

Classics – Latin

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H039

Report on the Units

June 2009

HX-CLAS/MS/R/09

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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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Chief Examiner's Introduction

It was with a mixture of apprehension and eager anticipation that the assessment team awaited the first appearance of the new AS Latin units. The opportunity had been grasped to improve on the legacy specification in ways that would benefit both candidates and Examiners; at the same time new and untried mark schemes, together with new types of questions, introduced a large element of uncertainty into preparations for marking.

Perhaps the most important single consideration in the minds of Examiners was the need to carry forward standards from the legacy specification. This was not a straightforward process, because both units contained very different types of question. F361, alongside an adapted passage of Latin, directly comparable with legacy unit 2492, carried an unadapted piece of Cicero and, as an alternative to this, sentences to be translated into Latin – a skill never before assessed at AS Level. F362 did away with the legacy straitjacket of formulaic 9, 15 and 30 mark questions and a formal essay, replacing them with more transparent, shorter questions and extended answer questions.

Examiners were confident that the standard set for Unit F362 was comparable with that of the legacy literature units. On F361, in the event, the Cicero passage proved more challenging than anticipated; although the mark scheme compensated for this, it is accepted that candidates should not be faced by too difficult a challenge. At the same time, because the new language unit comprises 50% of the AS, as opposed to 30% in the legacy specification, centres should expect to see some increase in difficulty.

In both units, Examiners were impressed by the high standard shown by the great majority of candidates. It is beyond doubt that they rose to the challenge of the new units and did both themselves and their teachers great credit.

F361 Latin Language

General Comments

Although the first appearance of this new unit proved challenging for many candidates, a high percentage of them were clearly thoroughly prepared and coped well with the demands of both sections.

The Section A unseen was found to be mostly straightforward, but with a few problematic sentences which tested even the strongest candidates. A pleasingly large number of candidates achieved full marks on this section.

The Cicero passage, as anticipated, provided a greater challenge, with a complex argument expressed in language radically different in style from anything met at this level in the legacy specification. Even here, a few candidates achieved perfect scores. The mark scheme allowed a high proportion to achieve more than two thirds of the marks, and few achieved under half marks. In consequence of this, the passage actually worked very well as a discriminator, and certainly did not in the event prove beyond the reach of candidates.

The English-Latin alternative to the Cicero unseen was attempted by between 10 and 20 per cent of candidates; while the best of these produced flawless versions, many showed considerable gaps in their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar or syntax.

Alongside the new-style Question Paper came a new type of mark scheme. For the two Latin-English translations, the passages were divided into 14 sections (Section A) and 6 (Section B). Each section was marked out of 5 according to the proportion of sense. A late change to the Specimen Mark Scheme was the decision to allow 5 marks for a section even if it contained a minor error, such as wrong number in nouns or verbs, a wrong past tense, or a near miss with the meaning of a word. Examiners approached this new scheme with some trepidation, because of its relative subjectivity compared with previous schemes; however, it soon became clear that the scheme was straightforward in application in most instances, and Examiners quickly gained in confidence. There is no reason to doubt that the new scheme is as accurate in rewarding performance as the legacy scheme.

For the English-Latin section, each sentence was marked out of 6, again with full marks allowed even when there was one minor error. In the event, most errors were classified as minor, to avoid distortion of the marks.

Comments on individual questions

Section A, Question 1

multae etiam feminae nobiles imperatorem orabant ut se in matrimonium duceret: since *etiam* was open to various interpretations, with no guide from the context, it was ignored in the marking. Most candidates linked *feminae* correctly to *nobiles*. As always, *se* proved problematic for weaker candidates, who had no idea whether it referred to *feminae* or *imperatorem*; a few, who clearly anticipated finding no sensible storyline in the passage, even had the women begging the emperor to marry himself!

inter eas Agrippina, filia Germanici, maxime idonea videbatur: an unfortunate misprint on the Question Paper meant that *idonea* had to be ignored in the marking. Both 'seemed' and 'was seen' were accepted for *videbatur*. Most candidates scored full marks on this section.

promisit se, quae iam mater fuisset, mox Claudio quoque filium daturam esse: again *se* defeated many candidates. Many ignored the tense of *fuisset*. About a third of candidates had Claudius giving a son to Agrippina.

