

Classics: Classical Civilisation

Advanced GCE H441

Advanced Subsidiary GCE H041

OCR Report to Centres

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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Overview

General Comments

It is pleasing to read in examiners' feedback reports just how much they have enjoyed marking the scripts for a particular module, and this year was no exception. Candidates also reveal their enjoyment of the material they have studied in the way they respond to the questions; they write with great enthusiasm and are keen to express their personal opinions, offer interesting critical appreciation and challenge statements which form part of the questions.

There was a significant improvement in the middle range of responses and grades this year. Whilst there were very few outstanding scripts, it is pleasing to report that there were far fewer really weak scripts this year. As always the best scripts were characterised by careful reading of the questions, focus on the questions posed and detailed knowledge of the material which was used to create a coherent argument. The (a) part of the AS commentary questions seemed to be particularly weak this year, with the sequence of events not being known or the candidates being unable to place a passage in the context of the whole work. There was still a tendency to provide answers to questions set in previous years or simply to reproduce – either in whole or in part – essays which candidates had written for other purposes. The danger of reusing responses to past questions is that candidates do not bend the material adequately to fit the new question – it is unlikely that exactly the same question will be set in another session. Rather more worrying was the evidence that some candidates had learned impressive-sounding extracts from critical works by academics which they then proceeded to regurgitate – but with Malapropisms, misunderstanding and omissions. Examiners would far rather see something clear and simple in plain English which enables a candidate's own knowledge and understanding to be assessed. Candidates need to read the questions carefully – there was much evidence of candidates missing out parts or bringing in information which was not required. Examiners strongly advise candidates at both levels to plan their longer answers – something which was particularly lacking this year.

Misspelling of certain words and technical terms remains endemic. Each unit has its own cast of the usual suspects: Odysseus, Laestrygonian, Ithaca and Phaeacians in F382; Pompeii, Herculaneum, Menander, Scaurus, Samnite and Opus Craticium in F386; Zeus, kouros, kore, symmetry, repetition and composition in F388; villain, Lysistrata and Acropolis in F389. Very often such words were printed on the examination paper. Abbreviating names to 'Pyrgo', 'Philo', 'ToZO', 'Ody', 'Ag' or 'Cly', whilst understandable in the heat of an examination, is taken into account when assessing quality of written communication for AO2(b).

Whilst candidates at A2 did not seem to suffer any issues with timing, candidates at AS seemed to find the pressure of writing to time much more difficult to cope with. Examiners advise candidates to practise working under timed conditions from an early stage in the course. Very few rubric errors were brought to the attention of Principal Examiners.

There are a few technical issues which cause difficulties for examiners marking candidates' work: the poor legibility of a growing number of scripts – examiners can only assess what they can read. Candidates must use each page of the answer booklet and not leave pages blank. It is helpful if they label each question clearly and start new questions on a new page each time.

F381 Archaeology: Mycenae and the Classical world

General Comments

As ever, there is much enthusiasm for Archaeology in centres. It is clearly being taught with passion and the candidates are demonstrating their interest in it with lively and rewarding essays.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1 (a) This was the more popular option of the two commentary questions but a significant minority of candidates did not recognise the illustration, and some of those who did recognise it were unable to provide details of the structure and the decoration.
- (b) Answers were very varied depending on the buildings chosen by the candidates. The Cult Centre and palace/*megaron* offered reasonable scope for discussion. Those who chose the Grave Circles had unlimited 'contents' to use, although few were very sure of where individual items came from. Many candidates erroneously thought that the Ivory Trio was found in the Cult Centre and others thought the *megaron* had a throne and often a 'libations channel'. There was also a problem with definitions of civilisations here. Examiners were told about the 'Gladiator society' that apparently lived alongside the Roman Empire or the Tudor people that followed King Henry, and a lot of Mycenaean sites were treated as non-Mycenaean.
- Candidates needed to balance their time in a more efficient way: citing a vast number of examples allowed little time for development and reduced the time available for later questions.
- (c) Quite a number of candidates referred to the sites of Pylos, Tiryns and Knossos but those who knew about individual buildings at Pompeii and other Classical sites could usually earn high marks. Examples of Roman villas in Britain were also employed in a highly useful manner.
- 2 A much less popular question than Question 1 but most of those who chose it could support their answers with relevant, sometimes detailed, material.
- (a) There was confusion about which frescos etc were found at Pylos. Quite a number did not mention Linear B tablets but those who did usually gave a good range of detail.
- (b) Most dealt well with the walls and galleries at Tiryns and sometimes the water source but a few candidates seemed to have very little knowledge of the site. A large number thought that Pylos had Cyclopean walls. Some failed to make use of the evidence from the Linear B tablets. There were, of course, a few excellent answers.
- (c) This wide ranging question tempted some candidates into listing lots of examples, often with their sites wrongly identified. There were, however, some very strong answers but also a significant number of rather limited ones.

Essay Questions

- 3 Few candidates actually gave details of archaeological recording beyond references to photographs and keeping notes generally. Specific sites were rarely mentioned with the exception of Troy and Schliemann's lack of recording – perhaps rather unfair since he did keep quite detailed diaries. Quite a number of candidates discussed Homer's Iliad as a 'record'.
- 4 Candidates found it difficult to give specific evidence in this answer. Many responses were very generalised. Some took archaeological sites to mean sites in the process of being excavated, some as meaning sites which had been excavated. No one contrasted the two.
- 5 This offered a lot of scope but candidates generally either focused on describing surveying techniques in detail or gave detail of specific sites. Only a few did both. As always, some sites given as examples were entirely inappropriate and many were given without any explanatory detail.

F382 Homer's *Odyssey* and Society

General Comments

This unit remains a popular option. There were many informative and interesting responses written by able candidates who were clearly both enthused by the *Odyssey* and had been very well taught throughout the course and in preparing for the examination.

