

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

J199

For first teaching in 2017

J199/23 Summer 2024 series

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper 23 series overview.....	4
Section A overview	6
Question 1 (a)	6
Question 1 (b)	7
Question 1 (c)	7
Question 2 (a)	8
Question 2 (b)	8
Question 2 (c)	9
Question 3	10
Question 4 (a)	11
Question 4 (b)	11
Question 4 (c)	11
Question 5	12
Question 6	14
Question 7	14
Section B overview	15
Question 8 (a)	15
Question 8 (b)	16
Question 9 (a)	16
Question 9 (b)	16
Question 9 (c)	17
Question 9 (d)	17
Question 10 (a)	18
Question 10 (b)	18
Question 10 (c)	18
Question 10 (d)	19
Question 11	20
Question 12	21
Question 13	22
Question 14	22

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

J199/23 (War and Warfare) is one of three Literature and Culture components for GCSE Classical Civilisation. This component focuses on the different aspects of warfare in the ancient world, including the purposes, conduct and effects of war, as well as how the military interacted with, and impacted upon, wider society. The literature is a combination of epic and shorter verse, presenting a range of responses to warfare, from glorification to depictions of horror and tragedy. To do well on this paper, candidates need to show knowledge and understanding of the different military systems in Rome, Sparta and Athens, key battles and their impact on the society and how warfare was depicted in the literature.

Examiners were pleased with the general standard of the answers, feeling that the overall performance had strengthened since last year, with candidates showing greater confidence when writing at length. There was an impressive understanding shown of Trajan's depiction of himself and some very good use of the source in the 8 mark question on Spartan soldiers. However, there was a minority of candidates who omitted to answer large parts of the paper. It was disappointing to see 15 mark questions unattempted.

It was evident that some candidates ran out of time for the final question. Candidates should be reminded to ensure that they reach the halfway point in no more than 45 minutes.

There were instances where candidates had not followed the rubric when asked to make a particular number of points. If a question requires two points, they must make no more than two points. Where more than two points were made, only the first two were marked, with further points disregarded, even if correct. This idea is in the rubric at the start of the mark scheme and candidates must understand that the examiner will not choose the correct answers from among a number of suggestions.

Candidates generally used the written sources competently, although there were instances of candidates answering a question using the wrong source. In some cases, closer attention to detail was needed with regard to features of visual sources. For questions worth 4 or 6 marks, candidates must give two or three precise references to the source and the majority accomplished this.

In Section A candidates showed sound knowledge of Trajan and Dacia; most knew who Decebalus was and that he had killed himself. There was some confusion about the names of parts of the trireme e.g. the rudder. There was good discussion of the appearance of Trajan on his arch. Responses to the 8 and 15 mark questions were respectable, showing a good knowledge and understanding, especially of Thermopylae and Actium.

In Section B, examiners were impressed with responses about the Tyrtaeus extract and the section of *Iliad* 6, with many analysing the passage in Question 10 very well. They were particularly good at quoting the key parts of the text. However, some answers to Question 11 revealed both a lack of understanding of the set source and an inability to spot the smile.

Detailed response (8 mark) and extended response (15 mark) questions were answered efficiently, although some candidates did not know what a comrade was. Responses on attitudes to war and fighting for freedom or love were well-argued and spirited.

Spelling proved problematic for many candidates. Danube, Decebalus and oars were frequently misspelt. Candidates were not penalised for this, as long as examiners could spot a close enough resemblance to the correct response.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• had detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of the set materials• expressed themselves clearly referring to specific details• used quotations from written sources on the insert• looked carefully at visual sources and chose precise details• referred to a wide range of evidence to support arguments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• had basic or limited knowledge and understanding of the set materials• expressed themselves indistinctly referring to imprecise details• referred to sources in general terms• lacked the ability to interpret visual sources• gave evidence lacking in breadth and depth to justify points of view.

