

GCSE

Classical Civilisation

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J280**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **J080**

OCR Report to Centres June 2015

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

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A351/01 City Life in the Classical World (Foundation Tier)

General Comments:

Once again there was no discernible difference in the numbers who selected either of the two options, Athens and Rome. The candidates were clearly practised in this type of paper, which is positive. There were very few cases where candidates ticked too many choices, or otherwise did not follow the rubric appropriately. However, candidates should be reminded that ticking too many boxes will result in marks being lost.

There were a handful of cases where candidates started on the Athens option, and then changed their minds and went back to cross out their first responses. However, this seemed to be rarer than in previous years. This is also the case for candidates who tried to answer both options – there were only a tiny number of these this year.

Candidates responded well to the layout of the paper, and answers were inserted into the correct boxes where applicable. Where candidates had accidentally ticked too many boxes, or changed their minds, and crossed out one or more of their answers this was generally completed in a very clear manner which is helpful to the Examiner.

There did not appear to be any misunderstanding about any of the illustrations.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Q.1 and Q.10

On the whole candidates displayed good knowledge of the gods and most were able to identify all of them correctly.

Q.2 and Q.11

Again these were generally answered accurately. The most common errors in both options was to tick “The animal was led into the temple” and /or “The priest blessed the wine”.

Q.3 and Q.12

Both of these questions enabled the markers to identify candidates who understood the value of these events. Errors did not follow a pattern.

Q.4 and Q.14

Candidates considered these choices about *symposia*/dinner parties carefully, and generally were able to offer accurate responses. Confusion about the two types of meal was rare.

Q.5 and Q.13

These short questions highlighted the candidates who knew this information, since generally candidates would either score full marks, or just one or even zero.

Q.6 and Q.15

The Examiners were pleased by the accurate responses here. The most common error seemed to be, surprisingly, some candidates who suggested that some Roman slaves were sacrificed to Juno. Generally the responses to these questions demonstrated a pleasing knowledge of the Classical world.

For comments on Questions 7, 8, 9, 16, 17 and 18 see the RTC for A351/02.

A351/02 City Life in the Classical World (Higher Tier)

General Comments:

Once again it was a pleasure for the Examiners to read these scripts as the vast majority of the candidates were clearly well-prepared for the exam. Knowledge of the Classical world was evident throughout, and, importantly, so was the understanding of that world. It was clear that candidates had been enthused by the material, and the credit for this must go to the teachers who have managed to pass their passion for the ancient world on to their students.

Of course a wide range of responses were received, but they were overwhelmingly of a good standard. Doubtless this is in part a reflection of the fact that this course is an option at GCSE which is selected by candidates, in contrast to the compulsory courses. As usual the Examiners were surprised by the range of knowledge shown by the candidates, and, once again, obscure, unexpected and interesting facts made their way into the responses. The markscheme was drawn up anticipating the information that was considered most likely to appear in the answers, but we were delighted to discover that candidates had been taught all sorts of information that we had not included in the MS. Candidates were, of course, credited for accurate information even if it is not listed in the markscheme. As in past years the vast majority of candidates demonstrated knowledge apparently drawn from the OCR Classical Civilisation text book, but examiners were instructed to credit any other relevant and accurate information.

There were an approximately even number of entries for the two options, Athens and Rome. In Section A, in both options, there was an even spread of responses to the various choices, but see comments below. It was pleasing to see that most candidates appeared familiar with the style of questions and many clearly constructed their responses based on a knowledge of the particular assessment objective for each question. This year's paper followed the convention of each Section A question being based on AO1, 2 and 3 consecutively (but please note that this is not a fixed pattern and could change in future papers).

As usual there were some candidates who attempted BOTH the Athens and Rome options. Only the marks from the option with the best responses were counted, not a combination of the best answers from both. However it was pleasing to note that there were very few of these cases this year. A tiny number of candidates answered all three questions in Section A in their chosen topic, and it was noted that this invariably impacted on their Section B question.

Inevitably there were a few candidates who started the Athens topic, then crossed out their answers and restarted on the Rome topic, although the vast majority of candidates were clearly aware of the correct option. There were also a few candidates who only answered one section A question instead of two – perhaps this was down to the preparation, or it may have been 'exam nerves'.

As noted in previous years there were a surprising number of candidates who had been given extra answer booklets by the invigilator without having used the extra pages supplied in their question paper. This suggests that they had not been made fully aware of the existence of these extra pages (pages 30-32). Some candidates squeezed extra lines onto the end of their answers for Section A questions, although, generally, the extra lines would rarely add more marks but be repetition of what had already been stated. It would be very helpful to the Examiners if candidates used the 'extra pages' in their answer book rather than write outside the lines provided for each answer. It is essential that any answers on the 'extra pages' MUST indicate the question to which they refer. It is good practice for candidates to indicate that they have used the extra pages by use of a note, arrow or asterisk: although this is not an official

requirement it can speed up the marking process for the Examiner. Please instruct candidates to use the extra pages, and not to write outside the allocated lines in the question paper. Please also remind your invigilators of the existence of these extra pages within the standard OCR response booklet, and to use these in preference to the ‘additional sheets’.

It is always disappointing to mark the work of the weakest candidates in the Higher Tier, when they might have been better suited to the Foundation Tier. I understand that there are a whole variety of reasons for this at various stages, but please consider the tiering carefully with next year’s candidates to ensure their best possible chance of a grade to reward their hard work.

Finally I would like to repeat my comment about the enthusiasm expressed by the candidates, especially in the AO3 questions and the essays. Some candidates argued strongly for one or other point of view and were clearly fully engaged with the material and keen to display their detailed

Comments on Individual Questions:

Option 1 Athens

- Q.1(a). Candidates responded well to this and were able to list various aspects of a temple. It was pleasing to see how many were familiar with the correct Greek terms including *naos* and *pronaos*, and some mentioned the *opisthodomos* as well. Use of these terms was not mandatory to reach the top levels. Generally there was good detail with clear use of proper terms. Most students remembered to address both parts of the question and mention some of the items commonly found in temples (cult statue, offerings and so on).
- Q.1(b). This question, like all the other (b)-questions in Section A of this paper was suggestive of an explanatory response. Candidates generally offered around three reasons, and the detail of the explanations would suggest the level. Most candidates explained that they were built to honour the gods, or to display the wealth/power/influence of Athens. Providing a home for the god was often cited, too.
- Q.1(c). Being an AO3 question, this required some analysis and some prioritising. Listing the events of a sacrifice, or describing a temple would not reach the higher levels. The top answers addressed both parts of the question and demonstrated good understanding of the issues – a temple for offerings, perhaps to seek a favour, and sacrifices to give something to the god and ask for something in return, and, importantly, to check the omens. The very best answers mentioned all of these things. There were lots of answers based on the experience of eating meat at a sacrifice, perhaps over-emphasising this at times. In order to reach the top level in this type of question it would be expected that a candidate would support both sides of the statement. Some candidates spent so long outlining the procedure they left themselves no time to evaluate, as required.
- Q.2(a). Pictures in Section A questions are there purely as prompts. Some candidates base their answers on them, and others prefer not to. In this question candidates invariably mentioned the *kitharistes*, the *grammatistes* and the *paidotribes*, and some also mentioned the *paidogogos* or sophists. Of course the question was not limited to ‘school’ so the *kyrios*’ role was perfectly acceptable too.
- Q.2(b). Weaker responses tended to be based along the lines that they needed to learn ‘to get a good job’. Stronger ones linked to the Classical world and mentioned *symposia*, political and legal roles, running the *oikos* and so on.