By far the most popular choice of questions was 1 and 3. It was encouraging to see a significant increase in the number of candidates attempting question 5 and answering it well. It was disappointing that so few attempted question 2.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1
- (a) There were many good answers here; those that did not do so well went short by omitting episodes (the escape from Polyphemus, Aeolus, or the Laestrygonians), or inverting them, before the arrival at Aea. Weaker answers also tended to require greater detail on what had happened just before the passage started.
 - (b) The best answers observed the visual emphasis on the details of, for example, the 'silver-studded chair' and the vivid use of direct speech, or mentioned the fact that it is Odysseus in the first person who is telling the tale at Alcinoos' court, and thus to us. In addition, some were able to comment appropriately on the contrast between the opulence of Circe's surroundings and her sinister intentions, or on the changing pace of the narrative. This year there seemed to be many more instances of candidates writing 'Homer's description of the action makes it more vivid' or 'The imagery when Odysseus draws his sword makes it more exciting', without further explanation or development to the detriment of their AO2 mark.
 - (c) This question seemed to work particularly well and candidates were very much divided about whom they admired more which made marking it less onerous. Weaker responses either tended to lose focus on the 'admire' element of the question or were unable to recall relevant information beyond that given in the passage. Stronger responses considered both sides of the argument for each character with a good range of supporting details and the best made comparisons between Circe and Calypso in terms of the help they offered upon Odysseus' departure, their hospitality etc.
- 2
- (a) There were some excellent responses but often confusion was prevalent about when, how, and what Odysseus communicates to Penelope, and Telemachus' role in the dénouement. Most scripts referred to Eurycleia's recognition through Odysseus' scar, but few referred to Penelope's dealings with the Suitors or to the insults Odysseus receives from the still banqueting suitors and Melantho.
 - (b) Candidates experienced little difficulty in picking up on the prophecies of Theoclymenus in the passage and some of the stronger and more foreboding language. There was, however, a need for a greater interpretation and explanation of how these and other descriptions in the passage portended the Suitors' demise.

- (c) There were some excellent answers to this question, with the strongest referring to the prefiguration of the Suitors' destruction at the gods' council meeting or to other previous hints (Menelaus in Sparta, Tiresias and Agamemnon in the Underworld). There was a tendency to focus on the 'Why?' part of the question, to the detriment of the 'How?'. Many did not give adequate details of Odysseus's planning (the bow challenge, confinement of the womenfolk to their quarters, removal of the weaponry) and execution (the role of Athene, or those of Philoetius and Eumaeus) of the retribution. Weaker answers often went little further than explaining the need for the Suitors' deaths in terms of their abuse of *xenia* – omitting for instance their plot to kill Telemachus, or their insolent behaviour towards him and others.

Essay Questions

- 3 This was a popular and generally well answered question. Nearly all responses were able to cite instances where Odysseus would appear to do things his own way. Stronger responses also included reference to the help or advice Odysseus receives from Athene, Hermes, his men, Nausicaa and the loyal servants in Ithaca. The best answers, however, profitably explored the question more thoroughly - Odysseus' initial reluctance to do as Ino instructs him, followed by his enforced change of mind about abandoning his raft, or his overruling of his men's misgivings about expecting *xenia* in the Cyclops' cave, where he needs his ingenuity (and his men's practical help) to redeem the situation, or his disregard of Circe's advice about how to handle Scylla. Some also considered the question of fate.
- 4 Most candidates sensibly discussed in turn Penelope, Eurycleia, Nausicaa and Arete, some also brought in Helen, Melanthe and the other guilty maids. Refreshingly few ignored the word 'mortal' in the question by bringing in Circe or Calypso. Most answers were able to see that women such as Penelope are crucial to the plot and narrative. Not all adequately distinguished between importance and value and many responses would have benefitted from addressing both sides of the question and developing a counter argument for each. Stronger candidates also often addressed contextual issues from an ancient viewpoint and that of the modern reader.
- 5 There were many thoughtful and sensible responses to this question, some of which sought and offered comparison between ancient Greek and modern attitudes or moral assumptions about eg slavery, homicide and women's rights and status. Other scripts tended to focus on the morally questionable behaviour of Odysseus himself (with regard to the Cicones for instance, or his affairs with Circe and Calypso, or his treatment of the guilty maids). Many scripts showed a tendency to focus too much on the code of *xenia*, at the expense of other issues of justice or right and wrong.

F383 Roman Society and Thought

General Comments

Candidates were able to communicate their enjoyment this year, particularly with regard to Petronius and Juvenal, through plenty of personal responses. However, examiners felt that knowledge of details from texts was not so strong and in a few cases there were weaknesses in understanding of Roman society.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1 (a) A significant number of candidates could not identify any guests at Trimalchio's dinner. Most assumed that all the guests, including Encolpius, were freedmen and a few described the dinner of Nasidienus from Horace. Some credit was given for offering detail of the guests named in the passage, though often even these guests were not mentioned. Reference to freedmen in general was given credit but this should not have formed the whole response. Weaker responses listed the guests, while better responses had a detail attached. The more obscure guests named were Echion, Seleucus and Phileros. It was decided that Trimalchio was not a guest.
- (b) In this type of question candidates should include both reference to the text and argument. There were some candidates who could point to sections which were funny, without making a very convincing case for why they were. Examiners felt that a better technical vocabulary would have helped here.
- (c) Candidates were instructed to include discussion of the passage; this was missed by a few. Candidates should also guard against losing sight of the question- *Is Encolpius essential?* A number of responses quickly dismissed Encolpius as not essential and then produced a character study of Trimalchio who was deemed essential. Better responses discussed Encolpius' use of the first person narrative, the sarcastic comments and detailed descriptions. Encolpius' naivety was also discussed.
- 2 (a) Some responses offered plenty of detail about Crispinus, making specific references to Satire 1. Some responses used phrases copied from the passage and gained minimal credit. Some candidates wrote, sometimes at some length, about Juvenal's attitude to Crispinus, and/or foreigners/freedmen in general.
- (b) There were many good responses, although again, in the case of some candidates, a better technical vocabulary would have served them well. Many candidates felt that Crispinus, in using his mullet to bribe a dotard into bestowing a legacy or to flatter his mistress, might be doing something good. Few candidates seemed to pick up the irony here and felt that Crispinus was not all bad. As in 1(b) there was a tendency for responses to say "Juvenal says.... X ... this shows hatred". Such responses produce an underdeveloped argument.

