

Examiners' Reports

January 2011

J281/J081/R/11J

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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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Chief Examiner's Report

There was a small entry for Higher Tier papers A401 (Language 1) and A402 (Language 2) – 429 and 208 candidates respectively. Numbers for Foundation Tier (15 and 8) were very small.

The overall performance of candidates on A401, as far as it was possible to judge from the small entry, was more or less in line with their performance in summer 2010. It was interesting to note that individual candidates who had been entered in the summer did not necessarily fare any better this time round. It was reassuring to see that candidates were clearly better prepared for the derivation question than in the summer, though some still risked losing four marks by merely translating the Latin word rather than giving an English word derived from it.

This was the first sitting for A402 – the high marks (mean 49.4) suggested that candidates had been entered appropriately and were well-prepared. It will be possible to draw more firm conclusions about the success of the papers and the performance of the candidates after the first full sitting of all five units in June 2011.

A401/02 Latin Language 1: Mythology and Domestic life (Higher Tier)

As in the previous summer paper, there were many very commendable attempts at this paper. Some candidates, however, experienced difficulty with vocabulary. The other main errors were a lack of attention to the endings of the Latin words, and not making use of the glossary provided, particularly in the questions. Thus, *pro regia* was often translated 'in front of the king'.

Candidates should be advised that alternative answers are not allowed, unless **both** answers are correct.

It was very evident in this paper that candidates found difficulty in recognising the parts of well known words, eg *tibi*, *tribus*, *laturum*. When testing vocabulary, it may be an idea to ask the more unusual parts of words, rather than their nominative or first person singular form.

Apart from Question 1 (a), where many candidates thought *Romae* meant 'Roman', the first three questions posed little difficulty.

In Question 2, 'god' was allowed for 'goddess' as the former is a generic form covering both genders.

In Question 4, and elsewhere, there was confusion about the gender of Numa, as several candidates thought Numa was a woman, although they had correctly stated in Q.2 that Egeria was the wife of Numa. However, as there was no clue to the gender in the relevant section of Latin, this was accepted, though not in the translation question, where *laturum* shows that Numa is masculine. Perhaps the gender of *parata* misled them. *Iovi* was often taken as genitive 'Jupiter's meal', and others confused *cena* with *cibus*.

Question 6 was usually answered correctly, though some candidates took *fulmina* as singular, despite the glossary.

In Question 7, the perfect *fui* was not recognised by many, and the meaning of *fidelis* was often unknown. Several candidates gave vague answers about Jupiter having had a meal, so that he was obliged to help, for which some credit was given. However, candidates should be reminded that the answer is usually to be found in the Latin quoted in the lemma, not elsewhere.

In Question 8, the person of *debes* clearly confused some candidates.

Answers to Question 9, the translation passage, varied widely. Here attention to the cases and number of the nouns and the persons of the verbs was vital. For example, many candidates translated *caput hominis* as 'the men's heads', and although nearly all knew the meaning of *dabo*, many could not recognise the tense or person involved, translating *tibi dabo* as 'You can give'. It was surprising that candidates were much more familiar with the future of the third conjugation verb *ostendo* than that of a first conjugation verb. Again, *laturum esse* was widely mistranslated or omitted. *postquam* was often confused with *postea* and *paucis horis* defeated most. The difference between in with the accusative case and in with the ablative case was not recognised by many, who translated in *caelum* as 'in the sky'. Lack of attention to endings was evident in the last clause, *quid Iuppiter promississet*, which was often rendered 'what he had promised to Jupiter', which cannot be correct, as *Iuppiter* is clearly nominative.

When candidates have finished translating the passage, they should check that all the Latin words have been accounted for, as there were many omissions, particularly of words which were probably well known, eg *tamen*, *deinde* and *igitur*. With the passage printed above the space for the answer, it is an easy matter to look at the answer and tick each of the Latin words translated.

Questions 10 was usually correctly answered, but in Question 11 (a), ignorance of the meaning of *pro* lost marks, and, in (c), *post quinque horas* was often translated 'after the fifth hour', although ordinal numbers are not in the prescribed Vocabulary List, and *horas* must be plural. However, one mark was awarded for this version.

Question 12 was not very well answered, partly because *iussisset* was not recognised as part of *iubeo*, partly because candidates failed to look back at the glossary for the meaning of *tacere*.