- Q.2(c). The strongest answers carefully addressed both parts of the question. Some selected one or other as the most important, and this, of course, was immaterial as long as they supported their ideas with accurate references to the Classical world. This was the answer in which candidates most often did **not** refer to the Classical world and instead made generalised comments about learning basic skills (eg 'reading') and applying them to 'get a job'.
- Q.3(a). This was the least popular of the options. Candidates invariably supplied five or six roles of the *kyrios*, which was pleasing to see. Usually the farm made an appearance, but the assembly was only rarely mentioned. There was a handful who neglected to mention his religious role despite the fact that this was referenced in the picture.
- Q.3(b). Most answers concentrated on the money-making skills of the *kyrios*, and the stronger responses looked at his social roles (*symposium*, assembly, chorus etc). Typically candidates were able to explain the importance of two or three of the roles. The link between the *symposium* and marriage was often made.
- Q.3(c). Generally speaking candidates came down in favour of the wife in this question – the 'trump card' being that she told the slaves what to do. Stronger answers emphasised the importance of the wife's ability to produce legitimate children. There was a range of nice ideas produced by these responses, including pointing out the importance of the wife's weaving, and the importance of the slaves being able to ensure that the wife could remain inside and hence respectable. There tended to be a lot of narrative responses here, with only the stronger answers really addressing the question. Some stronger responses even included comments on the difference between an Athenian 'household' and an Athenian 'family'. The top answers, of course, balanced or interlinked the importance of slaves and wives.
- Q.4. There was tendency by some candidates to write down all they knew about the festivals without actually addressing the question. Of course this is typical in this type of question and the stronger responses remained firmly focused on the question throughout – some would carefully repeat the key words from the title throughout their essay, in this case stressing the "importance" of each aspect of the festivals. It was clear that many more candidates had a knowledge of the Panathenaia than the City Dionysia, and I have noted this discrepancy in past reports. As a result there were a number of candidates who were able to write well on the Panathenaia, but not on the Dionysia, and therefore they were unable to address the question. When planning teaching for this course please note that **both** festivals are listed in the specification.
- Q.5. This question was not commonly answered. Stronger responses confidently discussed the various aspects of a theatre- everything from the *ekklema* to the actors' boots, and as they wrote they would pick out the key from the title ('most interesting') and comment on that. Some weaker answers to this question showed little knowledge or understanding about the chorus and wrote as if it referred to a modern chorus. Also, as with the City Dionysia answers in question 4, only the better answers showed a sense that the drama was part of the religious practice, and the weaker ones seemed very much to write about theatre as experienced in the modern world - ie something you can go to any time, for an evening out. The importance of Dionysos was rather underplayed – some candidates saw him as 'just the god of partying and getting drunk, so his festival can't be important'. The majority of candidates who selected this question identified the key features of machinery and sound effects. They clearly had some understanding of the chorus' role, but were inclined to minimise it in favour of the technology, to the detriment of the actors or theatre features such as costume. Stronger responses included comment on the recruitment of the chorus – drawn from the ordinary citizens – and their roles in narrating the storyline and/or providing background information and

even sound effects. Some candidates commented on the interaction between the chorus and the audience – addressing them in a way that actors never did. Once again the sound effects produced by ‘rolling stones under the seats’ made an appearance – the Examiners are at a loss as to the origins of this rather unlikely sounding method.

Option 2 Rome

- Q.6(a). These answers contained good detail like Q.1a. There was some confusion with Greek temples noticed with *naos* applied to the *cella*, for instance.
- Q.6(b). Candidates wrote a great amount on impressing foreigners and displaying a show of wealth. Candidates should be reminded that this is an exam specifically on the Classical world, so the best answers are those that can only apply to this society. Better candidates elaborated on how the temples were built to house gods, and why that was an advantage to Rome.
- Q.6(c). This question was generally answered better than Q.6b. Temple visits were not necessarily understood to the same extent as sacrifices however, and this was apparent in most candidates’ responses. The best responses identified that visiting a temple enabled a Roman to ask for a favour by giving a gift, in much the same way that a sacrifice worked. It was common to see responses which played down the value of temples, suggesting they were simply nice places to visit.
- Q.7(a). This was a really well answered question with plenty of detail – candidates really knew their material regarding chariot racing with the technical vocabulary of *spina* and *metae* being applied accurately for the most part. Inevitably armed chariots ‘a la Ben Hur’ made an appearance from time to time, but these were rarer than expected.
- Q.7(b). A good range of responses appeared although some were fairly narrow in range. Diocles cropped up regularly as an example of a rich charioteer. Generalised answers were not credited highly as the Examiners looked for specific ways linked to the Classical world in which charioteers might achieve such success. It was good to see plenty of references to the four teams here.
- Q.7(c). Again this was generally answered very well. The better candidates focused on the question and looked at the events and experiences throughout the day, whereas some others read this as another ‘why was chariot racing exciting?’ question. Of course there was plenty to be said about socialising, and betting, shops, other events and a whole range of other ideas made their appearances. Inevitably some candidates got confused with the events of the Colosseum at this point, and started talking about the execution of criminals in the lunch break.
- Q.8(a). This question was generally answered well; it was pleasing to mark these answers which contained masses of accurate detail about a whole range of responsibilities. At the other end of the spectrum we saw vague comments about “getting a job” rather than ideas that were specific to the Classical world.
- Q.8(b). Candidates were able to apply their knowledge clearly to their responses here and produced some excellent explanations of the importance of the paterfamilias’ actions. Again, the better answers were firmly rooted in classical context.

Q.8(c). The majority of candidates came down on the sides of slaves, recognising that they had a broader range of functions than a wife. However many candidates were able to demonstrate that the wife not only outranked the slaves, but also was crucial for her ability to provide an heir. There were also some candidates who knew that some Roman women ran businesses and/or made an impact by influencing their husband's political career.

Q.9. There was a healthy split between candidates who opted for each of the two questions. The best responses considered the difference between rich and poor, as well as between girls and boys, and so could develop top quality evaluation; alternatively they knew (and said) quite a lot about how education was used in later life, so could consider how useful it was. It was interesting to note, however, that such distinctions were more rarely made for women, and candidates tended to underestimate their education as a result of reverting to a stereotype of inferiority. Weaker answers listed the stages of education, perhaps pointing out the differences between boys' and girls'. Most candidates outlined the stages of a boy's education accurately, and some distinguished between the classes along the way. Stronger responses included detailed comment about what girls learnt at home as well as what boys learnt at school. They could also identify differences in status. Of course the best answers focused firmly on the wording of the question and kept returning to the issue of 'importance', and, it goes without saying by now, stuck closely to the context of the Classical world.

It appeared that candidates only selected this question if they were certain that they had a full grasp of all the issues, including how the children's education impacted on their adult life.

Q.10. This was the most commonly chosen essay in the Rome option. Candidates had a lot to say about the day at the Colosseum, but tended to overlook those initial preliminaries (parade, salute etc). Most agreed that the building was impressive, with a few going into the details regarding its construction, perhaps by Jewish slaves. Candidates generally focused effectively on the key words 'entertainment' and 'impressive'. Inevitably there was a range of responses to the term 'murder' – on the whole this was tackled extremely effectively. Some candidates pointed out that morals 'were different then' and so what was acceptable then is not so acceptable now (although many then pointed out modern equivalents, including violent computer games). Of course this was not an essay where candidates were asked to define 'murder', and I was pleased to see that they understood this and concentrated on the bloodshed without becoming sidetracked by philosophical debate. We were delighted to see that the candidates were evaluating the events in order to ascertain whether or not the "murder" part of the quote was accurate. The majority understood that gladiators were more valuable alive than dead, and it was pleasing to see candidates understanding that complex point. There were a few comments about the Romans being 'more bloodthirsty than us' but on the whole answers stuck firmly to the Classical context, so the killing of criminals was not 'murder' but was 'punishment' and so on.

On the whole candidates enjoyed getting into the gory detail of what went on in the Colosseum and had a very good knowledge of the schedule of a day. They were able to give a lot of detail about the ways people died in the arena and then analysed whether this could be seen as murder. The stronger candidates made sure to mention that we were also judging what was commonplace in the ancient world against our modern standards which was not fair.

A352/01 Epic and Myth (Foundation Tier)

General Comments:

Many candidates were able to show impressive levels of knowledge, understanding and evaluation of the text that they had studied, and there was much evidence of excellent teaching in both of the texts. It was a pleasure to read the scripts of most candidates engaging with the text.

Most candidates chose the right number of options in Section A and attempted the right number of questions in Section B. There were isolated occasions where candidates ticked too many or too few options, or even attempted both questions from both texts. In Section B, a small number of candidates attempted two parts of each question, or two of all three questions. Candidates need to ensure that they read the instructions on the cover page carefully.

Candidates found the Section A questions more straightforward than Section B. Section B answers varied hugely in standard. Many knew the events very well. Weaker responses often consisted of little more than two or three lines.

