most candidates identified either the Temple of Aphaia and/or its location. There was some confusion with other temples and/or locations – most commonly the Temple of Zeus at Olympia and the Temple of Apollo at Bassae. Many found the spelling of Aphaia and Aegina challenging, but for the most part, the spelling was recognisable.

## Question 6

**6** Assess which statue you think is the more aesthetically pleasing.

Use references to **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** to explain your answer.

**[10]**

There was generally good analysis and an effort to compare the two figures from the Temple of Aphaia. Successful answers described in detail for example the poses of the two figures, rather than simply stating that one pose is 'more realistic' than the other and brought in a range of points (i.e. not focusing solely on pose) such as the archaic smile, heavily beaded hair and the greater realism of the severe style. Figure 2 was overwhelmingly chosen as the one with the most aesthetic appeal.

There was also some good discussion of how the figures suited (or not) the narrative. Only a small number of candidates considered the effect of the sculptures in their pediments, commenting on how successfully the two figures filled their respective corners. Few candidates made references to compositional elements such as the triangular shapes contained within Figure 1.

Interestingly, many responses provided a much more detailed analysis of the two statues in Question 7 than in Question 6. For example, Question 7 responses sometimes made reference to the greater realism in terms of pose and emotion in Question 7 but did not mention these details in Question 6.

### 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.

## Question 7\*

- 7\* Analyse how the carving of reclining figures developed from the start of the 6th century BC to the end of the 5th century BC.

You may use **Source B** as a starting point in your answer.

[20]

There were many strong responses which were able to explore in detail the development of the sculpture of reclining figures. The Temple of Artemis at Corfu was used effectively by candidates to set up key issues such as scale and relevance. Most candidates used the images from the question paper to discuss the Temple of Aphaia at Aegina and there were lots of good discussion of the pediments from the Temple of Zeus at Olympia and the Parthenon. Examiners were impressed by how well some candidates discussed the various river gods and the excellent use of figures such as Aphrodite and Dionysus on the Parthenon. A number of candidates also brought in relevant and useful examples of metopes and friezes.

Successful candidates were able to describe and analyse individual figures on pediments, friezes and metopes with detail and accuracy. Higher level answers took into account issues such as the use of space, proportionality, and unity of theme/narrative, rather than analysing figures only on whether they looked realistic/naturalistic. Less successful answers wrote only about Figure 1 and Figure 2 in Source B. Such an approach did not make for a solid discussion of the development of the carving of reclining figures.

Some candidates were not clear about the meaning of 'reclining' which led them to use examples such as the seated gods and goddesses from the friezes on the Siphnian Treasury and the Parthenon. A few candidates also included examples from vase-painting, perhaps under the misapprehension that 'carving' referred to incision on pots. There was a small number of answers which included free-standing statues, often with a valiant attempt to make them relevant to the question by comparing them to Figures 1 and 2.

## Exemplar 2

7	6th c. = 600 - 500    5th = 500 - 400
	Archaic, early + high class.
	<del>           Temple of Aphaia — figure 1 + 2 — seer? — symposium 489            Pediment — Parthenon — women reclining 442?            Metope XXVIII — dead Lapith 447 BC            Siphnian Treasury Frieze Archaic         </del>
	A variety of reclining figures can be found in architectural sculpture throughout the Archaic, Early Classical and High Classical periods, including dead soldiers and relaxed women.
	<p>in the High Classical period we see a development in pose and drapery. Metope XXVIII from the Parthenon in Athens, features a reclining soldier, victim to the centaur rearing above him. This creates an incredibly horrific and dramatic scene. Also from the Parthenon, although more of a peaceful scene, the east pediment features three female figures in various states of recline to fit the triangular shape of a pediment. They have not yet heard of Athena's birth so are relaxed, surrounded by a massive swirl of fabric from the modelling lines in their chitons.</p>

Exemplar 2 above demonstrates the candidate taking time to plan by writing down the relevant pieces of sculpture to the question.

As well as writing a list of relevant pieces of sculpture – all of which were covered to a greater or lesser degree in the response, the candidate also writes the dates and the time periods as an aide memoire.

The introductory paragraph is very general, broadly setting out what will be covered in the response. It is good practice to have an introduction in a 20-mark question.

The second section is from the penultimate paragraph of the response and covers, albeit briefly, the idea of the development in pose and drapery in the 5th century employing examples from the Parthenon – Metope XXVIII and the reclining goddesses from the East Pediment. More detail about individual figures would have pushed the mark into a higher level.

### Misconception



Some candidates wrote with great conviction about the expressions on the faces of the river god Ilissos, Aphrodite and the dying Lapith from the Parthenon pediments and metope.

## Section B overview

Question 8 on 4<sup>th</sup> century sculpture was more popular than Question 9 on monsters and mythological creatures. Responses to Question 8 were generally more successful in terms of the AO1 offered. Many candidates were able to mention specific pots or statues or tell the story of a scene, but often did not provide sufficient detail to attain marks in the top level.