- (c) Many candidates seemed to read the question as asking “How angry does Juvenal get?” Or “What things make Juvenal angry?” with a resultant focus on content rather than Juvenal’s techniques. Better answers understood Juvenal’s style and the concept of the “angry satirist”. Some candidates missed the mock epic style of Satire 4 which was discussed in better responses. This would have been a suitable counter-argument against Juvenal being at his best when writing in anger.

Essay Questions

- 3 Candidates who attempted this question seemed to enjoy writing about it very much, and some responses were very good, personal responses. Almost every candidate agreed that neither Pliny nor Horace would have enjoyed Trimalchio’s dinner. Better responses gave specific details from the work of Horace and Pliny. Candidates should ensure that details are explained in relation to the question.
- 4 Candidates were expected to discuss the nature and purpose of Roman satire. A suggested introduction could have been discussion of the origins and of Lucilius as the founder of satire. All three satirists needed discussion and, in this case, comparisons proved to be better answers.
- 5 Detail from Roman society (money, Stoicism, Epicureanism) was credited under AO1. Many answers tended just to discuss money and Philosophy in general. The best answers included explanation of the two different philosophies. A number of candidates appreciated that the Roman class system was based on money qualifications.

Some General Advice:

Detail:

If candidates make passing reference, this does not provide enough detail: *Horace 2,8: the satire about two mice; Trimalchio serves elegant food*. Responses which offer detail might say: *....the town mouse country mouse, in which a mouse serves vetch; town mouse ... mastiffs.....* Direct quotation is not expected and indirect, detailed references will be credited.

Analysis:

Good analysis refers back to the question. Credit is given for analysis based on secondary reading (eg Rudd, Braund) under AO2.

F384 Greek Tragedy in its Context

General Comments

Greek Tragedy maintained its popularity amongst the candidates. They once again demonstrated their enjoyment of the plays and a good personal response to the issues raised by the questions.

All questions were answered with a wide range of detail and enabled the candidates to express their opinions, with personal response to the plays clearly evident. The enjoyment and appreciation of all the plays by the students was shown by their answers.

Candidates were generally able to write fluently and express their ideas in well structured and thought out arguments, although there were still some issues with the use of English. Candidates continued to use Greek terms, such as *kleos*, *timé* and especially *hybris*, but many found it hard to use them correctly. An increasing trend this year was the use of bullet points to answer part (a) of the commentary question but this did not seem to have any effect on the quality of the answers.

There was the usual sprinkling of misspellings, with *stichomythia* in particular showing a wide variety of spellings. Names were also often not spelt correctly, even if they appeared on the examination paper. There was also confusion over which characters appeared in which plays, with there being particular confusion between Aegeus and Aegisthus.

This year saw a new development in the distribution of questions. Question 2 on Euripides' *Medea* seemed to be the more popular of the Commentary Questions. It was in the choice of essay questions that a significant difference was seen from previous years. By far the most popular question was Question 5 (women as victims), while Question 3 (fate in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*) attracted a fair share of answers. The least popular question was Question 4 (*Trojan Women*).

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1 (a) Answers revealed a generally good knowledge of the play, although there was a certain amount of confusion over the order of events. Most common was uncertainty of when Menelaus and Agamemnon arrived, as well as the exact roles played by Tecmessa and Eurysaces.
- (b) Candidates were aware of Agamemnon's feelings for Ajax and were able to use the passage for evidence of these feelings. There were some good answers, using both Agamemnon's words and those of Odysseus; however, some answers contrasted the feelings of Agamemnon with those of Odysseus. Less well answered was how effectively Sophocles conveyed these feelings.
- (c) Candidates showed a good awareness of the role played by Odysseus in the play, using the passage well and contrasting this with his appearance in the rest of the play. Candidates were in general agreement about how Odysseus was portrayed in the passage, citing his respect for Ajax and his standing up to Agamemnon. Many candidates saw this as Odysseus possessing *sophrosyne*, and being a pious man (although there were a number of candidates who used the Latin term *pietas* in this context). This was compared to his appearance in the rest of the play. Virtually all of the candidates discussed how Odysseus was portrayed in the opening scene, with a range of opinions about his character, ranging from cowardice and fear of Ajax to respect for both gods and men. Only a few answers mentioned what happened after the scene in the passage, with the offer to take part in Ajax's funeral.

- 2 (a) The large number of answers to this question shows the continuing interest and inspiration *Medea* provides for candidates. Candidates generally knew the main details of the scene, although some were confused as to which meeting between Jason and Medea the passage came from. Although candidates were able to give a good account of the events in the play, a surprisingly large amount of answers did not mention the meeting with Aegeus.
- (b) Candidates reacted well to the passage, with some excellent discussions of the language used. Especially well analysed were the many examples of dramatic irony present in the passage. Another aspect which was analysed well was the tension inherent in Jason's initial rejection of Medea's presents. However, many candidates did not discuss the staging of the scene, despite the situation on stage being mentioned in the question.
- (c) Candidates showed a good appreciation of how Jason and Medea interact in the passage. They were able to appreciate the way Medea treats Jason in order to achieve her revenge and were able to contrast this with her interaction with other male figures in the play. Most answers discussed the way in which she dealt with Creon and Aegeus, with some even including characters such as the Tutor, the messenger and even her sons. Answers varied in the details of each meeting, with better answers commenting on how Medea used different ideas, such as Creon's love of his daughter and Aegeus' desire for children, to manipulate the men. A number of candidates, however, misinterpreted the question, discussing Medea's relationship with Jason in the play, rather than the other male characters.