In Section B, candidates fared a little better in analysing character than literary style in the (a) questions, with some very perceptive analysis. At times the questions that asked about the style of a passage amounted to little more than paraphrases. Better responses were able to make at least two points and provide clear evidence for each. The (b) questions seemed to pose more problems than in previous years, as candidates did not know the relevant parts of the texts, and in many cases muddled them with other myths. Candidates need to ensure, especially for Homer, that the shorter stories in books 9, 10 and 12 are known. The (c) questions elicited a wide variety of ideas and quality. Weaker responses found it hard to show understanding since the answers did not show enough knowledge of the text.

Comments on Individual Questions:

- Q.1 This question was very competently handled. The commonest error was to believe that Antiphates fell from the roof.
- Q.2 Many candidates showed excellent evaluation of character. In part (a) some candidates felt he cursed Odysseus. Part (d) caused more problems than the other parts, with all options attracting some level of support, especially options a) and b).
- Q.3 This question proved quite challenging for many candidates. It was widely supposed that Nausicaa had been compared to a butterfly. The similes involving Hermes and Scylla were known much better.
- Q.4 Many candidates chose all the correct options on this question, but a few felt that he killed Scylla.
- Q.5 Most candidates thought that the gods sent monsters, forgetting that a complaint had been made by the Sun god about the crew. Some felt that the boats had been burned, but the question was done well on the whole.
- Q.6 This question was done very well, with many candidates scoring full marks. As ever, some candidates muddled Circe and Calypso.

- Q.7 This question was done reasonably well. All the wrong options achieved some level of support from candidates, with the cursing of the gods being the most popular misconception.
- Q.8 This question caused very few problems.
- Q.9(a) There were some fine responses seen to this question. The vast majority of candidates referred to the beauty of the island and these were well supported with evidence. Some candidates found it hard to go beyond this with answers tending to be repetitive on these points. Better responses focused on the homely nature of the hearth and what this told us about Calypso. Some responses, which also referred to Calypso being a stereotypical Greek female, were pleasingly common, but other candidates only talked about her island.
- Q.9(b) There was good knowledge that Hermes had said he had come from the gods and ordered Calypso to release Odysseus, but little else was known of his speech. Candidates generally knew that Calypso was unhappy at the news, but agreed as Zeus had to be obeyed. Unfortunately, many candidates added wrong or irrelevant information from another part of the text, such as Calypso promising to help him build a boat. Candidates were not penalised for this, but they usually had less time and space for correct information.
- Q.9(c) Most candidates gave decent responses to this question. The vast majority recalled his tears on the shore and there were also some references to his skills in building his boat. A few candidates discussed his disbelieving and cunning nature reasonably often in getting Calypso to swear an oath. Many candidates also discussed intelligently his affair with Calypso, with views split on whether this was acceptable.
- Q.10(a) The rescue of the men was widely praised and indicated concern, determination and physical strength. For many candidates, this was the only part of the passage that was discussed. A few candidates discussed his decision to send out an investigating party.
- Q.10(b) Responses to this question were disappointing, and perhaps this is why question 2 was less popular than the other ones. Many candidates chose the wrong incident to discuss, with the details of stories involving Polyphemus or the Laestrygonians often being cited, and most of the other smaller stories attracting some level of discussion. Regrettably, it was hard to award any marks to such answers. Some candidates did recall the outlines of the correct story, but most of these were unable to give details such as the number of men killed.
- Q.10(c) There were some mixed responses to this question. The best answers highlighted specific incidents, usually referring to incidents where Odysseus' leadership led the men into trouble. The fact that the men were fated to die due to a curse arising from Odysseus' recklessness was cited. Some candidates did not stick to the wording of the question and counterbalanced their ideas with views as to why the men did deserve their fates. These comments, while good, were irrelevant and so gained no credit. Other answers were vague and did not show much knowledge of the story.
- Q.11(a) Answers to this question varied greatly in quality. Good ideas were that the audience knows trouble is in store as Odysseus is going against the advice of a goddess, and the twin threat on both sides meant that there is no way the trouble can be avoided. Weaker responses simply said that the idea of wailing showed it was frightening. Often isolated words got quoted, especially "vomited", but not always with much analysis. Very few candidates spotted the simile, and many who did commented on the idea of witchcraft, not realising that cauldrons exist beyond the world of witches.

- Q.11(b) This question provided some mixed responses. Most candidates knew Scylla had many heads and killed several men. Some of these gave the correct numbers, while others included other errors, such as Scylla killing most of Odysseus' men or her taking two groups of men or Odysseus throwing spears at her. Many responses could not distinguish Circe's advice from what did happen, and hence there were references to Odysseus calling on Scylla's mother or other comments that Circe made. Few other parts of the story were remembered.
- Q.11(c) There were some very interesting responses to this question. Examiners were hoping that candidates would recall that most of what happens is foretold by Circe, thus removing some of the suspense, but this was not commonly seen. More often candidates talked of the clever plan to escape Polyphemus and the length of the escape. These were excellent ideas. Most answers had little to say on Scylla, and examiners were left to infer from comments on the Polyphemus story that similar things did not happen with Scylla. It would be advisable for candidates when asked to compare two events to try to balance the amount of ideas. A significant number of candidates never mentioned Scylla. For them the question might as well have been "why is the escape from Polyphemus interesting".
- Q.12 This question caused quite a few problems. Candidates seemed unsure from their responses as to the genders of characters, or whether they were mortal or immortal. Several candidates got only 1 or 2 marks.
- Q.13 Parts (a) and (e) were done well. The other parts caused significantly more problems, especially part (b), and part (c) where the option about the lack of approval attracted support.
- Q.14 This question was well done with a number of responses getting full marks.
- Q.15 There were some excellent responses to this question. The story of Actaeon seems to cause candidates few problems at this level. A few candidates felt he was born in Corinth.
- Q.16 Some excellent answers were seen to this question. Some candidates mistakenly thought Erysichthon tortured his victims.
- Q.17 The option of Perdix attracted support for most answers, although most candidates had few problems with this question.
- Q.18 There were some fine answers to this question. A number of candidates mistakenly felt Daphne gave in to Apollo.
- Q.19 This question caused very few problems.
- Q.20(a) This question was quite well answered by candidates. There were references to the poor living conditions, the lack of human speech, and the constant guarding of Io. These were well backed up by relevant quotations. Some candidates described the events before this passage about why and how Io was turned into a cow. Candidates can only be given credit in these questions for what is printed on the question paper.
- Q.20(b) There were many fine answers to this question. Virtually all candidates knew the outlines of how Argus was killed, but the name of Mercury was not always known. Few answers included the finer details of Mercury being disguised as a herdsman, the weapon with which Argus was beheaded, or what happened to Argus's head.

- Q.20(c) This question was once again well answered. Some candidates wrote enthusiastically of the characters of Juno and Jupiter and their relationship in the tale. The twists in the story were discussed to good effect by others. Weaker responses focused a bit too much on the issue of sympathy, rehashing some of the ideas given in question (a).
- Q.21(a) There were very few responses seen to this question, but some good points were made. Some candidates were able to focus on the key phrases and make perceptive comments. Other answers focused not only on phrases like “cracked a joke”, but also looked at the colloquial nature of the passage. Others were amused by words like “cudgelling” and “wallop” which were felt to be colloquial.
- Q.21(b) Answers were very polarised to this question. Most candidates knew the details of the story of Bacchus’s conception very well. If candidates did not show very good knowledge, they seem to have little idea of what happened. However this last group were in the minority.
- Q.21(c) This was a question that caused problems for most candidates. Most candidates confined their answer to the Teiresias story only, and hence tended to be rather limited. Candidates do need to read the (c) questions carefully in order to assess the scope of the answer. Other answers were sometimes lacking in examples. Generally, every point made should be illustrated by at least one example. Stronger responses talked of the varying levels of detail in the transformations, with the story of Apollo and Daphne providing some excellent discussion.
- Q.22(a) Most candidates focused heavily on Scylla’s infatuation with Minos, and were able to provide clear evidence from the passage. Many responses did not get any further than this, preferring to link every reference to this infatuation. Most candidates missed the chance to talk of her irrational ideas and other aspects of her character.
- Q.22(b) Most candidates knew some aspects of what happened as Minos was sailing away, but precise details were often lacking. Many wrote of Scylla’s anger towards Minos and moved quickly on to her swimming after the boat. Some recalled Scylla clung on to the boat, and that her father changed into a bird and pecked her, although the precise types of birds were rarely known. There were a number of errors which crept in at the end, including several answers referring to the death of Scylla.
- Q.22(c) There were some quite good answers to this question. However there was a tendency to repeat information from the earlier questions, focusing on her initial infatuation and her later anger. A few candidates discussed her initial innocence and referred to the relevant part of the text where she was throwing pebbles at a wall. Very few referred to the middle part of the text where the lock of hair was cut off, which could have provided excellent points on her determination and confidence.