While there was still a significant number of candidates who did not make any mention of scholars, examiners were delighted to see a much greater variety of scholars than in previous years – Barron, Beard, Boardman, Cook, Emerson, Neer, Osbourne, Pedley and Richter all warranted at least one mention this year; Spivey seemed to have fallen out of favour this year. Of course, some candidates simply 'name-dropped' one or two scholars, but many were able to show some engagement with their ideas. There was a slight increase in the number of essays which were driven by scholars. Beginning every paragraph with a scholarly thought or quotation does not necessarily make for a good coherent argument.

### OCR support



OCR has produced a blog detailing where you can find suitable material that meets the requirement for 'secondary scholars and academics', what we expect candidates to do with it in the exam and how examiners go about marking the scholarship requirement.

[Read the blog here.](#)

### Question 8\*

- 8\*** Assess how successful sculptors of the 4th century BC were in creating innovative pieces of free-standing sculpture. **[30]**

This question was generally well handled. Lots of answers quickly focused on relevant areas of innovation such as humanisation of the divine, mundane activities and breaking of the frontal plane. There was good discussion of examples such as Eirene and Ploutos, Hermes and Dionysus, Apoxyomenos, Knidian Aphrodite and Antikytheran Youth. Some candidates also included the Raging Maenad and Apollo Sauroktonos.

Successful answers provided detail of the sources and analysed them specifically in terms of innovation, sometimes referring to earlier sculptures to argue where innovation had already occurred. For example, Artemision Zeus was used as an illustration of an intimidating, divine looking deity in comparison to more human depictions in the 4th century.

Some candidates confused their dates and strayed outside the 4th century and discussed 6th century examples or 5th century examples, but only a very few did this for the entirety of their answer.



## Exemplar 3

8		<p>4th century = 400 - 300 BC</p> <p>Neer - "revolutionary"</p> <p>Praxiteles - Hermes + Dionysus <span style="float: right;">composition adapts s-curve</span></p> <p>Woodford "very human" Aphrodite of Knidos <span style="float: right;">first full female nude</span></p> <p>Lysippos - 1:7 head ratio <span style="float: right;">bridgeway + spiral Boadman - lean</span></p> <p>Eirene + Ploutos - meaning?</p> <p>Skopas = Raging maenad.</p>
		<p>Many <del>at</del> enhancements and developments can be noticed throughout the late classical period, such as adaptations <sup>to</sup> Polykleitos' methods, which lead to it being a time of great innovation for sculptors.</p>
		<p>Praxiteles has been deemed one such innovator for centuries, with Neer describing him as "revolutionary". His <sup>343 BC</sup> group composition of Hermes and Dionysus helping to prove this. Praxiteles adapts contrapposto and adds a "cocked-hip" (Woodford) to emphasise the pose, creating the Praxitelean 's-curve' which moves smoothly and realistically throughout the figure.</p>

Exemplar 3 shows the plan, the introduction and first paragraph for this essay.

This candidate has provided a plan setting out the dates of the 4th century, the names of the sculptures/sculptors, the points to be highlighted and the names of the scholars to be cited. There are some omissions, but there is the addition of the Raging Maenad – not on the specification but most definitely worthy of credit.

The introduction mentions Polykleitos and immediately opens the discussion to innovation in the 4th century and passing mention of two scholars. Hermes and Dionysus are used to show that Praxiteles was 'revolutionary', and therefore innovative, in producing a group statue and in adapting contrapposto to produce the Praxitelean s-curve.

### Misconception



Misconception or confusion: the dates covered by 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.

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



## Question 9\*

- 9\* 'Depicting monsters and mythological creatures allowed painters and sculptors to be more experimental and creative than using any other subject matter.'

Assess how far you agree with this statement. Justify your response with reference to specific examples from **both** vase-painting **and** architectural sculpture. [30]

[Section B Total: 30]

Some candidates seemed to have misinterpreted the terms of the question, focusing on mythological narratives and including examples of gods and heroes, rather than monsters and mythological creatures. As always, the most successful answers gave detailed and precise description of sources before analysing their impact and returned specifically to the ideas of experimentation and creativity.

There was good use of portrayals of Medusa and some candidates charted the development from typically archaic examples through to more imaginative examples (e.g. the Pan Painter) really nicely. The way that centaurs were used to explore themes of Civilisation vs Barbarity also came up regularly and was usually well explored.

Some chose to offer a counter argument, providing examples that were unrelated to monsters/mythological creatures (e.g. warfare allowed for experimentation). Sometimes this made for a well-rounded essay, but some candidates spent too long on the counter argument and provided little in the way of examples or discussion for the thrust of the question.

### 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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Questions 3 and 4: Dying Warriors from the temple of Aphaia, © Erin Babnik / Alamy Stock Photo

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