Essay Questions

- 3 Candidates who answered this question showed a good understanding of Fate and its role in the play. Most candidates discussed the characters of Agamemnon and Cassandra, with many also including Clytaemnestra, and a few Aegisthus and Iphigenia. Candidates produced a range of answers, arguing for both sides of the question. A good range of detail was used, including Agamemnon's "catch 22" problem of whether to sacrifice Iphigenia, his behaviour at Troy and walking on the purple tapestries, as well as Cassandra's position as a captive and victim of Clytaemnestra. Those discussing Clytaemnestra also analysed her choice to avenge her daughter, with some mentioning that she saw herself as an instrument of the gods' revenge on Agamemnon. More perceptive answers also mentioned the curse on the House of Atreus and the effect this had on all the characters, including Aegisthus.
- 4 Although this question was the least popular of the essays, it was generally answered well. Candidates showed a good appreciation of how the play illustrated the cruelty of war, with the treatment of the women and the killing of Astyanax being mentioned as prime examples. Many candidates also showed knowledge of the historical context of the play, with its production after the siege of Melos. Candidates argued for both sides of the question, with some agreeing with the premise of the question, while others found other themes to discuss, such as the portrayal of the gods. There were even those who took Cassandra's speech on war as showing how war can produce fame and contrasting the fate of the Greeks who died with that of the Trojans. The answers to this question showed the candidates' appreciation of the play and how provocative it was.

- 5 This was by a long way the most popular of the essay questions. Candidates were generally able to find evidence to use in their answers. The most popular play which candidates used was Euripides' *Trojan Women*, which was overwhelmingly seen as evidence in favour of the proposition in the question. All the women were seen as victims, although Helen produced a mixture of reactions. Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* was also a popular play in the answers. Cassandra and Iphigenia were both seen as victims. Many saw Clytaemnestra as a powerful woman, although there were those who argued that her actions were the result of her being a victim of Agamemnon's behaviour. This was also true of Euripides' *Medea*, with Medea being seen in the same light – a powerful woman, but one seen by some as forced to act as she did by Jason's mistreatment of her. Sophocles' *Ajax* was the least used of the plays, with Tecmessa being seen as a victim of war and Ajax's suicide. Most candidates analysed three or four plays, rather than just two, and did conclude that although women were generally shown as victims, some rose above this status.

F385 Greek Historians

General Comments

As seems to be the case most years, the majority of candidates were much more comfortable answering questions on Herodotus than on any other author, with most answers responding to Question 1 and Question 3. Although some candidates did answer Question 2, they were distinctly in the minority. Year after year, it is very encouraging to see the enthusiasm that centres and candidates have for the Greek Historians.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1
- (a) In general, this question was well answered. Most candidates had a thorough knowledge of the relevant events and could explain them in good detail.
 - (b) Unfortunately, some were distracted by looking ahead to Question 1(c) and thus focussing on the treatment of the supernatural as a typical feature of Herodotus' style. While that was certainly relevant, the other features were addressed by the stronger answers.
 - (c) This was generally answered with confidence and gusto. The stronger answers were those that tried to focus on the 'how' part of the question, analysing the way in which Herodotus used the supernatural and the potential reasons for such discussion, rather than just listing incidents where Herodotus mentions oracles and suchlike.
- 2
- (a) The few that attempted Question 2 did not show, in general, sufficient knowledge of the events before the passage to gain higher marks.
 - (b) In general, some solid use was made of the passage. On the whole, answers were strong, but several candidates described what they saw on the page without making reference to how what they read was, or was not, typical. Several compared his style to those of Herodotus or Thucydides – such answers were rewarded as long as the focus was on Plutarch.
 - (c) This question was either answered very well with lots of detailed reference to the text or much less well with very general comments about why Plutarch may have written his works. Stronger answers were those that tried to focus tightly on the question.

Essay Questions

- 3 This was the most popular question. The stronger answers focussed on the supposed aims of an historian before comparing them to what Herodotus says in his work. There were a few answers that relied on generic points and ideas, but the majority gave plenty of evidence and reference to the text.
- 4 The small number of candidates selecting this topic generally made a strong attempt to describe Thucydides' aim with regard both to his contemporary readership and to posterity.

- 5** Again, very few essays on this topic were seen, as Question 3 dominated Section B. The few candidates that answered this question made a real effort to describe all three authors and their varying levels of bias. However, there were some that focussed on one author at the expense of the other two. A discussion of all three authors is required for this type of question.