In Question 13, ignorance of vocabulary again caused problems, as *alterum* was a key word in the complicated mathematical calculation.

Failure to recognise that *tribus* was part of *tres* led to numerous tribes of women carrying the shield in Question 14, and in Question 15, *futuram* was often taken as a noun, rather than the future infinitive of *sum*.

Question 16 was better answered than in the previous summer examination, though some candidates are still translating the Latin word instead of giving a word derived from it.

However, despite the above comments, the work produced by most candidates was very good indeed and reflected great credit on their teachers, particularly in view of the very limited time some centres are able to allocate to the teaching of the classical languages.

A402/02 Latin Language 2 (History) (Higher Tier)

208 candidates were entered for the first sitting of this paper, and the vast majority made very good sense of the historical narrative about Gaius Mucius' attempt to kill Porsenna. It was noticeable that scores on the comprehension were particularly high – less strong candidates who struggled to score half marks on the translation section were often able to pick up 15/20 or more on the comprehension. The new mark scheme for the translation section provided a good spread of marks, differentiating clearly the very best candidates but also giving some credit to those with too weak a grasp of syntax and grammar to make much continuous sense of the story. Centres with candidates around the A/A* borderline would do well to note the comments about the importance of easily-missed words like *autem*, *tamen* and *adeo*.

Question 1: candidates found this a relatively straightforward beginning to the paper, though not everyone knew the mean of *oppugnare*. Those who thought that it meant 'to fight' often got into difficulty.

Question 2: a straightforward fearing clause caused little difficulty.

Question 3: some candidates who scored full marks on the rest of the comprehension questions made little sense of this sentence. The key was to take the accusative and infinitive first (*dixit senatoribus se consilium audacissimum habere* – 'he said that he had a very bold plan') and the gerundive of purpose second (*ad patriam e periculo servandam* – to save his country from danger'). Those who made some sense of part of the sentence (e.g. *ad patriam*) received some credit.

Question 4: the meaning of *transire* was not always known (Mucius wanted to cross the Tiber rather than go along it) but the second half of the sentence was straightforward.

Question 5: the form of *discessuros* proved a problem for some. When testing verbs it is a good idea to test them occasionally in forms other than the first person of the present (eg the various tenses of the infinitive). See also the similar comments of the Principal Examiner for A401.

Question 6: this was a straightforward question and answered correctly by most.

Question 7: the translation question proved, as expected, a very good differentiator. In the first sentence, 'went through' was not quite right for *pervenit* and *dabat* was often confused with *debere*, perhaps because the idea of owing money seemed to make sense. The accusative and infinitive *putans illum Porsennam esse* was mostly handled well – the taking of *putans* as a main verb ('he thought') was considered a 'minor' error on this occasion, but *illum* needed not to be confused with *ipsum*. *celato* was often confused with *celeriter* – this is the sort of vocabulary error that risks bringing a candidate down to three marks out of four for a sentence. The testing of verbs in their perfect participle form rather than the present tense (eg *celatus* rather than *celo*) is good practice. In the next sentence, the word *autem* was sometimes omitted. Candidates need to be aware that the omission of 'little' words like this (cf. *tamen* in the last sentence) is more heavily penalised under the new mark scheme – on this occasion the omission was considered a 'major' error. In the next sentence it was acceptable to turn the subordinated participle *captus* into a main verb, as long as a suitable conjunction was used to link it to *tractus est*. The two indirect questions (*rogatus quis esset et unde venisset*) were mostly handled well, though candidates should note that there is a difference in meaning between 'where he came from' and 'where he had come from'. The conditional *si me occides* and the relative clause *qui te occidere conabuntur* were handled well by those who had worked out who was threatening to kill whom. In the penultimate sentence, the form of *iniceret* proved to be the most difficult test in the passage. Almost all grasped the idea that Porsenna ordered Mucius to be burnt, but only the most diligent realised that *iniceret* was a compound of *iacio*. It was necessary to see this to

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score full marks on the sentence. In the last sentence, *poenam* was sometimes taken as the direct object of *vidisset* rather than *timere*, and the result clause *adeo ... ut* was not always well done, either because of the separation of the words or ignorance of the meaning of *adeo*.

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