quamquam brevi tempore Agrippina cum imperatore habitabat sicut uxor: most candidates treated the time phrase as expressing duration; in all other respects this section was handled well.

nondum ausi erant nuptias celebrare, quod Germanicus fuerat frater Claudii: most ignored at least one of the pluperfects here. Few knew *nondum* or *ausi erant*.

multi erant qui crederent, si incestum eius modi fecissent: weaker candidates omitted *erant*, fortunately without losing the sense. It was evident from the awkwardness of expression that many candidates were unfamiliar with the word 'incest'. Most versions, however, were acceptable.

cladem diram civitati incasuram esse: this short section proved to be one of the most difficult in the passage, because of the inability of most candidates to parse *incasurum esse* or to work out its meaning. As a result there were many paraphrases of varying degrees of acceptability, such as 'the citizens would suffer a dreadful fate'.

Vitellius igitur, qui amicus imperatoris erat, in senatum ingressus senatores hortatus est ut matrimonium probarent: this long section was handled correctly by nearly all candidates. The only occasional error was ambiguity over who was entering the senate.

'nonne', inquit, 'deceat imperatorem, qui semper pro populo Romano tam diligenter laborat, solacium coniugis habere?': this section too caused no difficulties.

cum senatores haec verba laudavissent, Vitellius eos rogavit: this was nearly always translated correctly.

quis aut nobilioris generis aut melioris ingenii esset quam Agrippina: *generis* and *ingenii* were unknown to many weaker candidates. The descriptive genitives were very well handled. Most recognised the comparatives.

eis respondentibus nullam feminam meliorem esse: the only difficulty encountered here was the participial phrase, particularly the significance of *eis*; only the strongest candidates could deal with this. The commonest error in translation was to turn the phrase into a main clause with no link to what followed: 'they replied that..., he denied'.

negavit tale matrimonium, quod aliis gentibus sollemne esset, ulla lege prohibitum esse: this complex double clause defeated most candidates. The weakest failed to link *matrimonium* with *prohibitum esse*: ‘he refused such a marriage, because...’. As in every previous year, most candidates confused *aliis* with *ceteris*; the case puzzled many. *Ulla* was rarely known.

quibus verbis senatores adeo incitati sunt ut statim poposcerint ne diutius morarentur: there were a number of potential pitfalls here, avoided by the most able: the case of *quibus verbis*, the correct rendering of *ut* to express result; the correct rendering of *ne* to express an indirect command (‘so that they would...’ was not accepted); and the comparative adverb.

Section B, Question 2

nunc iam summatim exponam quibus criminibus Oppianicus damnatus sit: the difficulty of rendering both *nunc* and *iam* into sensible English caused Examiners to ignore the two words. Common errors were wrong tense for *exponam* and slight confusion over the meaning of *criminibus*. It was evident that few candidates had a good enough grasp of English usage to select the appropriate preposition to place in front of ‘charges’ or ‘crimes’; it was hoped to find either ‘on what charges’ or ‘for what crimes’; but neither of these appeared frequently. Fortunately at this level, candidates are not marked down for poor English. About two thirds of candidates gained full marks for this section.

ut et constantiam A. Cluenti et rationem accusationis perspicere possitis: here weaker candidates failed to identify the phrase boundaries: ‘the firmness and reason of the accusation of Cluentius’. About half the candidates scored full marks here.

primum causa accusandi quae fuerit ostendam, ut id ipsum A. Cluentium vi ac necessitate coactum fecisse videatis: this proved the most challenging section, with only about five percent of candidates gaining full marks. Common errors were: treating *primum causa* as an adjectival phrase; failure to construe *quae fuerit*; the tense of *ostendam*; omission of *id*; failure to link *videatis* to *ut*; ignorance of *coactum*.

cum manifesto venenum deprehendisset quod vir matris Oppianicus ei paravisset: weaker candidates moved *manifesto* out of context. Most took *quod* to mean ‘because’, which gives no sense here. Only a tiny proportion of candidates knew that *vir* could mean ‘husband’ (essential here). Many paid no heed to cases: ‘the mother of the man Oppianicus’ was common. The identity of *ei* is not clear from the Latin, and so ‘for him’ and ‘for her’ were equally acceptable.

et res non coniectura sed oculis ac manibus teneretur, neque in causa ulla dubitatio posset esse, accusavit Oppianicum: most candidates coped surprisingly well with the zeugma of *teneretur*, often substituting more appropriate verbs (quite acceptable if they gave good sense). The difficulties lay in the parenthetical *neque ... esse*: again *ulla* was rarely known or construed; many could not accept that the subject could appear as late in the clause as *dubitatio* (this led to the common ‘nor could the case be in any doubt’).

quam constanter et quam diligenter postea dicam: fewer than half the candidates realised that *quam* could mean ‘how’; most gave ‘more firmly’ etc. Weaker candidates made *dicam* past.