F386 City Life in Roman Italy

General Comments

Candidates who entered for this unit obviously gained much pleasure from their study of cities in Roman Italy. It was felt that this year the quality of answers had improved with more detail being offered in support of argument.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1
- (a) The event shown in the painting from the House of Actius Anicetus was the riot at the amphitheatre in Pompeii. The account by Tacitus is one of the literary sources prescribed in the specification. Examiners expected that there should be a range of detail across the whole incident. Better answers gave some specific names and the correct date: AD 59.
 - (b) The question required candidates to assess the importance of the amphitheatre *in Pompeii*. A number of responses discussed what an amphitheatre in general was and the gladiatorial fights which took place. A limited amount of credit was given for this under awareness of social context. However, better answers gave detailed factual knowledge of the amphitheatre in Pompeii, such as the correct seating capacity and the correctly-spelled names of sponsors. The amphitheatre was generally assessed as important for entertainment and for politicians to raise their profile. On occasion though, mentioning its *importance* was forgotten.
 - (c) Some responses listed examples without offering detail. Lists of houses, buildings, mosaics, columns should have some detail to support points over the name or type. A number of responses offered little on wall painting and only included lists of other forms of decoration. Better responses offered a balance of both. It was encouraging to see discussions of different styles of wall painting, though these were not always secure in understanding. Most candidates offered information from both Pompeii and Herculaneum. To ensure a detailed range of information, candidates should go beyond a list, for example: *There are mosaics in the House of Menander* gives little detail and is basic. However, *monochrome mosaics in the bath house* or *mosaics depicting Nilotic scenes* shows good detail.
- 2
- (a) The principal details should have been on the barracks building rather than the fire fighters themselves. Better responses had more on the building, showing familiarity with the plan, and the best set the barracks in a chronological context. The favourite fact offered was the shrine to Fortuna in the latrines.
 - (b) Garden houses should have identifiable detail over general information on flats. In parallel with 1(b) better responses offered specific detail of the Garden Houses. Most candidates were insistent that the Garden Houses were not ordinary and supported their argument with details of building materials, location, decoration and gardens. Those who argued against this were equally forceful.

- (c) Although the use of *exceptional* and *unusual* was often fluid, most candidates understood the importance of Ostia in relation to Rome. The Great Warehouse and Fire Fighters barracks were the most commonly cited buildings with a surprising number missing the opportunity to discuss the ports of Claudius and Trajan.

Essay Questions

It was felt overall that candidates had a good knowledge of prescribed material but that further work is required on analytical skills.

- 3 Reference was expected to Ostia and Pompeii. The prompts indicated, for discussion, tombs and shrines, which were offered in the best responses. There was a danger of responses becoming a list of religious facts, the most common being the failure to repair the temple of Jupiter after the 62 earthquake, with the question addressed only in the conclusion. Better answers tended to refer to the question throughout the whole response.
- 4 Many responses produced a list of individuals, such as Scaurus, Eumachia, and these could only be credited under AO1. There needed to be some analysis of their contribution to success. The prompt asks for buildings. Some responses mentioned emperors under discussion of Ostia which was credited but this did not form the only reference in better responses. It was acceptable at this level for discussion of one town to be followed by another (A+B) though the most perceptive dealt with both at the same time in a thematic approach (benefaction and business, for example).
- 5 Responses to this question were very varied. There was a wide range of ideas. Topics discussed included the grid layout; similar buildings; special named and detailed buildings for individual towns; changes to specific houses over time; the decline of Ostia and the sudden destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Candidates frequently mentioned buildings beyond the specification (namely baths and theatres) and although this practice is not expected, full credit was given for relevant examples. Better answers compared two towns together.

F387 Roman Britain: Life in the Outpost of the Empire

General Comments

It was pleasing to note that there was a good spread of marks this year and that there were far fewer weak scripts. Good responses were distinguished by the approach to tackling the question as it was asked and by detailed specific evidence from a range of literary and archaeological sources. Whilst having a general overview of a topic is commendable, without detailed evidence it is unlikely to lead to high AO1 marks. It was common to see uneven performances between the commentary questions and essays on many scripts, with essays often being stronger than the commentary questions.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

In contrast to previous years, there was a fairly even division of the numbers of responses to each of the commentary questions.

- 1 (a) The candidates who chose this question often did not know how to go about answering it, with many only using the information on the exam paper and adding no knowledge of their own. Some candidates had difficulty in extrapolating accurate information from the plans of the towns.
- (b) Again, this tended to be a generally poorly answered question. Some candidates were able to describe the different categories of towns although full understanding was rare. Very few candidates showed an understanding of the 'change over time' element. Knowledge of the geographical location of towns within Britain was poor. Information about particular towns and their facilities was not sufficiently detailed.
- 2 (a) The inscription was often misinterpreted: 'To Holy Cocidius Aurunceius Felicessemus', a Roman individual with 3 names, Cocidius was occasionally equated with Cogidubnus and was named as a Roman emperor.

The exact status of Cocidius and the Genii Cucullati in terms of being Celtic or purely British seems to be uncertain in the books available to the students so credit for both was given. Knowledge was varied and sometimes confused, with the Genii Cucullati equated with the Genii Loci or Lares and Penates or even Egyptian gods. Cocidius was better known mostly through his position as Mars Cocidius. Christianity was easily identified with many knowing the debate about the figure of Christ/Orpheus/Magnentius but many spent much time here on the changing position of Christianity which would have been better employed in 2(b). Very few actually discussed diversity of religious practice rather than diversity of religion in any detail. Few picked up on the inscription being a gift to the god for services rendered. Most saw the limitations of location and time although there was limited knowledge of the geographical locations.

- (b) Most candidates had enough knowledge to answer this question well, providing a range of examples of different types of religion. Many candidates assumed without giving any evidence that Britons had to worship Roman gods. Of the many candidates who used the example of Sulis-Minerva, quite a number gave this as an example of Britons being forced to worship Roman gods rather than their own deity, forgetting that the Roman name of Bath is *Aquae Sulis* not *Aquae Minervae*. Most candidates gave the examples of the treatment of the Druids and changing attitudes to Christianity as examples of lack of tolerance. There did seem to be some confusion about general polytheism with an assumption that people worshipped a variety of gods but actually each individual worshipped only the god or range of gods of their choice.

Essay Questions

The essay questions seemed equally popular and of a similar quality. This year candidates seemed to have sufficient time to offer essays of a decent length. There was little evidence of planning despite the emphasis laid upon this in the report from last year. Candidates need to read questions very carefully and answer the questions as they are written and not as they have practised.