A352/02 Epic and Myth (Higher Tier)

General Comments:

There were some excellent scripts that were seen this year and the ideas that were given by candidates reflected a high standard of teaching. As ever, there were considerably more responses for the Homer option, and within the options Q. 4 and Q. 7 were considerably less popular than other questions.

Virtually all candidates understood the rubric, with very few answering too many questions. However an increased number of candidates did miss out questions, most often on the (b) questions. Candidates would be well advised to have a go at all questions as even a very small amount of correct information can gain a mark.

Most candidates indicated clearly the use of extra pages. Some of these were on the final page of the examination booklet, while others were on additional pages. The latter should be used ideally before using extra paper. A significant number of candidates continue to use the space below and to the side of the main body of the answer, which causes difficulties for Examiners especially when candidates use the sides. Such answers are always marked however.

There was an increase in the amount of typed answers seen, and as a result there were less legibility issues in scripts. In some cases, candidates clearly found typing difficult to judge by the number of wrong letters pressed and did not check over their work. This did not affect the understanding they were able to show.

There were generally some fine answers seen in the (a) questions. Candidates remain more confident when assessing character, but seemed more precise and imaginative in their responses about the style or tone of a passage. There were some excellent responses to Q.1(a) in particular and candidates seem to have been well prepared for this. There were felt to be fewer vague comments about dramatic use of vocabulary or general comments about similes this year, and very few references to the use of punctuation. Examiners like to see a range of ideas, ideally at least three, and many candidates were able to do this.

There were more problems than before with some of the (b) questions. Many candidates simply did not know the text well enough, and at times, especially in Q.2(b), chose completely the wrong episode to discuss. As ever candidates found recalling details of speeches rather than events difficult, and this was apparent in 1(b). There were more instances of incorrect information in the (b) questions this year, and some of the commonest ones are highlighted later in this report.

There was a pleasing quality to many of the (c) responses. The majority stuck to the requirements of the question, while some wasted time in trying to argue against the given statement, such as saying that they did not feel sympathy for Odysseus' men. At times candidates only referred to the episode in the passage for the (c) question, for example only discussing the transformation of Teiresias in Q.7. This limited the marks they could be awarded as the answers did not tend to have a range of ideas.

As ever, there was a wide variety of ideas and quality in the essays that were seen. Virtually all candidates wrote with a passion and argued both sides of the issue. There were some very strong views expressed particularly in Q. 4.

At the weaker end of the responses, candidates over-relied on the passages given earlier in the paper, and often repeated ideas given elsewhere on the paper. This was an issue at times on Q.9. Whilst credit is given for any relevant reference, if a candidate can provide different

evidence of a point, this would be advisable. Weaker responses also tended to over narrate, often spending over a page on a single myth. Where candidates did narrate a great deal, this was often done at the expense of evaluation. Whilst candidates are well rewarded for discussing a small number of myths or characters in detail, better evaluation generally occurred where a wide range was considered. This was the case in Q. 9, where many essays did not recall any myths where gods rewarded people or showed compassion.

Many of the best essays started with an analysis of a concept in the title, such as what they understood by “good behaviour” or “bad behaviour” in the first of the Homer and Ovid essays. Some essays did produce rather a narrow definition, which did not go on to show a full understanding of the texts. Many essays had no proper conclusion, and so Examiners were left to infer one from the main body of the essay. Some candidates who wrote at length would be better advised to have a detailed conclusion and one less example in the essay as many conclusions were rather shallow.

Some essays showed knowledge of material beyond the set books. Such knowledge was always rewarded, although it was not necessary.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No.

- 1a) There were some excellent responses seen to this question. The vast majority of candidates referred to the beauty of the island, with words like “idyllic” or “paradise” occurring regularly. These were well backed up with evidence. Some candidates found it hard to go beyond this with answers tending to be repetitive on these points. Better responses focused on the homely nature of the hearth and what this told us about Calypso. Many candidates also referred to Calypso herself weaving with a golden shuttle, and ideas about wealth and a stereotypical Greek female were pleasingly common. Despite the requirement to analyse Calypso herself, some candidates only talked about her island.
- 1b) There was widespread knowledge that Hermes had said he had come from the gods and ordered Calypso to release Odysseus, although not all candidates mentioned Zeus. The majority of candidates could not recall anything else that Hermes said, but the best responses did mention what he said about the harshness of his journey. Candidates generally knew that Calypso was unhappy at the news, but agreed as Zeus had to be obeyed. Many referred to the hypocrisy of the gods, with the best responses naming the goddess and mortal relationships mentioned by Calypso. Unfortunately, many candidates added wrong or irrelevant information from another part of the text, such as Calypso promising to help him build a boat. Candidates were not penalised for this, but they usually had less time and space for correct information.
- 1c) Most candidates gave very fine responses to this question, usually approaching Odysseus’ behaviour in the book chronologically. The vast majority recalled his tears on the shore, which was usually seen as evidence that he missed Ithaca. There were also numerous references to his skills in building his boat. His disbelieving and cunning nature was discussed reasonably often in getting Calypso so swear an oath. Many candidates also discussed intelligently his affair with Calypso, with views split on whether this was acceptable under the circumstance and made him seem more heroic, or whether it was a source of criticism.
- 2a) This start of this passage was interpreted in various ways by candidates, but usually very well: some criticised the sending of a small party and one which Odysseus himself was not part of, and accused Odysseus of risk taking and cowardice, while others saw sense

in sending only three men. The best answers indicated that both interpretations were valid. The rescue of the men was universally praised and indicated concern, determination and physical strength. Many candidates referred to Odysseus's "nostos" with varying degrees of understanding as to what this was. This question was on the whole very well done.

- 2b) Responses to this question were very mixed, and perhaps this is why question 2 was less popular than the other ones. Candidates who struggled elsewhere on the paper often chose the wrong incident to discuss, with the details of stories involving Polyphemus or the Laestrygonians often being cited, and most of the other smaller stories attracting some level of discussion. Regrettably, it was hard to award any marks to such answers. When candidates did identify the episode correctly, they showed a good overall knowledge of the main parts of the initial attack, the disagreement about leaving, and the second battle. Some answers did introduce incorrect information such as the number of men killed, the length of the stay on Ismarus, or what happened to the women on the island. The best answers recalled this was where Odysseus got the wine in the Cyclops story from or recalled precise details about the allies of the Cicones.
- 2c) There were some very fine responses to this question. The best answers highlighted specific incidents and showed very good understanding of the text, usually referring to incidents where Odysseus' leadership led the men into trouble. The fact that the men were fated to die due to a curse arising from Odysseus' recklessness was often cited, and some referred to the "perks" Odysseus got on his travels. Some considered the more general situation for the men being away from home for many years and missing their families, which was particularly good if candidates could refer to the length of their absence. Some candidates did not stick to the wording of the question and counterbalanced their ideas with views as to why the men did deserve their fates. These comments, while good, were irrelevant and so gained no credit.
- 3a) Answers to this question varied greatly in quality. Good ideas were that the audience knows trouble is in store as Odysseus is going against the advice of a goddess, and the twin threat on both sides meant that there is no way the trouble can be avoided. The best answers commented on phrases like "wailing in terror", referring to the fact that if seasoned warriors were screaming, it must be terrifying. Weaker responses simply said that the idea of wailing showed it was frightening. Often isolated words got quoted, especially "vomited", but not always with much analysis. Few candidates spotted the simile, and many who did commented on the idea of witchcraft, not realising that cauldrons exist beyond the world of witches. Only the most perceptive responses referred to the energy of the whirlpool in the simile.
- 3b) This question was an excellent discriminator of candidates. Many went too far back in their responses, including details that were before or in the passage, and some went on to describe the storm that followed and the encounter with Charybdis. Virtually all candidates knew at least a little bit of the story of Scylla, but a significant number could only say that she had many heads (often giving the wrong number), and that they each ate one of Odysseus' men. Such responses often included other errors, such as Scylla killing most of Odysseus' men or her taking two groups of men or Odysseus throwing spears at her. Many responses could not distinguish Circe's advice from what did happen, and hence there were references to Odysseus calling on Scylla's mother or other comments that Circe made. A good number of candidates could recall other parts of the attack, such as the final words of the sailors, the best men dying, the dangling limb or the idea it was the most horrific event but few could remember more than one or two of these. Very few recalled the angler simile.
- 3c) There were some very interesting responses to this question. Examiners were hoping that candidates would recall that most of what happens is foretold by Circe, thus

removing some of the suspense, but this was not commonly seen. More often candidates talked of the clever plan to escape Polyphemus and the length of the escape. These were excellent ideas. Most answers had little to say on Scylla, and examiners were left to infer from comments on the Polyphemus story that similar things did not happen with Scylla. It would be advisable for candidates when asked to compare two events to try to balance the amount of ideas. A significant number of candidates never mentioned Scylla. For them the question might as well have been “why is the escape from Polyphemus interesting”.

