

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

H408


For first teaching in 2017

H408/22 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

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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 22 series overview

Candidates had a detailed knowledge of individual visual and material sources and scores for AO1 were generally strong. There were hardly any very weak responses. However, it was felt that drawing these sources together into coherent arguments was not always equally successful. Several responses, with careful planning, might have produced more critical analysis and evaluation presented in a clear, concise and logical manner.

Textbook

Inevitably much detail offered was based on the Bloomsbury supporting textbook, with some candidates quoting verbatim sections from it. Whereas candidates held a great deal of knowledge, this sometimes meant a rigid approach to responses and in a few responses an unwillingness to challenge opinions. There was a feeling too that, for a very few, knowledge of literary sources was derived from here. Without the study of the literary source booklet from the OCR website, candidates may limit the range of references they can offer in essays.

Understanding of social historical and cultural context

Examiners felt that candidates needed a firmer understanding of the context of the sources. For example, many candidates did not know when Suetonius was writing. Candidates are advised to develop an understanding of social historical and cultural context of sources in order to select suitable material for future responses.

Scholars

Many relied, understandably, on the scholars quoted in the textbook. However, it was refreshing to see references to podcasts and lectures which had obviously enriched the study of candidates. As stated at the beginning of Section B, reference to secondary sources, scholars and/or academic works was expected however when marking these questions it was agreed that the first bullet point in the AO2 marking grid (i.e. the quality of the response overall) would determine which level the answer received. Examiners would then use the second bullet point, which contains reference to scholars, secondary sources and/or academic works, and the quality of extended response statement to determine where in the level the mark should be awarded.

Section A

Question 1

Source A: Augustus of Prima Porta



1 In what year did the Senate vow this statue to Augustus?

[1]

Those candidates who understood the statue to commemorate the return of the Parthian standards referred to this either by date or phrases such as “in the year of the return of the Parthian standards”. This is worthy of credit as it shows knowledge of context. Some candidates believed that this statue was to commemorate the apotheosis of Augustus “in the year of his death” or “after his death” or again a date was offered. All such responses received due credit. Lack of understanding of context was indicated by candidates citing 256 BC or AD 300.

Question 2

2 Of what material is this statue made?

[1]

Almost all candidates identified the material as marble. Credit was also given for bronze based on knowledge of the original statue.

Question 3

3 Explain how far this statue creates an image of a man of peace rather than an image of a strong military commander. [10]

This is where reliance on the textbook led to too many candidates dismissing the idea of a man of peace in a sentence to base the rest of the response on a strong military commander. Again, examiners gave credit to the many interpretations of this statue. Most candidates referred to the return of the Parthian standards and various related interpretations on the breastplate. For other candidates, the breastplate signified Augustus' achievements after death, himself collecting the standards and leaving the whole empire at peace signified by the sky spreading his cloak over the empire. Centres should be reassured that a range of possible interpretations were and will be given due credit. What is most important is the engagement of candidates with the sources.

Better responses looked at the statue as a whole, going beyond discussion of the breastplate. In addition, such responses discussed both sides of the argument. For the best responses, candidates should be prepared to challenge statements and argue for and against opinions.

Question 4

Source B: Suetonius *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars: Augustus* 53

He was always horrified at being called 'my lord', as though it was a term of abuse or censure. Once, while he was watching a comedy and the audience rose and applauded when the words:

'O just and benign lord!'

were spoken, as if in reference to him, Augustus quelled the indecorous adulation, with a look and a gesture, and the next day issued an edict reprimanding such behaviour. After that he prohibited his children and grandchildren too from calling him by that title even in jest: nor were they allowed to employ such obsequious terms among themselves. 5

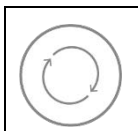
If he could do so he would enter or leave towns and cities in the evening or at night to avoid troubling everyone with a formal ceremony. During his consulship he habitually walked through the streets of Rome quite openly, and only when he was not consul did he go about in a closed litter. Similarly, his morning receptions were open to all, including commoners, and he was affable in dealing with requests, reproving one man jokingly when he presented a petition as nervously 'as if he was offering a penny to an elephant!' 10

On Senate days, he waited to greet the members in the House, rather than allowing them to pay the customary calls at his home, not allowing them to rise and calling each by name unprompted, and he left the House in the same manner. He exchanged many social calls, and always attended birthday celebrations until he was jostled by the crowd at a betrothal party when he was well on in years. 15

4 Explain the term **consul** (line 11).

[2]

Given the number of consulships held by Augustus a surprising number did not know what a consul was.

**Teaching idea**

When reading through prescribed literary sources candidates might be encouraged to make notes on technical terms and references. This could also form a preparatory task as independent study.

5 When did Suetonius publish *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars*?

[1]

Question 5

Again, context was key and would have bearing on the summative question at the end of the section. Some concerns were raised about this question. Many candidates in fact offered a date, but credit was given, as the Mark Scheme always states, for other legitimate responses, as detailed in Exemplar 1. The specification requires candidates to have knowledge of the context in which material was produced. In this case candidates needed to appreciate that Suetonius was writing after the death of Augustus. A general timeframe or date might be appropriate to understanding any such context. This could be important in the selection of relevant material for future questions.