Section B, Question 3

- (a) **The storm, which attacked the city, was so great that the citizens were terrified:** many did not know the declension or gender of *tempestas*. Few were familiar with *tantus*; fortunately *tam magna* was accepted. *Civites* was very common. *Territi essent* was much commoner than *territi sint*, and was accepted.
- (b) **The wretched citizens, because they feared death, stayed at home:** many could think of no word for 'wretched' and chose *dirus* or something similar. The noun death was often unknown, but stronger candidates successfully paraphrased as *ne morerentur*. The perfect of *maneo* was rarely known; the easier imperfect was hardly ever chosen. Few knew the locative of *domus*: half gave *domum* and half *domo*; it would have been sensible, if they were unsure, to try *in domo* or *in domibus*, or even *in villis*, all of which would have been accepted.
- (c) **After the sun returned, a few, braver than the rest, wanted to go out:** the correct form of *sol* was rarely known. Many tried an ablative absolute here, but only the very best candidates were successful (*redito* was common). A minority knew *pauci*. It rarely occurred to candidates that *fortior* had to be plural to agree with *pauci*. *Quam ceteris* was common.
- (d) **Having sought their friends, they asked whether many were dead:** more were successful with the ablative absolute here; most knew *peto*. *Utrum* appeared far more frequently than *num*. The principal parts of *morior* were often unknown.
- (e) **Soon they were rejoicing, when they had learned that everyone was safe:** there were several routes to 'were rejoicing', e.g. *gaudebant*, *laeti erant*. Few knew a correct word for 'learned'. 'That' was nearly always *ut*. 'Safe' was rarely in agreement with 'everyone'.

F362 Latin Verse and Prose Literature

Examiners are confident that this unit set candidates tasks of suitable difficulty, and that it produced an appropriate level of response from candidates and a suitable range of marks. They are also of course very aware of the chances of anxiety being felt by centres and candidates in dealing with a new and at first sight quite different set of questions. They wish to reassure centres and candidates that in essence the approaches to text handling required by this examination are the same as required in the 'legacy' specifications and indeed in reading any Latin text for instruction or pleasure.

Most candidates completed all the questions required, some at perhaps excessive length and with considerable detail, partly perhaps because they were familiar with work for the legacy specification where commentary and essay questions sometimes required longer answers. The examiners are confident that this will correct itself as centres and candidates familiarise themselves with the style of questions set, but would urge centres and their candidates to be aware of the need to read questions carefully to avoid:

1. reference to parts of the passages outside the lines or sentences mentioned in the questions
2. the sometimes lengthy discussion of 'style' issues in questions where 'style' is not mentioned and only 'content' needs to be discussed. Examiners note this as a particular issue for some candidates' use of time, and feel that candidates should be reassured about the amount of time available provided they take care to answer the question set.

That said, Examiners would like to express their genuine appreciation and admiration for the amount of knowledge, discussion and critical skill they have seen in the scripts presented. Aware of all the possible anxieties felt, Examiners are confident that they have done all in their power to be supportive and rewarding in assessing candidates' work.

Some candidates answered the questions in a different order from that in which they were printed. Examiners fully understand that this can help with time-management, but they would ask candidates politely to ensure that if they do this, the question numbering is crystal-clear.

In commentary questions, the norm is that 1 mark is allocated for a relevant Latin quotation where requested, and 1 for the discussion of it. To achieve both marks, the discussion should be accurate and well thought out, and based on an understanding of the meaning of the Latin, even if that is only implicitly expressed in the answer. Candidates who offer an inaccurate translation of the Latin will not be credited with the mark for the reference.