Section A overview

Section A comprises 45 marks worth of questions on historical/archaeological aspects of wars and warfare in Athens, Sparta and Rome. These include questions that require short responses demonstrating knowledge and understanding, short analytical statements and a detailed response (8 mark) question. All of these are introduced by a stimulus source. Candidates must also write one extended response from a choice of two 15 mark questions.

Knowledge of Trajan's Dacian campaign was generally sound. It was pleasing to note how many candidates knew about Decebalus. Many candidates had good knowledge of the use of the trireme. Knowledge of Sparta was very good. Most were able to make a good analysis of the Xenophon source on the *Constitution of the Spartans*.

Answers to the 8 and 15 mark questions mostly displayed good knowledge of the material required for the specification, with the best responses making use of a wide variety of source material. Question 7 on the significance of the battles of Thermopylae and Actium was far more popular than Question 6 on Trajan's Column. Some candidates paid too much attention to describing what happened in the battles, rather than concentrating on their significance to the society. Candidates who tackled the question on Trajan's Column in the main had understood the limitations of a purely visual source and the fact that Trajan was using it for self-promotion.

Question 1 (a)

Study Source A

1

(a) Figure Z personifies which river?

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

Approximately half of candidates were aware that this was the Danube, although it was not always spelt correctly. Candidates were not penalised for misspellings as long as examiners could recognise the word as Danube.

Question 1 (b)

(b) How does the figure represent a river? Give **two** ways.

- 1
- 2
- [2]

Candidates are not expected to know that river gods are usually depicted as old men, but were given credit if they did. Many identified that he is in the river/water or that he has flowing, watery hair; some mentioned the boats surrounding him. The mark scheme includes a list, but is flexible: examiners were directed to accept other reasonable observations such as 'He is strong/muscular like a river is strong/powerful', etc.

Question 1 (c)

(c) What is happening on the right hand side of the river? Make **three** points.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- [3]

Candidates were required to look at the source and state three things that are happening, for example: 'soldiers are marching, they are carrying shields, they are crossing the river' would receive 3 marks.

Exemplar 1

- 1 There are soldiers marching
- 2 There are boats lined up
- 3 The soldiers are invading Dacia

The candidate has written down three things from the source, gaining 3 out of 3 marks.

Question 2 (a)

Study Source B

2

- (a) What is the name of the Dacian king labelled Y?

[1]

Many candidates could name the Dacian king and misspellings were not penalised.

Question 2 (b)

- (b) How did he die?

[1]

Candidates were expected to state that Decebalus took his own life; no further detail was required. The curved sword he is holding under his own throat indicates what he is about to do.

Question 2 (c)

- (c) Identify **two** items of military equipment being used in the scene and state how each was important to the soldier in battle.

1

.....

2

.....

[4]

Many candidates were able to choose two items of equipment from the source and say how they would be important to a soldier in battle. Some looked at the wrong source and referred to the *lorica segmentata* in Source A. Shields and horses were popular choices as well as swords. It should be noted that if a candidate is credited for saying that the soldiers are holding shields, which they use to protect themselves, they cannot then gain further credit for saying that a helmet is also for protection (helmet would be credited, but not protection). It is too vague to say that a weapon is for killing enemies: responses must be more specific, e.g. short sword for stabbing/thrusting.

Question 3

Study Source C

- 3 Identify **three** features of the depiction of Trajan and say what impression of him each one was intended to convey.

- 1
- 2
- 3

[6]

The mark scheme includes a list of acceptable answers, however the indicative content is a description of possible content only and *all legitimate and approaches* are credited appropriately.

One such example is the discussion of Trajan's relationship with the personifications i.e. Mesopotamia is kneeling to him, showing him as strong/dominant. Some candidates gained credit for discussing the fact that he is wearing a *paludamentum* over his toga showing his high status or the fact that he is in charge/a leader.

Many candidates referred to him being larger than the others, in the forefront of the sculpture or that everyone is looking at him showing his power/importance, etc. The wearing of the toga showing his peacetime/political role was another popular response. The features and the impressions must all be different, for example powerful would only be credited once even if the candidate picked out two different features that convey Trajan to be powerful.