- 4) This question did not prove popular, and of the responses seen, many were from candidates who did not score well on the rest of the paper. Candidates who did answer the question well very clear on what issues might affect our enjoyment. Most commonly this involved the different values of the times, such as the idea of xenia and the position of women. Many candidates felt that it was hard for a modern reader to appreciate such issues in the text. Other good ideas involved the role of the gods and literary features like formulae and epithets. Generally candidates spent more time on themes than literary devices.

Candidates were split as to whether they affected enjoyment or not, with some feeling they were too repetitive, while others felt they helped us to understand characters better. Generally candidates were able to show a good understanding of the issues and were very clear about expressing opinions. It was pleasing to see many candidates find valid reasons for not enjoying the text, although in some cases it did turn into a rant about areas such as the difficulty of the text.

The main issue focused on AO1 for most candidates. In making points, candidates gave relatively few precise examples from the text, leading to a feeling that candidates were writing a book review at times. Candidates would, for example, discuss the fact that similes aid understanding, or they discuss things the Greeks would know about, but we are less familiar with, but then not proceed to give examples. The best essays were successful in incorporating facts, but the evidence would suggest candidates need to practice writing this type of essay and striking the right balance between evidence and ideas.

- 5) This essay was very popular with candidates, and elicited a wide variety of responses. Virtually all candidates stuck well to the remit of the question and used the bullet points to guide them. Many defined what they understood by “good” and “bad” at the start, and went on to give plenty of examples of both. Unfortunately a sizeable number gave definitions but did not then stick much to their plans in the main body of the essay. The best essays were able to distinguish what they understood by these terms today from what would have been the case to someone hearing the story in Ancient Greece. Such answers invariably showed very good understanding of the text.

Calypso, Circe and Polyphemus were the most commonly discussed characters, with the gods and the various Phaeacians also featuring heavily in many essays. Odysseus, a ripe area for discussion, featured less frequently. Quite a number of candidates talked about Charybdis, which was stretching things a little bit, but was seen as acceptable. As ever, some candidates over-narrated, discussing for example the chain of events leading to Polyphemus’ blindness, without commenting much on what it said about him or Odysseus.

The main issue that examiners had with this essay, which was evident in many definitions of “good” and “bad”, was that it was simply seen in terms of xenia or help given to Odysseus. It did seem that many candidates were writing a pre-planned essay on helping and hindering. These candidates were often the ones that did not discuss

Odysseus himself. Those that looked more widely at the question focused also on areas such as the attitude towards the gods of characters, and the ideas of civilisation, thus showing they looked at the story from an ancient perspective.

Most candidates had a simplistic view in saying that if characters did not help Odysseus, they were bad. Hence Aeolus was seen as bad for not helping Odysseus for a second time, as were the Cicones for attacking Odysseus' crew. Better responses realised that Aeolus was not actually bad for doing this, as Odysseus seems to blame his crew at the end of the episode and that the Cicones were perfectly entitled to act as they did in the face of an unprovoked attack. There was equally fine discussion in defence of Poseidon standing up for his son or for Polyphemus who arrived home to find thieves in his house, although even in this case most saw his actions overall as very bad. Many did comment intelligently on Polyphemus' skills as a farmer showing him having the capacity for caring.

- 6a) This question was well answered by candidates. There were numerous references to the poor living conditions, the lack of human speech, and the constant guarding of Io. These were well backed up by relevant quotations. Some candidates also used the opening line of the passage well to show in creating fear for the fate of Io. Some candidates described the events before this passage about why and how Io was turned into a cow. Candidates can only be given credit in these questions for what is printed on the question paper.
- 6b) There were many fine answers to this question. Virtually all candidates knew the outlines of how Argus was killed. Names proved a problem to some candidates with Apollo occasionally making an appearance as the god who killed Argus, and the names of Pan and Syrinx not being universally known. Many candidates could have gained an extra mark by giving more precise details: some of these included the mention of Mercury being disguised as a herdsman, the weapon with which Argus was beheaded, or what happened to Argus's head. However it was clear that this story was well remembered.
- 6c) This question was once again well answered. It was pleasing to see candidates talk of the idea of the interlude of Pan and Syrinx in the wider story of Io. Many candidates wrote enthusiastically of the characters of Juno and Jupiter and their relationship in the tale. The twists in the story were discussed to good effect by some, especially the transformation back to a human of Io and a relatively happy ending. Weaker responses focused a bit too much on the issue of sympathy, rehashing some of the ideas given in question a).
- 7a) Whilst this question on the whole did not prove popular, it was done well. In this part many candidates were able to focus on the key phrases and make perceptive comments. The best answers focused not only on phrases like "cracked a joke", but also looked at the colloquial nature of the passage. This was evident in phrases like "how so", with candidates commenting on Ovid's rhetoric. Some were amused by words like "cudgelling" and "wallop" which were felt to be colloquial. All candidates made some of the above points, but weaker responses only made one of them. Some commented on the fact that there was no death or violence in the passage, which was relevant, but it is always better to focus on what there is, rather than what is missing. Whilst most candidates did see the passage as very light-hearted, there were some excellent points about Juno's punishment of blindness being a very serious one and in no way humorous.
- 7b) This question was excellently done and was felt to be the best done question on the whole paper. Virtually all candidates knew the basic details of the story of Bacchus's conception, and many were able to provide precise details such as the name of Beroë or the actual words that Juno spoke. Weaker responses, while still impressive, were unable to include such details. The sowing of Bacchus in Jupiter's thigh was mentioned by most candidates

- 7c) This was a question that caused problems for some candidates. A good number of responses, often ones where candidates struggled on other parts of the paper, confined their answer to the Teiresias story only, and hence tended to be rather limited. Candidates do need to read the c) questions carefully in order to assess the scope of the answer. Weaker answers were sometimes lacking in examples. Generally, every point made should be illustrated by at least one example. Stronger responses talked of the varying levels of detail in the transformations, with the story of Apollo and Daphne providing some excellent discussion. The unexpected nature of some transformations, the origins of various things and creatures, and the creation of sympathy for some candidates in what they were changed into also were commented upon by candidates.
- 8a) Most candidates focused heavily on Scylla's infatuation with Minos, and were able to provide clear evidence from the passage. Weaker responses did not get any further than this, preferring to link every reference to this infatuation. Stronger responses were able to pick out other aspects of her character, such as Scylla's reluctance to betray her country at one point, or her incredulity that a soldier might wish to injure the enemy leader. The best answers contrasted her statement that defeat was inevitable to the fact that the battle had been evenly contested, and wrote of her irrational thinking. Few candidates made use of the reference to her hope that Minos would be merciful to her people.
- 8b) Most candidates knew some aspects of what happened as Minos was sailing away, but precise details were often lacking. Many wrote of Scylla's anger towards Minos and moved quickly on to her swimming after the boat. This meant that the details of what she said at this point were lacking, such as the comments about Pasiphae and the Minotaur. Most recalled Scylla clung on to the boat, and that her father changed into a bird and pecked her so that she fell off before being also changed into a bird. Very few candidates correctly identified the two birds, and many candidates totally omitted Scylla's transformation. There were a number of errors which crept in at the end, including several answers referring to the death of Scylla.
- 8c) There were many reasonable answers to this question, but relatively few excellent ones. There was a tendency to repeat information from the earlier questions, focusing on her initial infatuation and her later anger. The same parts of the text were also used as evidence for her self-delusion and her hatred. This was all well considered, but for the highest mark candidates did need to consider other parts of the story. A good number of candidates discussed her initial innocence, although not many referred to the relevant part of the text where she was throwing pebbles at a wall. Very few referred to the middle part of the text where the lock of hair was cut off, which could have provided excellent points on her determination and confidence. As with other questions, the best answers to the c) question referred to the full range of the myth, and not just the parts used for other questions.
- 9) This essay was usually well answered by candidates. Some, but not many, candidates defined what they understood by good and bad behaviour, which often led to very fine discussion. An obvious starting point for many candidates was to refer to the stories that were used for the comprehension passages. Weaker responses trotted out the same information that they had given earlier on the paper and a brief mention of one or two extra myths. Better responses referred to the passages, but brought in fresh ideas, such as the fact that Jupiter did seem to eventually genuinely care for Semele and Io and took steps to minimise their suffering. Most candidates showed a good understanding of what constituted good and bad behaviour.