- 3 Most candidates had a good overview of villas but often did not use it well to answer the question posed. Knowledge of specific individual villas tended to be poor and many gave inappropriate examples, whether this was genuine error or just an example of using guesswork is difficult to say. Geographical knowledge of the location of individual villas was noticeably weak. The limitations of the effect of villas based on their geographical distribution were widely known and many candidates also had a general idea of their development through time. The better answers distinguished between the effects on different social classes. Details of agricultural changes were often cited.

A significant number of candidates felt that villas were not good evidence of the Romans' effect on Britain and discussed instead roads, towns, the army etc. Some managed to turn this approach into an effective essay but some gave far too little information on villas for this to be a wholly successful approach.

- 4 This was the better answered of the essay questions. Candidates seemed well-prepared to discuss the economy of Roman Britain and were able to structure the essay in an effective manner. Whilst many clearly discussed *reasons* and *extent* separately, there were also many candidates who simply discussed how the economy changed. Some compared pre-conquest Britain with post-conquest Britain and went on to refer to the collapse of the economy after the departure of the legions, although few gave specific evidence for this. Few candidates were able to discuss changes within the period of Roman occupation. There was often detailed discussion of the changes in agricultural tools, crops and techniques as well as changes in the scale of mining during the Roman occupation. There was some discussion of industries with a range of different examples given. Weaker answers showed an understanding of the general development of the economy but could give little specific evidence.

F388 Art and Architecture in the Greek World

General Comments

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 have studied for this unit. The level of personal response continues to impress markers. The marks covered the whole mark range, but interestingly there were fewer excellent scripts and far fewer weak scripts. There were relatively few examples of candidates choosing questions for which they were unable to identify appropriate material. To improve their performance candidates need to answer 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 reoccurring in answers, 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.

It was felt that candidates made better use of their time this year, balancing the commentary questions against the essay questions efficiently. Legibility and quality of written communication were not noticeably worse in this unit. As for spelling of technical terms, the usual suspects were in evidence: a variety of spellings of repetition, symmetry, kouros, kore, Andokides, Exekias and Sophilos (often called Sophocles). Candidates should remember that an examination requires a formal written approach and that terminology should be appropriate. One worrying new trend to emerge this year was for a number of candidates to criticise the questions for asking them to make a choice between one art form, artist or site and another.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

Once again, the popularity of vase-painting as an art form was shown by the number of candidates who tackled this question, just over 80%. The candidates who answered the architecture question often produced responses which were short on relevant supporting detail.

- 1 (a) Although there were some superb responses to this question, the majority were weak. Candidates chose to compare the temple of Zeus with other 5th century examples, principally the Parthenon but also the Erechtheion, the Hephaestion and the temple of Apollo at Bassai. The most common failings were that some candidates did not see the need to compare the temple of Zeus with any other temple in order to give a full consideration of the question and the unloading of an array of sculptural details.
- (b) This question was better answered than 1(a), with many candidates displaying detailed knowledge of the buildings in the sanctuaries of Delphi and Olympia. There was some confusion about what happened at the sites, especially Olympia, between the games. Knowledge of the chronology of the two sites was often insecure. Some thought that the temple of Apollo was significantly larger than the temple of Zeus because it was 6x15 rather than 6x13. The general feeling, though by no means a consensus, was that the description of 'impressive but not very practical' applied more to Delphi than Olympia.

- 2** **(a)** Most candidates had a very sound knowledge of the techniques involved in black-figure and red-figure painting, though sometimes there was confusion between incision and brushwork. The best answers followed the question and referred closely to details from the two pots pictured rather than other pots they could think of. Candidates needed to make specific reference to actual examples of losses and gains. Very few noticed that the decorative borders on both pots were actually black-figure.
- (b)** There were some very nice responses in answer to this question. Candidates were usually able to provide details of at least two pots by Exekias (some went beyond the specification and offered details of the Suicide of Ajax pot and the Achilles and Penthesilea pot) and details of at least one other painter, usually the Amasis Painter but also the Gorgon Painter, Kleitias and Sophilos. Descriptions of the pots gave good AO1 marks but more was required to achieve good AO2 marks – an evaluation of ‘skilful’ and ‘innovative’. Opinions varied; some considered Exekias both skilful and innovative, whilst others deemed that although he was indeed skilful, there were other painters who were much more innovative. It is a pity that a significant number of candidates chose to compare Exekias’s work with that of red-figure vase painters. A few candidates barely mentioned any pots by Exekias in coming to a conclusion.

Essay Questions

The best essays showed clear evidence of planning, allowing candidates to provide logical, well-structured arguments. Question 3 was significantly more popular than Question 4, with roughly a 75% - 25% split.

- 3** A very popular question which was for the most part answered well, though there were fewer good responses when compared to Question 4. All candidates followed the rubric of discussing both the Sounion Kouros and the Diskobolos, but there were some who did not discuss other examples from their own knowledge. Many responses simply offered a straightforward developmental approach and only turned briefly to the notion of aesthetic preference. The ‘Cook’s Tour’ approach does not work well with a question of this type. Many candidates failed to mention bronze and its effects on free-standing sculpture. Many assumed that the Diskobolos was an original carved in marble with an intentional tree stump emerging from the leg. Archaic sculpture, although not often fully appreciated and usually heavily criticised, was better known, and a wider range of supporting material provided, than Early Classical sculptures. Many candidates struggled to identify appropriate Early Classical material beyond the Delphic Charioteer and the Riace Warriors and often went a long way beyond the period into High Classical and Late Classical statues. The illustrations were designed to give candidates clues as to their starting and end points. The almost universal conclusion was that Early Classical sculpture is preferable to Archaic sculpture.