Exemplar 2

- 1 he is at the centre of the depiction which shows
his importance and power as everyone is looking to him
- 2 There are people kneeling before him begging
for mercy which shows him as holding a lot of power over others
- 3 Trajan is wearing a toga and this means show
him as a political leader as well as a military general.

[6]

The candidate has identified three features of the depiction of Trajan and said what impression each one conveys, gaining 6 marks out of 6.

Question 4 (a)

Study Source D

4

(a) Which ancient culture used ships like the one shown in **Source D**?

..... [1]

Given the range of acceptable answers, the vast majority of candidates gained a mark here.

Question 4 (b)

(b) Name **two** items of naval equipment shown in **Source D**.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

Candidates could discuss any part of Source D in the picture, which means the background reconstruction and the remaining parts of the relief. Oars and ram were the most popular choices; credit was given if candidates called the rudder a 'large oar for steering' or similar. Many responses mentioned hypozomata and the Greek term was not required so 'cables wrapped round the hull' or similar was credited. Interpretation of one of the figures as the auletes with his aulos to keep the rowers in time was accepted.

Question 4 (c)

(c) State how **one** of them was useful in a sea battle.

.....

..... [1]

Popular responses stated that the ram was used to attack/smash/sink enemy ships and that oars were to move the ship quickly/move it in any direction. Credit was given for the use of the rudder to steer or the *hypozomata* to help keep the ship together/sustain impact when ramming.

Question 5

Study Source E: Xenophon, Constitution of the Spartans 2, 2–4

- 5 Describe how Spartan soldiers were prepared for warfare and battles. Use **Source E** as a starting point and your own knowledge in your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [8]

An 8 mark detailed response question would normally seek to elicit AO1 and AO2 from candidate responses as required by the levels of response marking grid. Unfortunately, the 'describe' command word used was inappropriate for this question and as such, the mark scheme was amended/opened up to accommodate descriptive responses. As with every question, candidates are expected to continue on the additional pages if they run out of space. There is no evidence to suggest that the shortness of the answer space for this question impacted on candidate performance.

Successful responses picked out details from the passage and detailed how that prepared Spartans for warfare or battles, then gave some details from their own knowledge and detailed how those things prepared them for being soldiers. Popular choices from the passage were: being whipped to instil obedience; going barefoot to toughen feet for marching and to improve agility and one garment a year to build endurance in harsh conditions. From their own knowledge, candidates often talked about the *syssitia* enhancing comradeship or teamwork and the *krypteia* for practising survival skills and getting used to killing; stealing food for learning stealth and survival skills and learning music to keep in time in the phalanx were also mentioned.

Exemplar 3

- 5 Describe how Spartan soldiers were prepared for warfare and battles. Use **Source E** as a starting point and your own knowledge in your answer.

Source E describes the Spartan Agoge, which prepared Spartan soldiers for warfare and battles as they were taught obedience, and to be tough, making them brutal and skilful warriors. The whips mentioned in Source E made the Spartan ~~boys~~^{boys} used to pain, making men less affected ^{by} the pain brought by war. In addition to that, Spartan boys were taught music and dance in the Agoge, which prepared them for warfare and battles as their orders were communicated via music. Also, the fact that the Spartan boys only wore one cloak throughout the year, meant that weather conditions would affect them less in battle, allowing them to spend more energy fighting. Lastly, Spartan soldiers were prepared for warfare as they used the phalanx formation, where the enemy would find it difficult to fight through the front lines. [8]

In Exemplar 3, the candidate has used both the source and their own knowledge to say how Spartan soldiers were prepared. The response gained 7 marks; if they had given some detail about what preparation was done for the phalanx, they would have obtained 8 marks.

Question 6

- 6 'Trajan's column tells us everything there is to know about Trajan's campaign against the Dacians.'
How far do you agree with this statement? Justify your response. **[15]**

Candidates cannot be expected to have knowledge of everything depicted on Trajan's Column and may discuss whatever representative scenes they have studied.

