

GUIDELINES AND SAMPLE QUESTIONS
Greek and Roman Archaeology Comprehensive Exams
UWO PhD: Classical Archaeology Stream

GENERAL INFORMATION:

TIMING:

You will take the Greek Archaeology exam on one day and the Roman Archaeology exam on another day (your Greek or Latin language exam will be on the third day). Comprehensive exams are usually held on a Wednesday, Friday, and Monday in the last week of September, but individual exam schedules may be discussed with the Graduate Chair in early September. The exams are each 4 hours long in total.

FORMAT:

The exam includes two parts. Part 1 consists of image identifications and requires short answers (about 1 hour). For this section you are asked to identify what is in the image and provide a brief paragraph about its importance to Classical Archaeology. Part 2 comprises essay questions, some of which may include images for identification and commentary in the essay answer (about 3 hours). There will be choice in both parts of the exam (see below for more details, sample questions, and organization).

ANSWERS:

We do not want to prescribe the structure of answers or exactly what you might include in an answer on this comprehensive exam. The organization, approach, and material that you include is part of the exercise to demonstrate your knowledge in these fields. Different questions and answers may require different lengths and structure, and a comprehensive response should include everything necessary to answer the question posed. You will find below a few details that you can use to think about how to structure your preparation and exam answers. Some basic tips on complete answers are found below.

Identifications (Part 1): Please be as comprehensive as you can with these answers. Report the name, location, and date of what is seen in the image as best as possible. If it is an object in a museum, try to say where it was originally found/located and, if applicable, where it now resides (e.g. a museum). Be as precise with the date as possible, but we recognize that not everything has an exact date. Please also include a short statement (one paragraph) about the importance of this object/monument/place to Classical Archaeology. Be as thorough as you can with this but only as it pertains to what is in the image, and do not include broad statements without detail.

Essays (Part 2): Generally, a complete essay will be at least two to three typed pages (single-spaced, 12-point font, normal margins) and may go longer. The questions are written to allow you to bring your strengths to the exam, which can be done in many different ways. Therefore, if you have only two short paragraphs, this may suggest you haven't answered the question fully and you will want to think about including more. You want to be sure that the structure of your answer flows and ideas follow one to the other smoothly. You do not want to present a group of facts without any discussion. Where necessary, you must cite archaeological evidence (monuments, sculpture, objects, sites, etc.) that supports your answer and shows that you understand the material culture of the Greek and Roman worlds. You will also want to show engagement with modern scholarship and the scholarly arguments about the subjects you discuss. Please include citations to these modern scholars and publications that you are leaning on for your discussion (just use in-text parenthetical citations, e.g.: (Smith 1972), and don't worry about page numbers). You may also wish to mention important scholarly sources in the body of your essay. Sources

that you cite can come directly from the reading list, but you might also include other things you've read that inform your discussion.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

****NB:** sample images and questions in this document come from both Greek and Roman archaeology for ease of supplying a single document. Please note that your exams are separated into one Greek exam and one Roman exam.

PART 1: IDENTIFICATIONS

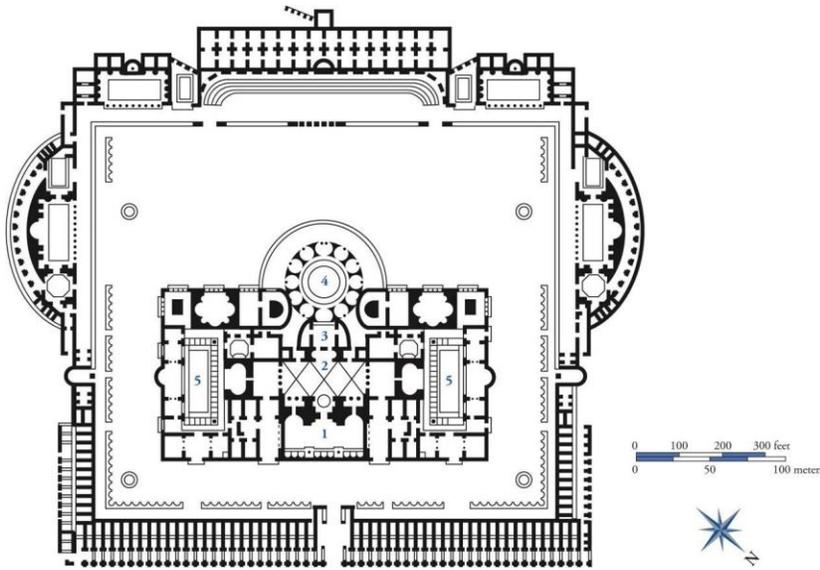
(spend about 10 minutes per identification; ca. 1 hour total)

Identify and comment on **SIX** of the following images, with at least **ONE** from each of the three sections. Identification should include the name of the object/monument/site, its location (which may include: its original or current location; the location of its discovery; its current museum location. Please provide this info as relevant), and the associated date/period. Your discussion should be about one paragraph long and should include socio-political importance where appropriate and how the object/monument/site impacts our interpretation of Roman culture. Please get right to the point with your discussion paragraph and avoid broad statements that offer little detail (e.g. "The sculptural tradition in antiquity had a long history of development...").