Some answers only focused on the negative actions of Jupiter. A better approach was to also consider stories where he saved humans for their good conduct. This often led to the idea that his punishments and treatment of humans was fair. Most candidates felt that the two floods and the mass deaths that resulted were too harsh, but some candidates

perceptively noticed that humans had been behaving badly and perhaps deserved their treatment.

The best answers considered numerous other characters. Juno's behaviour nearly always came under discussion and there was some excellent analysis of this. Some felt her actions in effectively killing Semele were worse than Jupiter's adultery. Most felt her treatment of Io was worse than Jupiter's, with many referring to Jupiter's attempts to help Io. Other instances of gods raping mortals were generally seen as badly as Jupiter's affairs and Diana was criticised often for over-reacting to minor offences. There was less discussion of stories involving Bacchus and Ceres, although the best essays did include them.

There was much fine evaluation seen. Many felt that Jupiter did show more compassion than the other immortals and reward humans, and he was generally felt to behave better. The key to the evaluation was examining a good range of stories which showed both the good and bad behaviour of Jupiter.

- 10 This essay was answered well by most candidates. A wide interpretation of "lust and greed" was accepted by examiners, and candidates were creative in their definitions: for example some candidates included Icarus' desire to fly high as showing a greed or lust for what was not allowed. Occasionally examiners felt the definitions were a little overstretched by candidates.

As with question 9, many started with the myths used in the comprehension passages. Weaker responses found little else to say, but most went on to refer to the behaviour of Apollo with Daphne, with the best making some reference to the stories of Perimele, Echo or Meleager. Greed was often highlighted by the story of Erysichthon and Lycaon, and there was some excellent use of the early stories involving the Iron Age and the Giants. As with other essays, the best essays had a good range of myths, often covering at least six myths in good detail.

Candidates were variously successful in considering other motivating factors. Some candidates found only one other motivating factor and perhaps one example to illustrate this. This often tended to be jealousy with reference to Juno's actions in the passages printed earlier on the paper. There was a wide variety of ideas offered in the best essays: revenge was a common idea, with Cupid and Diana featuring regularly, and many candidates looked at the positive rewards of Jupiter for characters who acted piously.

A353/01 Community Life in the Classical World (Foundation Tier)

In this unit candidates had the opportunity to display their knowledge and understanding of the unit at a level apposite to their ability. There was little evidence of candidates being unable to complete the paper within the allotted time and the majority had clearly practiced well for the examination, with almost all following the rubric correctly.

Very few candidates wrote answers outside the designated area and they made good use of the extra pages at the back of the booklet with most indicating this clearly.

Option 1 - Sparta

Section A

Generally all tasks were completed well and caused few difficulties for candidates who had revised thoroughly.

Task 1 was done pleasingly well by the majority of candidates.

For Task 2 quite a few candidates mistakenly ticked the answer that the *Helots* worked in the mines and that *Perioikoi* helped prevent *Helots* escaping was often missed.

In Task 6 there was some confusion with the names of the *Gerousia* and *Ecclesia/Apella*.

Section B

- Q.1(a) Not a popular choice at Foundation tier but some candidates were able to identify the main themes of the poems of Tyrtaios. Knowledgeable answers mentioned war, patriotism, bravery, fighting to the death, not retreating and comradeship.
- Q.1(b) The majority of candidates showed understanding of the fact that Spartan men spent all their time training for war or fighting in war and that visual arts were not valued.
- Q.1(c) Some candidates were able to evaluate the losses and gains with the successful army and security being the main gain.
- Q.2(a) At Foundation tier, the majority of candidates were still able to demonstrate thorough knowledge of the Spartan warrior's equipment.
- Q.2(b) Successful answers focused on how the *syssitia* benefitted the army rather than just what it was which was where less successful answers tended to focus; cohesion and teamwork for the phalanx was the most common point made. Some candidates clearly had no idea what the *syssitia* were.
- Q.2(c) Most answers focused on how the methods helped, usually referring to the *agoge*, *phalanx*, feigned retreat and having two kings.
- Q.3(a) Some answers evaluated the passage thoroughly and referred to the Spartan prowess as soldiers fighting in a *phalanx*, the Spartan obedience to the law and indoctrination as well as never retreating.

- Q.3(b) Explanations usually focused on the choice of the narrow pass and use of the *phalanx* in it as well as the training and ethos of the Spartans which were successful ways to approach the question.
- Q.3(c) Vivid descriptions abounded and reflected the passion with which candidates relate to this story as well as a thorough knowledge of the story.

Option 2 - Pompeii

Section A

Generally all tasks were completed well and caused few difficulties for candidates who had revised thoroughly.

Task 10 was completed pleasingly well by the majority of candidates.

In Task 11 a several candidates were mistaken in ticking that the riot destroyed half the amphitheatre and ended in a fire.

In Task 12c quite a few were under the misconception that the Alexander Mosaic is a wall painting.

Section B

- Q.6(a) Thorough answers included the sea, the lava spur, River Sarno, Mount Vesuvius, fertile soil and forests.
- Q.6(b) Lava spur for defence, river for irrigation/trade and fertile soil for crops were the most commonly discussed features.
- Q.6(c) Many candidates were able to identify the fact that there would be plenty of people to sell to and some referred to the high level of competition. Easy transportation of goods by road or water as well as the Forum as a place to trade were also popular responses.
- Q.7(a) Efficient answers referred to the counter with holes having access from the street as well as places to sit and eat, and rooms upstairs to stay over. Some referred to painting/graffiti on the walls.
- Q.7(b) Candidates were often able to identify the need for *thermopolia* if people living in *insulae* were to have hot meals. Many answers referred to visiting traders needing food or accommodation.
- Q.7(c) Some interesting personal responses were given to this question with the majority deciding that it would be quite basic and not particularly comfortable but that it would be handy to have a bed upstairs and food available downstairs.
- Q.8(a) Many answers made suitable reference to being able to identify which character was which especially in a large theatre. The comic aspects of the faces and colours on masks were often discussed. One actor portraying more than one character was also a popular answer.
- Q.8(b) Answers were often very good with most candidates able to identify tiered seating, stage, orchestra, boxes, aisles and awning.

- Q.8(c) A wealth of opinions as to why audiences went to see plays with very similar plots, the most basic idea being that it was a day out with the most thorough referring to topical jokes, slapstick humour, the idea of familiarity still being funny and the triumph of the underdog.

A353/02 Community Life in the Classical World (Higher Tier)

Candidates had the opportunity to display their knowledge and understanding of a chosen topic at a level suitable for their ability level and this unit differentiated well. There were examples of candidates producing outstanding answers going significantly beyond the level expected for GCSE which were a delight to read. Some candidates displayed particularly broad understanding of the use of the buildings in Pompeii or the Pliny's account of its destruction while others analysed in discriminating detail the effect of Lykourgos' reforms of Sparta or its education system. There were occasional cases where candidates with observable knowledge failed to gain marks by not answering the specific question asked. In the main, examination technique was competent and in general, it was evident that the candidates had been well prepared for the examination.

In Section A most candidates answered two questions in accordance with the instructions. In Section B there were very few instances of candidates running out of time and some wrote extensively in response to the essay titles. Candidates in need of extra space made good use of the additional pages at the back of the answer book, although some failed to indicate on the main answer area that they had continued on the extra pages and this would have been helpful to markers.