The main point of this question from the Romans at War section of the specification is to analyse 'the presentation of warfare in the material source' in conjunction with 'the image of Trajan as an emperor'. The main points to be made are that it was Trajan who had the column made so its bias will be towards showing him and the Romans in a good light and the Dacians as barbarians. The column does not tell us the 'reasons for the war', nor does it give names or dates and these must come from other sources. The Arch of Trajan is another prescribed visual/material source for this component, which the candidates can use as a comparison.

Question 7

- 7 Which battle do you think holds the greatest significance for its society: Thermopylae or Actium?
Justify your response. **[15]**

This question was very popular and elicited many spirited arguments on both sides. The importance or lack thereof of the battle of Thermopylae to the ultimate victory over the Persians was frequently discussed as well as its links to 'the idealisation of warfare in Spartan society' and how it was commemorated. Actium's significance to Octavian's assumption of control and the beginning of the empire as well as the end of the civil war and making Egypt a province as well as its commemoration and the spin Octavian put on his version of events were the main areas of discussion.

Section B overview

Section B comprises 45 marks worth of questions on the prescribed set texts. These include questions that require short responses demonstrating knowledge and understanding, short analytical statements and a detailed response 8 mark question. All of these are introduced by a stimulus source. Candidates must also write one extended response from a choice of two 15 mark questions.

The Tyrtaeus source was very well understood. Answers on the Horace *Ode* revealed some misunderstanding about the 'axes'; the candidates should know what the axes are as this is a set text; in addition, *fascies* are depicted on the Arch of Trajan, which is a set source. Understanding of the Homer passage was pleasing. A disappointing number of candidates did not choose suitable quotations for the question on how Virgil made the passage exciting, with remarkably few identifying the simile.

There was some really good discussion on the depiction of comrades, with the most common starting point being when Coroebus rushes to seek death and his comrades follow unquestioningly.

Question 13 on fighting for love and freedom was more popular than Question 14. Many candidates selected a good range of characters with discussion of their reasons for fighting and opinions on whether or not it was a type of love or freedom. Most chose to talk about Achilles, Hector and Aeneas.

Question 14 on Greek and Roman attitudes to wars and warfare elicited comparisons between Homeric heroes and Spartans, and Spartans and Romans.

Question 8 (a)

Study Source F

8

(a) 'You, young men' (line 1): where are the young men and the poet from?

..... [1]

They were almost universally identified as Spartan.

Question 8 (b)

(b) What **three** attitudes to battle are expressed by the poet in these lines?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- [3]

Candidates showed very good understanding of the extract with the majority identifying: flight/panic in battle is shameful; be brave in battle/don't cling to life; don't abandon your elders.

Question 9 (a)

Study Source G

9

(a) Who is the author of this poem?

..... [1]

Many candidates were able to identify Horace and spell the name correctly.

Question 9 (b)

(b) '**axes**' (line 3): what axes does the poet depict here?

..... [1]

Only a minority of candidates were awarded a mark for this question. Candidates are not expected to know the term *fascis*, although it was used, the mark scheme lists acceptable responses such as political office, power, and authority in addition to the term *fascis*/bundles of rods with axes inside.

The poem is a set text and as stated on the specification, candidates are expected to study 'how the content of the texts reflects their political or cultural context, including details of the historical context' in the 'Heroes and Warfare' section.

Question 9 (c)

(c) Quote **one** example of a literary technique from these lines and state its name.

..... [1]

Approximately half of candidates were awarded a mark for this question and those that did chose personification of Virtue/Punishment, while some opted for the metaphor 'whims and breezes of popular opinion'.

Question 9 (d)

(d) What do you think the poet means when he says '**never takes up the axes or puts them down at the whims and breezes of popular opinion**'?

..... [1]

There were many interpretations of this section, and all valid suggestions were accepted. The main idea expressed was that Horace is telling us that if you are a good person, you are not influenced by what other people think.

Question 10 (a)

Study Source H

10

(a) Identify **two** epithets from the passage.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

There were a great many epithets to choose from and most candidates were able to copy two from the source, with 'bronze-clad husband' and 'swift-footed mighty Achilles' being very popular choices.