Translation of the parts of passages set was generally very competent indeed. As with the legacy 2491 unit, loss of marks came mostly with omissions of important words. Candidates are reminded therefore of the need to be careful in making certain that all words and phrases are covered in their translations.

In assessing with the new assessment descriptors for translation, Examiners have maintained the expectation of well recalled accuracy as these are not 'unseen' translations, and are delighted that the great majority of candidates have indeed recalled their translation work very accurately indeed. The award of the full 15 marks was not at all uncommon.

Examiners would like, though, to repeat their plea from the days of the legacy specification, that candidates should write translations on alternate lines of the answer booklets. This would make assessing easier.

Centres and candidates may also like reassurance about the assessment of the extended answer or 'mini-essay' questions. Aware that candidates may feel under pressure to write at length here, in memory of the 2491 unit, with its single essay and longer time allowance, Examiners wish to express their delight in reading so much excellent work which both recalled the text in some detail and applied that recollection to the question so thoroughly. Even answers which lacked some recall of detail were sound answers to the question, with very little irrelevant material or mere retelling of the content without attempt at analysis.

Centres and candidates may wish to be reminded here of what the examiners are looking for in these questions:

a range of points of analysis which constitute an answer to the question set; the mark scheme will try to give clear statements of these points. Candidates who have made points other than those on the mark scheme will of course have their ideas credited if the point is a valid one. The range or number of these points covered in the answer is very important in assessing the level of marks the answer merits, in accordance with the level descriptors included with the mark schemes and familiar from the Specimen Assessment Materials too.

- 1 Illustration of each of these analysis points with appropriate and accurate reference to the text. This does not have to be quoted in Latin (though that is welcomed, of course). It is very important to remember that these text references should go beyond the Latin passage(s) printed on the paper, unless the wording of the question limits that, as it did with the Ovid question.
- 2 Centres who ask to see the marked scripts of their candidates will see that Examiners have acknowledged the use of a text point by the letter 'T' in the left margin and that of a point of analysis with a letter 'A'.

The scripts assessed do indeed seem to bode well for the future work of the candidates and their teachers, and the Examiners wish to pass on their unqualified thanks for the quality of work they have seen.

Cicero: In Catilinam 1

- (i)
 - a This was generally well answered, though some candidates answered at much more length than was really needed; indeed a single word would have sufficed here, 'pity/sympathy/mercy' were all deemed acceptable. Candidates ought not to be afraid of writing brief answers to the 1 mark questions that will appear in this Unit.
 - b This was generally very well and clearly answered. Some candidates slowed themselves down by discussing style here, sometimes very well indeed, but that discussion was not specified in the question. Latin quotation was often well focused and well incorporated into the discussion, though some candidates omitted it entirely, and others quoted at rather too much length perhaps. This was, of course duly and fully credited by the examiners, as the mark scheme indicates, but centres and candidates might like to be encouraged to aim for focus on shorter phrases when quoting.

- c** This question produced much very well thought out and accurate discussion. Most of the points in the mark scheme were mentioned in answers. Style discussion was often very well approached indeed, with candidates showing a good grasp of the effect of the rhetorical techniques as well as the technical terms. Some made no reference to style in their answers; this reduced their maximum mark to 6. There was a tendency here and in the other questions like this, such as (e) and 2 (a) and 2(d) for some candidates to go on beyond the section specified in the question, possibly prejudicing the time available for later answers. Some candidates also risked slowing their progress down by making more than the required number of points, though credit was given for this where appropriate.
- d** There were many full and well presented answers to this question. But some candidates did not fully grasp the movement of the argument. This is perhaps something on which centres might wish to focus attention, as it recurred in some candidates' answers in an Ovid question where the movement of the argument was an important issue too. In particular, some did not see the argument involving Cicero's slaves, but merely said that he would leave Rome if the Romans feared him. Some candidates did not move to the final point that fear and hatred of Catiline were justified, and that Catiline had knowledge of his guilt, which should have inspired him to quit Rome. Latin reference here was generally focussed and appropriate, though some did not quote from the text at all.
- e** This was also generally fully and thoughtfully answered, with candidates covering most of the points mentioned in the mark scheme. There was also some very good grasp of the structure of the argument, distinguishing between what the 'patria' had accepted and what she now thought unbearable in Catiline's conduct. A number of Candidates thought that Cicero was speaking entirely as himself in this passage, however.
- f.** Many fully accurate translations of this passage were produced. The chief issues causing the loss of marks were as follows:
omission of *quamobrem*
omission of *ne* and the idea of the purpose clause
both *tandem* and *aliquando* needed to be translated for the full mark, some candidates saw them as having one single joint meaning, and it was felt important by the examiners to reward those who saw them as separate words
haec was often omitted or just incorporated into *ita*
some candidates seemed to confuse *impetrare* with *imperari* and thought it meant 'obey'
some candidates thought that *debeat* was *debeas*, 'you should'.
- g.** Many really good answers were offered to this question. The best candidates offered a broad range of aspects of Catiline's character, mostly concentrating on his evil nature, some however took Cicero's feeling of pity mentioned in the passage at its face value, which rather distorted their view. Answers offered did cover all of the aspects suggested in the mark scheme.
There were many examples of really broad reference to the whole prescription, which candidates often knew very well indeed, and the examiners commend this enormously. Examiners did feel a little concern about the number of candidates who were unable to spell 'Catiline' correctly, 'Cataline' and 'Catalline' being the commonest variations.