- 4 Though this was not a popular option, this essay produced some of the best answers for the whole paper. Candidates mostly showed great enthusiasm for Archaic art in all its guises and in the better answers there was a real engagement with the concepts of ‘regular’, ‘repetitive’ and ‘boring’. Answers were often lively and vigorous, with some criticism of the author of the comment as ‘ill-informed’, ‘ignorant’ and perhaps ‘rather boring themselves’. The most sophisticated answers dealt with the three adjectives separately rather than as a whole phrase; this meant that they could agree with one adjective whilst disagreeing with another. All the responses followed the rubric of discussing two areas of Archaic art, with many displaying an impressive knowledge across the three areas specified. Some candidates struggled to address the idea of their chosen examples being ‘regular’, but ‘repetitive’ and ‘boring’ were usually handled well, with the latter giving plenty of scope for personal response. As with all questions on this paper, there was a need for detailed reference to specific examples in order to achieve high AO1 marks.

F389 Comic Drama in the Ancient World

General Comments

This was the first year of the new prescribed plays, with *Lysistrata* and *Miles Gloriosus/The Swaggering Soldier* replacing *Wasps* and *Dyskolos*. Accidents and confusion do happen on such occasions, and it is not unknown for candidates to arrive at the examination and only then realise that they have studied the wrong plays. Such candidates would still have been able to tackle the paper successfully. Quite deliberately, no named “other” play by Aristophanes was specified in Question 1(b), while Question 3 could have been answered well with the use of only one play by each playwright. Inevitably, candidates who had not read the two new plays would have found it hard to give good answers to Question 2(b) and 4. Most candidates, however, seemed to have read *Lysistrata*. Question 2 was slightly more popular than Question 1. Question 4 was very much more popular than Question 3.

We were pleased to see an increase in the overall number of good responses and a decrease in the number of weaker ones. Most seem to have found something to enjoy in at least one of the plays. Several responses made it clear that the names in the two Plautus plays were a minefield. There was some evidence of wider reading, not only of other plays by Aristophanes and Plautus but also of plays by Euripides and Aeschylus not on the AS Tragedy specification. It was clear, too, that there had been some thought about modern analogies and parallels. This is useful in class discussion, but candidates need to take care to ensure references are relevant to the context of the question.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1 (a) This question required no material from outside the passage on the paper. The best responses made sensible comments, using evidence from the passage and correctly assessing what an ancient Athenian would have seen and heard in 405 BC, with some appropriate suggestions about stage ‘business’. Some were able to discuss the ‘Charon’ pun with reference both to the assonance and to the custom of calling on the dead three times. Some candidates found it difficult to distinguish between visual humour and dialogue, and ‘slapstick’ was used indiscriminately as a synonym for ‘not verbal’. Charon’s boat as a source of visual humour was often missed. The stage directions in the prescribed Penguin text were often cited without reference to the technical resources available to Aristophanes; while a small boat on wheels and non-speaking extras carrying in a corpse were perfectly feasible, elaborate lighting changes were unfortunately not. Standard comedy uniform (masks, padding, phallus) was irrelevant, unlike Dionysus’ comic attempt at a Heracles disguise.

- (b) This was less well done on the whole. Candidates could see that the scenario and setting for *Frogs* was clearly a comic fantasy and could comment on the references to the oligarchs, Arginusae and Alcibiades. Only the very strongest responses commented that ancient Athenians would be familiar with the general situation of a *katabasis* (and consequently mythological representations of the Underworld), the works of Aeschylus and Euripides and drama contests in honour of Dionysus. Conversely, many decided that there was no comic fantasy in *Lysistrata* but then went on to talk about women's lack of political involvement in ancient Athens. Only the very best responses mentioned that the original audience would be familiar with political debates and could see the Acropolis and its environs from virtually everywhere in Athens, including the Theatre of Dionysus. A few responses cited *Wasps*, successfully discussing Cleon and the jury courts, but being less familiar with symposia.
- 2 (a) This was generally well done, with good assessments of Simia. Some candidates took Pseudolus' flattery literally. The tricking of Ballio into revealing Polymachaeroplages' name was usually well recalled but Pseudolus' craftiness elsewhere in the play was often omitted. It was clear from the responses that many candidates had previously written comparisons of Simia and Pseudolus, reproducing these with little attention to the words 'more crafty' and consequently including much irrelevance. The strongest responses also cited Charinus' description of Simia and the start of the Simia/Pseudolus scene. The weakest ones made no reference to the passage at all.
- (b) The majority of responses showed good knowledge of Ballio's activities and he was the runaway winner of the villainy contest. There were some good discussions also of the extent to which the two characters were 'stock' villains rather than 'real' ones, and these produced some interesting assessments. Ballio's brutality towards his slaves, his mercenary outlook and his pride in being a villain were usually well discussed, as were Pyrgopolynices' arrogance and self-delusional tendencies. The latter's kidnap of Philocomasium was generally the only 'real' crime laid at his door, though some recalled the fear of punishment expressed by both Sceledrus and Lurcio. Some decided that his link with pirates (see Palaestrio's prologue) also made him a villain.

Essay Questions

- 3 This question deliberately did not specify how many plays by each playwright should be cited and it was perfectly possible to gain high marks by using just one play from each playwright. It could also be answered well by using *Wasps* rather than *Lysistrata* and *Pseudolus* rather than *Miles Gloriosus/Swaggering Soldier*.

The strongest responses showed awareness of the structural conventions of both Plautine and Aristophanic comedy, discussing such elements as prologues, stock plots, *parabasis* and conventional endings as appropriate. They were able to identify elements of coherence in Aristophanic plays (most clearly in *Lysistrata*) and sketches in Plautus (the cook scene and the insulting of Ballio in *Pseudolus* and the fooling of Sceledrus in *Miles Gloriosus/Swaggering Soldier* being the favourites). Most talked also about political messages in Aristophanes and the different audiences/purposes of the two dramatists. Weaker responses were, by and large, very weak and suggested that this question had been chosen because the candidate felt even less confident about Question 4.