Question 10 (b)

(b) Choose **one** of the epithets and say why it is suitable.

.....

..... [1]

Candidates often referred to Achilles' running speed or that Hector is wearing his armour.

Question 10 (c)

(c) 'If I lose you I were better dead' (line 6): what will happen to Andromache and the other women when the Achaeans take Troy?

..... [1]

The majority of candidates were able to answer correctly that the women would be enslaved.

Question 10 (d)

(d) Give **two** ways in which Homer makes this passage an emotionally moving scene.

1

.....

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

.....

[4]

This question was answered confidently by many candidates with successful responses including a quotation from the passage for each of the points, with a clear explanation of what is moving about it. The quotation 'crept weeping to his side, and clasped his hand' was a popular choice with the explanation that she is showing her emotions and supplicating him not to leave her. 'If I lose you I were better dead' with explanation of what might happen to her, or a reference to when she says 'there will be no more joy...' were also popular choices. An explanation of how Andromache has already lost all her family with a suitable quotation was another way to obtain the marks.

Question 11

Study Source I

11 Give **three** ways in which Virgil makes this passage an exciting description.

1

.....

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

.....

3

.....

.....

.....

[6]

The mark scheme lists many options from the huge number of quotations that could be used and examiners are reminded that the indicative content is a description of possible content only and directed to credit all legitimate approaches appropriately. Discussion of the treatment of Cassandra and Coroebus' reaction to it were popular choices.

Question 12

Study Source I

- 12** How do the authors you have studied depict the behaviour of comrades? Use **Source I** as a starting point and your own knowledge in your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [8]

A good many candidates performed really well on this question, often referring to Aeneas and the other Trojans following Coroebus as he 'hurled himself among the ranks'. The fact that Aeneas and his comrades are still fighting despite the fact that it is obviously not possible to save Troy was also discussed. From their own knowledge, candidates frequently mentioned Tyrtaeus and Spartan attitudes to comradeship; Aeneas and Pandarus confronting Diomedes in the *Iliad* was another popular choice as well as Glaucus and Diomedes choosing 'comradeship' despite being on opposing sides.

As with every question, candidates are expected to continue on the additional pages if they run out of space. There is no evidence to suggest that the shortness of the answer space for this question impacted on candidate performance.

Misconception



Some candidates did not know the meaning of the word 'comrades' despite it appearing in the 'Characterisation' section of the specification and mistook it as a synonym for soldiers.

Question 13

- 13** 'Every soldier is fighting either for freedom or for love.' How far do you agree that this statement applies to the texts you have studied? Justify your response and refer to at least **two** authors. **[15]**

As stated in the mark scheme, candidates could interpret freedom and love in any way they choose. Whether the candidates agree or disagree or a bit of both they can access the higher levels of the response grid by showing detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of the sources, selecting a wide range of appropriate evidence and analysing it within a well-structured argument.

Examiners saw many spirited responses to this question. Coroebus was a popular choice as he fights in vain for Cassandra. Other examples examiners saw included the Trojans fighting for their city's freedom from the Greeks; the Greeks nominally fighting for Menelaus' love of Helen; Achilles to avenge Patroclus' death; Spartans fighting for the love of Sparta; Diomedes and Pyrrhus fighting because they love it; various heroes fighting for glory/spoils of war etc; Aeneas eventually giving up on fighting and fleeing for the sake of freedom/love for his family.

Question 14

- 14** 'Greeks and Romans had completely different attitudes towards wars and warfare.' How far do you agree with this statement based on the texts you have studied? Justify your response and refer to at least **two** authors. **[15]**

Homeric heroes were frequently contrasted with Spartans and Romans from Horace compared to Spartans. The *Aeneid* concerning Greeks but being a Roman epic was interpreted in many different ways, which were credited if based on accurate knowledge and understanding of the text. Hector, Achilles, Aeneas, Diomedes and Pandarus featured prominently in discussions.

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