Section 1 Examples: Monuments/sites/buildings



Answer tips: If you know this is Herculaneum that is great and you should discuss the site specifically. If you are unsure if this is Herculaneum or Pompeii, please discuss your thought process and your evaluation process. You may contextualize this site by discussing the Bay of Naples and how its archaeology impacts our understanding of the Roman world.



Answer tips: You have some flexibility and options to show your range of knowledge. For instance, the plan above is the Baths of Caracalla. If you know exactly that, terrific. You may not know the exact bath, but don't panic. You should know it is an imperial bath (and hopefully that it's not the Baths of Titus) and you should be able to discuss imperial baths as a phenomenon. Evaluate the image as best as you can, even if you do not know exactly what it is.

Section 2 Examples: Art (sculpture, mosaics, wall painting)



Answer tips: You may not know exactly which monument this is (grave stele of Hegeso), but you should understand that it comes from the Attic tradition of grave stele and know its rough date (late 5th c. BCE). Discuss the meaning and use of this class of objects and anything else you can think of that informs its discussion.



Answer tips: Ideally you would know this is a mosaic from the House of the Faun at Pompeii that sits in front of the Alexander Mosaic. If you don't know the exact identification, you could hopefully discuss the Egyptianizing trend in Roman art (you would want to include that in any answer) and/or discuss the mosaics found at Pompeii. If you are completely in the dark, at least discuss the tradition of mosaic decoration in the Roman world.



Answer tips: You may not know the exact name of this sculpture (so-called Tivoli General) but there is still plenty in here that you can discuss. Comment upon the style and what else is happening with this style in this particular period (late Republic). In this case, you would want to discuss the combination of veristic portraiture with an idealized body. Place this sculpture into its context and discuss how it fits between what came before and after.

Section 3 Examples: Artefacts (ceramics, religious objects, artefacts of daily life, etc.)



Answer tips: You should know this is terra sigillata and you might know this is found ubiquitously in the Roman west or that it is manufactured predominantly in Gaul. If you don't know any of this use the opportunity to discuss ceramics industries, ceramics and dating in archaeology, etc.



Answer tips: This is supposed to be a difficult/vague example. You won't know where these are from or exactly to when they date (Hellenistic to Roman period, 2nd c. BCE to 2nd c. CE). You are meant to show us your ability to evaluate archaeological material, even if you don't know the exact identification of something. You should know that these are votives found in a religious context. If you can't discuss exactly what they are (uterus votives), you could discuss the purpose of votives similar to these in religious worship and the types of contexts in which we find these objects.

PART 2: ESSAYS

(spend about 1-1.5 hours per essay; 2-3 hours total depending on how much time you have left after Part 1 and how much time you want to proof read your answers)

Answer **TWO** of the following **THREE** essay questions. Answers should be comprehensive using the full chronological span where indicated and citing examples from the archaeological record to support your answer. Please cite the most relevant scholarship where appropriate.

Example Essay Prompts:

Example #1:

Elite competition is evident physically in many different ways in the city of Rome. The emperors took this to a level never before seen in Rome; however, the models for imperial propaganda and the use of the city as a backdrop for this competition came very much from the middle and late Republic. Please discuss the archaeology of elite competition and display in Rome from about 200 BC until the end of the Republic. Please address the motivations for the construction of the monuments you discuss, making reference to shifting political landscapes and discuss the impact these complexes/buildings had on the urban landscape of imperial Rome.

Example #2:

Some of the most iconic buildings from the ancient Greek world are the temples to the gods, many of which still stand today in various states of preservation. These structures tell us a great deal about the development of monumental Greek architecture in the Archaic and Classical periods. Please discuss the development of temples in the Greek world from about the 8th to the 5th centuries BCE, making reference to the sites that critical for understanding important architectural changes and shifts in construction material.

*As stated above, we do not want to prescribe how these might be answered. Therefore, we are not providing sample answers to essays. Please do not hesitate to come see us any time to discuss strategy for approaching answers, potential practice answers you've prepared, or to ask any questions on your mind about studying, format, approaches, etc.