Higher Tier

Option 1 - Sparta

Section A

- Q.1(a) Well answered with most candidates being able to identify the main themes of the poems of Tyrtaios. Knowledgeable answers mentioned war, patriotism, bravery, fighting to the death, not retreating and comradeship.
- Q.1(b) The majority of candidates showed understanding of the fact that Spartan men spent all their time training for war or fighting in war and that visual arts were not valued.
- Q.1(c) Many candidates were able to evaluate the losses and gains with the successful army and security being the main gain and the lack of culture being a loss.
- Q.2(a) The majority of candidates were able to demonstrate thorough knowledge of the Spartan warrior's equipment.
- Q.2(b) Successful answers focused on how the *syssitia* benefitted the army rather than just what it was which was where less successful answers tended to focus; cohesion and teamwork for the phalanx was the most common point made.
- Q.2(c) Most answers focused on how the methods helped, usually referring to the *agoge*, *phalanx*, feigned retreat and having two kings. Some referred to the dwindling numbers of *Spartiatatai* eligible for the army to good effect.
- Q.3(a) Many answers evaluated the passage thoroughly and referred to the Spartan prowess as soldiers fighting in a *phalanx*, the Spartan obedience to the law and indoctrination as well as never retreating.

- Q.3(b) Explanations usually focused on the choice of the narrow pass and use of the *phalanx* in it as well as the training and ethos of the Spartans which were successful ways to approach the question.
- Q.3(c) Vivid descriptions abounded and reflected the passion with which candidates relate to this story as well as a thorough knowledge of the story.

Section B

- Q.4 For thorough AO1 marks, answers identified the main aspects of Lykourgos' contribution to Spartan society including the government, *agoge*, professional army and equality, with details and many candidates were able to do this successfully. Understanding of the impact of the changes for AO2 was displayed with varying levels of accomplishment; successful answers described how the army, *agoge*, loss of currency, equal shares of land and helots etc. affected Spartan life. For a thorough AO3 mark, candidates evaluated whether each of the reforms was or was not harmful to Sparta by looking at the outcomes it produced.
- Q.5 Thorough AO1 marks were attained by describing in detail the different aspects of the Spartan education system which many candidates were able to accomplish with apparent facility. AO2 marks were gained successfully by showing understanding of the effect of the features of the education system and why they were carried out. Evaluation of the extent to which the aspects were cruel, humiliating and unfair was necessary for a thorough band mark in AO3. On the whole, cruel and unfair were evaluated much more often and more thoroughly than humiliating.

Option 2 - Pompeii

Section A

- Q.6(a) Thorough answers included the sea, the lava spur, River Sarno, Mount Vesuvius, fertile soil and forests.
- Q.6(b) Lava spur for defence, river for irrigation/trade and fertile soil for crops were the most commonly discussed features while some more thoughtful responses included the wood for fuel and building or discussed the types of crops that could be grown.
- Q.6(c) Many candidates were able to identify the fact that there would be plenty of people to sell to and some referred to the high level of competition. Easy transportation of goods by road or water as well as the Forum as a place to trade were also popular responses.
- Q.7(a) Efficient answers referred to the counter with holes having access from the street as well as places to sit and eat, and rooms upstairs to stay over. Some referred to painting/graffiti on the walls.
- Q.7(b) Candidates were often able to identify the need for *thermopolia* if people living in *insulae* were to have hot meals. Many answers referred to visiting traders needing food or accommodation.
- Q.7(c) Some interesting personal responses were given to this question with the majority deciding that it would be quite basic and not particularly comfortable but that it would be handy to have a bed upstairs and food available downstairs.

- Q.8(a) Many answers made suitable reference to being able to identify which character was which especially in a large theatre. The comic aspects of the faces and colours on masks were often discussed. One actor portraying more than one character was also a popular answer.
- Q.8(b) Answers were often very good with most candidates able to identify tiered seating, stage, orchestra, boxes, aisles and awning.
- Q.8(c) A wealth of opinions as to why audiences went to see plays with very similar plots, the most basic idea being that it was a day out with the most thorough referring to topical jokes, slapstick humour, the idea of familiarity still being funny and the triumph of the underdog.

Section B

- Q.9 For AO1 many candidates showed thorough knowledge of Pliny's letters about Pompeii. Factual knowledge was frequently very good although some candidates simply described what Pliny said without bringing in the things we know from archaeologists that we could not have known from Pliny. AO2 marks were gained by showing understanding of the usefulness of Pliny as a source as well as the understanding of what we can learn from things such as the Fiorelli process. For AO3 strong candidates were able to discuss the extent to which Pliny's information and archaeologists' information is a complete description of what happened. There was a broad range in the answer quality for this question.
- Q.10 For AO1, many candidates showed extensive knowledge of the Stabian baths as well as being able to show detailed knowledge of at least three other buildings in Pompeii. AO2 marks were gained by showing understanding of how the features were used/worked i.e. what the Temple of Jupiter or Basilica was used for. For AO3, candidates discussed the relative importance of the things that were done at the baths (e.g. keeping fit, networking, getting clean) and the things done in other places in Pompeii (e.g. making sure the law was upheld, having council meetings so the town was run well).

A354 Culture and Society in the Classical World

General Comments:

It is usually a pleasure to read the vast majority of the scripts while moderating A354, and this year was no exception. It is pleasing to see how enthusiastically the candidates have engaged with the topics, and pleasing to see how they have immersed themselves in the Classical world. Responses were generally of a high, or very high standard, although there were inevitably a wide range of final marks. Most responses demonstrated good analytical skills, and the responses were usually tightly focused on the question. Sources were generally used very well. In the literature options candidates generally demonstrated good contextual knowledge of the text, and this helped them reach the higher levels. In the other options Centres' candidates generally used a wide range of sources – sometimes these were in source packs provided by the Centre, and sometimes the candidates had been left to find their own sources, although it was usually clear that in these cases the candidates had been taught the background of the issue and given clear guidance to locate relevant sources.

Sources were generally used very well across all options, although there were differences in the Olympic Games option. Many responses to the Olympic Games questions tended to rely heavily on the internet for their research (and/or Judith Swaddling's text). This is not an issue in itself, but it appeared as if some candidates answering these questions were less well prepared for the topic than some of the others; perhaps this was because the topic had not been taught in class. As in previous years the Olympic Games option was the most popular, with the Sophocles option coming second.

Some Centres allowed their candidates a choice of either question from their chosen option, which is good for seeing independent research. However this sometimes led to slightly inconsistent marking, meaning problems with patterns/rank order. Perhaps these Centres might consider sticking to one question for all the candidates in future.

The administration of the Controlled Assessment went smoothly again, but some Centres are still not checking that their candidates have included an accurate word-count. Sources and quotes etc. are not included in the word count, so it is up to the candidates to work out an accurate total of their own words. The word limit of 2,000 words was closely adhered to by most candidates. Those whose answers were over or under the limit risked impacting their mark in AO1. Most markers were aware of this but others needed reminding by the Moderator in their report.

One or two Centres had clearly instructed their candidates to list the sources that they used separately at the back of their work, perhaps as an appendix, but this was counter-productive as it resulted in the candidates tending to write without reference to the sources.

There were occasional instances of clerical errors, where the wrong marks had been sent to OCR, as well as a handful of scripts with no candidate or Centre number, or no date or total mark included. It was disappointing to note that there are still Centres which had entered for wrong option: A354/01 means that work should be submitted by the repository (online), whilst A354/02 means that the work will be submitted by post to the moderator.

The standard of marking was generally very high, and it was pleasing to see how many Centres fully understood the markscheme, and how carefully it was applied. It is particularly helpful when the comments on the cover-sheet (CCS 336) are clear and detailed, and explain why the marks have been awarded. Likewise, annotations throughout the scripts indicated AO1, AO2 and AO3 are most helpful in enabling us to ensure consistency of standard – some Centres have been reminded of the importance of this on their reports.

The CCS 336 cover-sheet replaces the old system of getting the candidates to sign individual cover sheets to state that the work is their own. These sheets are no longer used, although they still appear from time to time. The CCS 336 is a statement by the Centre that they have conducted the Controlled Assessment according to the OCR guidelines. These conditions should be applied rigorously. In the vast majority of centres in A354 this was clearly the case.

It is always a pleasure to read the work submitted for this unit as so many of the candidates produce high quality work. It is especially pleasing to note when they have had access to a wide range of support materials. Conversely, there were a small number of centres where the candidates appeared to struggle with very little research material. These Centres have been notified in their Report, and pointed in the direction of the OCR guidelines for Controlled Assessment.