Exemplar 1

5.		Under the Emperor Hadrian, circa 100AD. After Augustus

Question 6

6 Explain how Suetonius shows, in this source, that Augustus behaved in a humble way.

[10]

Unlike similar questions at AS Level, this question type is not marked on a points basis and is marked using the specification marking grid. For the top level a detailed response, based on a wide range of examples, was expected. Continuous prose is required rather than bullet points, which limited some candidates' arguments.

Question 7

- 7* Discuss how far you agree that Suetonius' biography of Augustus was the most effective source in creating a positive impression of Augustus **beyond** his lifetime.


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

[20]

This question type is the overarching question which is designed to make connections and comparisons. A suitable introduction would be for candidates to show appreciation of when Suetonius was writing, prompted by the short question earlier. Suetonius was not writing when Augustus was alive which was not understood by all candidates. Candidates then went on to discuss what they felt were the positive impressions, developing the argument beyond Source B, and negative impressions given elsewhere in Suetonius.

"beyond his lifetime" allowed for interpretations of visual material such as the Prima Porta to be used from its obvious way of surviving to this day to being just post Augustus. Plenty of material was offered from poets to coins and various examples of his building programme and the Sebasteion. These all represent legitimate examples when used in supporting relevant arguments.

Better responses were more sophisticated in discussing different interpretations of "beyond his lifetime".

	Misconception	Several candidates assumed Suetonius was a poet, presumably from the reference to Kline's website from where the prose translation has been taken.
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Exemplar 2

Suetonius' Life of Augustus was released in 121AD as a part of his Lives of the twelve Caesars. Suetonius gained the majority of his information on the Caesars, including Augustus, from letters and sources from Augustus' time as he worked in a library. In Source B Suetonius does seem to praise Augustus

As demonstrated by Exemplar 2, a few lines of introduction is useful to show understanding of context from the start. This response has made reference to when Suetonius was writing before getting on with discussing Source B. Tackling all the short questions at once can miss a train of argument which can be used in the final question of this section.

Section B

Question 8

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.

8* Assess the extent to which you think Augustus was an effective religious leader. Justify your response. **[30]**

Having studied various aspects of Augustus' principate, candidates were invited to discuss what insight they had gained regarding Augustus' role as a religious leader. Credit was also given for discussion of Augustus' moral policy as it was felt that these were issues and values which candidates would find relevant. As stated in the overview, a wide range of both visual and literary sources were used which included: *Res Gestae*, Temple of Mars Ultor, Propertius 4.6, coins. Better responses kept to the assessment of 'effective'.

Exemplar 3

8. Augustus wanted to portray himself to be a religious leader in Rome as it helped him to gain popularity with older conservatives by making him be seen as a religious reformer to give the impression that he was republican and starting in 28B.C. he started building and restoring temples to show the people that he cared about religion and he was their religious leader. A denarius which displays sacrificial elements that include the stipulum, the patera and the tripod demonstrate the number of sacrifices that he led which shows that he was an effective religious leader as the people saw him actively taking part in religious ceremonies which was important to show pietas which showed him to be a religious leader. Furthermore, the coin also features the Litus which is a reminder of the priestly colleges that he was a member of as Augustus was a member of most priestly colleges which shows him to care about religion and shows his position to be a leader. AHM Jones said "perhaps his greatest gift was his political tact." I agree with this as we can see from the coin and the connotations that come with it, we can see Augustus was carefully planning the image he wanted to give politically which make people think more highly of him as a religious leader.

Despite some shortcomings in expression and written communication this response gives a reason as to why Augustus wanted to portray himself as an effective leader. It also offers support from a source, with suitable detail and links this back to the question. The analysis of the coin goes further agreeing with Jones (*Augustus: A M H Jones*) that this was part of Augustus' careful planning. It is good to see candidates agreeing or disagreeing with scholars rather than just adding quotations.

Question 9

9* 'Augustus used only the imperial family and nothing else to create a successful propaganda campaign for himself.' Explain how far you agree with this statement and justify your response.

[30]

The quotation produced some strong introductions such as "it was in no way the only method he used to achieve this". Most candidates were aware of his use of the imperial family in 'spinning' his public image and examples such as the coin of Gaius and Lucius and the Head of Livia were the most popular examples offered.

Exemplar 4 is to be commended. This extract from the longer response covers Augustus' early propaganda. The response takes the reference to the Head of Livia further than the hairstyle of the Roman matron and fully appreciates the context of the head "to top it off" being made of Egyptian basanite "to spite Cleopatra". Whether Augustus' intended this we can never know but the candidate has clearly engaged with the question offering a personal response to the material they have studied in the true spirit of Classical Civilisation.

Exemplar 4

power . The imperial family is used a lot not just in his early years . During the tirumviral period when Mark Antoney had married Cleopatra Octivian had a head of Livia his wife commissioned , Livia's head had a very normal roman hairstyle and look about her to show how much more roman she is and therefore Augustus is compared to the wild Cleopatra , to top it off the headshot is also made of egyptian bassite to spite Cleopatra and draw the link closer . If the Imperial family looks good as does Augustus which was vital in this propergander war between Mark Antoney . In the later years of Augustus reign he even talks about how all his family makes their own clothes which related him more to the common people and made him more popular with them as well as more pious and embodying roman values .

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