2 Ovid Metamorphoses VIII

- a. Numerous high quality answers were offered to this question, clearly this was a familiar passage.
Most points made in the mark scheme were covered in answers, the superlative *pulcherrime* was very well discussed (and candidates who had read *rerum for regum* found their answers fully accepted), but several Candidates failed to grasp the point Ovid is making in lines 1-2 about Minos' mother, some thinking that the gods had burned with passion for Minos himself others not seeing how the story of his conception was turned by Ovid into a compliment. For a few candidates the word 'superlative' was the only point of style discussion, this rescued them from scoring only 6 marks maximum.
There was some tentative discussion of the effects of alliteration (sometimes confused with assonance) of the *f* and *m* sounds in *fassaque me flammae meae*, but some very sound suggestions about the passionately whispering sibilance of lines 3-4.

- b. Generally this was very well answered, with focused reference to the Latin; Latin words were often very neatly incorporated in answers in a rather 'macaronic' style, and provided the understanding of the meaning is accurate, this seems a worthwhile approach to time-management. Quite a few candidates extended their discussion down to *hastam*, though, and this did lose them time, perhaps.

- c. There was a rewardingly high number of perfect translations here. The chief points of weakness were:
omission of either *dotalem* or *mecum* or both
reading *patrem* rather than *patriam*
omission or disagreement of *infelix*
taking *hunc* as neuter- this thing rather than this man
some took *solum* as if it were *sola*

Examiners were happy to accept singulars as plurals and vice versa where appropriate, recognising this tendency in Latin verse.

- d. This was generally well answered, with the provisos in some candidates' cases mentioned in connection with other similar questions on the paper.
There were good discussions of the exclamation in lines 1-2, but some candidates did not then grasp the movement of the argument about the gods and Fortuna, which leads into Scylla's decision to take herself the action she has decided on. This meant that discussion of this section of the content was a little weak and not deemed worth the mark in some cases.

All of the points in the mark scheme appeared in the answers seen, with particular emphasis on the rhetorical question, whose effect was often very well discussed.

- e. This was almost universally answered accurately.

- f. Candidates had clearly enjoyed reading this section of the text and knew it well, with the result that many gained entry to the highest level of marks for their recall of the text. Though some did rather restrict their scope to only the 'take-off' or the death scene, many brought in the building of the labyrinth and the image of the river Maeander, the learned Alexandrian style geography of the route of Daedalus and Icarus, the picture of the watchers with its touch of everyday life realism and hints of *hybris*. Many candidates correctly identified a broad range of ways in which Ovid makes the story memorable. The notion of the range of points is always crucial in this kind of question. Some thought that the description of Icarus flapping his featherless arms was witty and humorous, which seemed a slightly ghoulish thought.
In both this and the corresponding question on the Cicero text, the quality of written communication was almost universally very high indeed.

Grade Thresholds

Advanced Subsidiary GCE Classics - Latin (H039)
June 2009 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
F361	Raw	100	76	68	60	53	46	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
F362	Raw	100	73	64	55	46	37	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
H039	200	160	140	120	100	80	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
H039	67.0	81.1	91.1	95.6	98.4	100.0	875

875 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:

http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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