Many Centres had conducted internal standardisation of work, which is, of course, to be commended.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question Specific Comments

Option 1: Sophocles *Antigone*

It is always a pleasure to read these scripts as they tend to be produced to a high standard. The first question was far and away the most popular of the two. Only very few candidates chose the Chorus question.

Q.1. How far do you think Creon is justified in his treatment of Antigone and her family?

A popular question that was generally completed very effectively. Some candidates concentrated on giving a narrative of Creon's actions without really focusing on whether they could be justified, while others provided sensibly balanced responses focusing on the 'How far' part of the question. The stronger candidates took pains to ensure that they covered all members of Antigone's family in their answers. There were some very high quality answers to this question. Candidates opting for this question always seemed to be well-prepared and armed with a good understanding of the social values of Classical Athenian society. The standard ranges from pretty good to outstanding. There were a lot scoring between 50 -60. Most candidates offering this option selected this question. One Centre had apparently not communicated the full title to their students who wrote only about Antigone rather than *Antigone and her family* and the marks were consequently affected. There are a few Centres that have not instructed their candidates to quote line numbers rather than pages (this goes for the Virgil topic too).

One Moderator enjoyed the comment from a candidate who, after giving a brief overview of the play, said that 'Creon didn't have a good first day in the job.'

Q.2. How important do you think the Chorus is in Sophocles' *Antigone*?

We only saw a few of these and they tended to be very good, as usual for Centres choosing for the Sophocles option. There was more evidence of wider reading this year, as well.

Option 2: Aristophanes *Lysistrata*

As with the Sophocles option it invariably appears as if candidates offering this option have been given clear and appropriate instruction about both the context and the play. There is often clear knowledge of the background suggesting that the candidates have studied the 'Athens' option for A351, and also sometimes linked to other topics too, eg Sparta (A353). However this is not always the case and candidates are still able to achieve the top levels regardless of their other options. The highest scoring candidates were able to include the play's historical (war) and social context (Dionysia) also.

Q.3. 'The women behave like men and the men behave like women.' How far do you agree with this statement about Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*?

Generally well-answered. Candidates offered good answers to this question displaying a clear understanding of the gender roles in Classical Athens. There was generally a good knowledge of the context as well as of the text itself. However there tended to be a much heavier focus on the 'women as men', rather than the 'men as women' and so candidates should be reminded to offer balanced responses which address the title. The Magistrate scene (with the wool, etc.) would have been a straightforward example to use here.

Q.4. 'Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* is a useful way to learn about Athens in the fifth century BC.' How far do you agree with this statement?

Again this provided some great responses. Candidates used a range of sources to contrast to extracts from the play – we saw everyone from Thucydides to Xenophon, and even Homer, crop up as contextual evidence to balance against the behaviour of the characters in the play.

Option 3: The Olympic Games

The most popular option, as usual, although perhaps a little less now than in the last few years. Judith Swaddling's text seems ubiquitous across the Centres, and the Moderators are now very familiar with her points and illustrations. This is not an issue as long as it is used sensibly. Weaker responses tended to describe the Games rather than answer the question. Some candidates used sources as illustrations rather than evaluating them in context. This option provided the Moderators with the largest number of over-generously credited responses and that, in turn, raises the question of whether there is a tendency for teachers who are non-specialists to select this option. This is not in itself an issue, and Moderators have given clear guidelines in their Reports to Centres where this overly generous marking has occurred.

Q.5. To what extent can we gain a clear account of how and why the Olympic Games originated?

As usual the Olympic Games was the most popular option, with this particular question the least popular of the two on offer. Responses varied in quality as some candidates became sidetracked by enormous amounts of evidence (usually from a combination of Wikipedia and Swaddling) and lost sight of the wording of the question. Of course these responses were balanced by stronger ones where the candidates remained focussed throughout. Candidates who scored highly in this question went beyond the mere mythology of the games' founding, considering the site's archaeology and drawing parallels with Greek customs such as funerary games. Some Centres drew from an impressive array of sources in this manner demonstrating a thorough understanding of the ancient world in doing so. One Moderator commented: "I could've cried tears of joy when two candidates ... commented on Dendrochronology's contribution to our understanding of the site."

Q.6. How far are the attitudes to, and training for, the modern Olympic Games comparable to the attitudes to, and training for, the ancient Games?

This was the most popular question in the whole paper this year. Answers were generally strong with a good balance between the ancient and modern Games. Inevitably weaker candidates focused too heavily on the modern Games, but this was not common. The issue here, inevitably, was in awarding AO3 as there were many candidates who used the ancient sources mainly for illustrative purposes rather than evaluating their content. Centres should be reminded that internet sites and modern books are not sources *per se* and so candidates should not waste time trying to evaluate them. It is the ancient sources that we are interested in.

Option 4: Virgil The Aeneid

This was the second most popular choice overall. The standard overall has been high. Centres that study this option are similar to those that choose Option 1: Sophocles in that the candidates tend to appear well prepared as regards the context of the material. Answers tended to be well-constructed with plenty of accurate use of the Virgil. The Moderators were, once again, impressed by the general standard of writing, research, understanding and evaluation in this option.

Q.7. 'The Aeneid is nothing more than Augustan propaganda.' How far do you agree with this statement?

The few who opted for Augustan propaganda question fared very well. On the whole the students produced mature and well-informed responses to this, covering a good range of examples for the propaganda; they had less to say against propaganda, but nonetheless the essays were very good and the students were obviously very capable. Candidates were able to put the work in its historical context and refer to Virgil's wishes for its destruction being ignored for the sake of Augustan propaganda. Candidates made the connection that the storyline connected Augustus' family as a whole to the line of Venus, giving them a 'divine right' to rule.

Q.8. Dido or Aeneas: which character do you think deserves more sympathy in *The Aeneid*?

Generally candidates responded appropriately to the question and provided a balanced response culminating in a conclusion where either Dido or Aeneas were named as the character deserving the most sympathy. It was good to see some of the stronger responses demonstrating wider contextual knowledge of either the text or the background. We also came across a handful of candidates who (surprisingly) argued that Aeneas deserved our sympathy more than Dido and they usually made a very good case.

Option 5: Pliny Letters

Once again there were very few centres that opted to study Pliny. As with the Sophocles, Aristophanes and Virgil options there was usually clear evidence of good teaching providing a solid understanding of the text and its issues.

Q.9. Why do you think that people still read Pliny's letters today?

Very few seen. One Centre chose to look at this question from a very literal point of view that the Moderator was not expecting: instead of discussing generally how the letters can teach us about the values and culture of the ancient world, they were listing

modern professions etc. which could find relevance in the letters, e.g. journalists and writers could learn from Pliny's descriptive skills; geographers could learn from the Vesuvius letter; Christians could learn more about their religion etc. This was an unexpected approach but obviously was how the candidates had been taught to understand the letters, in which case it was not an issue.

Q.10. 'Pliny was more interested in himself than anyone else he wrote about.' How far do you agree with this statement.

Most candidates who selected the Pliny option completed this question. The candidates almost always attempted to consider both sides of the question (i.e. disagree as well as agree with the statement), in order to offer a balanced view/response. The Moderators would like to have seen more evidence of contextual knowledge or wider reading.

Option 6: Roman Britain

Moderators are always pleased to see candidates that offer this option as they are not common, but tend to be completed imaginatively, perhaps owing to the fact that more archaeological evidence can be used on this option than many of the others. It also links very nicely, of course, to school trips.

Q.11. How far has the Roman occupation of Britain influenced life in Britain today?

The most popular of the two 'Roman Britain' questions. Some candidates tended to lose sight of Roman Britain and talk more generally about Roman influence. 'Britain' sometimes got forgotten about in the selection of source material, too. For example the students in more than one Centre used an image of the Pont du Gard to support discussion about Roman aqueducts/sewers.

12. 'Studying an archaeological site is a useful way to learn about life in Roman Britain.' How far do you agree with this statement? You must refer to at least one specific archaeological site in your answer.

A range of sites had been visited by students in preparation for this unit, offering an excellent opportunity for some local History research. One Centre had organised a trip to Vindolanda, and the enthusiasm that it had sparked among the students was clear. It was good to see that candidates were often able to appreciate the benefits and limitations of a single site.

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