- 4 This was the most popular question on the paper and produced some very good, thoughtful responses which engaged both with what the audiences expected from women in their societies and with dramatic constructs at the time of the plays. Most were able to identify the presentation, either by Aristophanes or (allegedly) by Euripides of Athenian women as interested only in sex, drugs and revenge on men. Most were also able to cite useful evidence from *Lysistrata*. Lampito's presentation as a stereotypical Spartan was, however, misunderstood by many. Similarly, there were good discussions of the various stereotypes of women in Plautine comedy, with a distinction being made between stereotypes and plot devices. Discussions of 'contribution to success' were more varied. Candidates were able to set their own criteria for 'success' and their task was then to make an appropriate assessment. The various female characters in *Frogs* were often identified as making a contribution to the success of the play as a comedy, with the Initiate Chorus (probably intended to be in part female) being cited, with Lysistrata in that play, as contributing to the successful delivery of the underlying serious purpose of Aristophanic comedy. Discussion of the female characters in Plautus' plays was usually centred on their role in the plot, though some useful comments were made about Periplectomenus' views on marriage. Weaker responses concentrated on listing all the jokes that referred to sex from *Lysistrata* and implied that the courtesan/prostitute characters in Plautus vindicated the reputation of women as sex-addicts.

F390 Virgil and the World of the Hero

General Comments

There is a huge amount of outstanding teaching and learning being put into practice in a wide number and range of centres. Candidates continue to have much to write about the epics and to take full advantage of the two hours given for the examination. It was pleasing to observe an increasing number of responses making effective reference to the cultural contexts of both epics.

By far the most popular combination of questions was 1 and 4. For many candidates answering the latter, however, they would have done well to have made direct comparisons between the two epics so as to ensure that they were fully answering the given question.

There were, perhaps, more candidates this year trying to recycle responses to old questions and shoehorn homework essays to fit this year's paper. Thus 1(b) often became the help and hindrance essay, 3 on how far Aeneas should be viewed as a perfect role model for Romans and 4 focussed solely on father and son relationships. Some of the AO1 was relevant but there was often a lot more to be said and a number of candidates were largely unsuccessful in making their pre-prepared response fit the new question.

Spelling was generally fine, although there was a sizeable minority of candidates who still continued to spell *Iliad*, *Aeneas* and *Aeneid* incorrectly – they were all printed on the examination paper. Timing did not pose a problem and there were very few rubric errors but some candidates would have benefitted from reading the question more carefully – 1(b) needed reference to books 1-6 **only**, question 2 required candidates to go beyond the passages.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1 (a) The calibre of response to this type of question seemed better this year than last and many centres seemed to have practised tackling this type of question, especially in picking out **and** explaining how the use of such devices as hyperbole, metaphor, onomatopoeia etc added to the drama of the passage. Both the size and power of the storm and the fates of the ships and men were generally well discussed. Stronger responses managed to use the breadth of the passage and to comment on the intervention of Neptune and the contrast this provided.
- (b) Just as a significant number of responses did well in part (a) of this context question, so did a similar number struggle to get to grips with part (b). This was not because candidates elected to write solely about Neptune and Juno (of which there were only a tiny number), but through candidates failing to comb through the passage to pick out the varying relevant points of the different ways the deities are portrayed. Without this range and foundation to the response, many responses did not advance beyond making general assertions that Neptune is a help to Aeneas or a good god, whilst Juno is a hindrance and an evil goddess and linking this to the portrayal of the gods and goddesses in the rest of the first half of the *Aeneid*. Such responses did not score highly under AO2 and often lagged behind under AO1 as their recall beyond the passage did not get much further than the contribution of Venus, who was seen as a good

and helpful goddess. That said, there were candidates who were able to work through the passage and deploy their detailed knowledge of the portrayal of the gods and goddesses to full effect and highlight a range of differences and similarities.

The handful of candidates who wrote only about Juno and Neptune were not penalised in the assessment of their work as the approach was entirely valid and their answers were marked in line with the levels of response and according to how well they met the criteria in each level, just as all other responses. Interestingly, some of the strongest responses to this question were from such candidates, who were much more focussed in their use of the passage.

A greater number of candidates, unfortunately, brought in extraneous information from Books 7-12.

- 2 (a) Almost all of the candidates were able to identify elements within the passage which glorified war. Stronger responses took the passage as a springboard to jump into the rest of the epic and to consider other areas where Virgil glorifies and fails to glorify war. Perhaps unsurprisingly, what differentiated candidates the most with this question was their depth of knowledge of the epic and awareness of its cultural background. There were a number of responses which did not go beyond the passage and an even greater number with a detailed understanding of both the epic and the Augustan context who scored highly in this question.
- (b) There were some excellent and perceptive responses to this question which used both passages and included discussion not only of shields but also armour and weapons.

Too many responses were limited and did one of the following:

- only made reference to the passages in their answer;
- did not directly compare the epics;
- only discussed shields.

Candidates are reminded of the importance of reading the question carefully.

Essay Questions

- 3 Even though this question provided an opportunity for students bored by Aeneas and his characterisation to pour out their grievances, the majority dutifully trotted out instances of Aeneas' *pietas* and linked this to the Augustan context. Similar to 2012, candidates were stronger on the context books in the first half of the epic than the second but their knowledge of Augustus and the background to the epic was much more detailed. Stronger responses either developed a counter argument by considering some of Aeneas' flaws and/or also discussing other elements, such as the story of Dido, which contribute to the success of the epic.

- 4** This proved to be a popular question, although not always answered well. Weaker answers failed to compare the epics throughout, affecting the AO2 mark. They often missed the idea of importance and listed examples from each. Stronger responses included some thoughtful analysis of the cultural importance of family and how this translated differently in each context. With questions involving comparisons between epics, it is worth encouraging candidates to find common points of comparison between the two epics and to discuss these – for instance, mother/son, father/son, husband/wife etc.

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