

Classical Civilisation

Advanced GCE H441

Advanced Subsidiary GCE H041

Report on the Units

June 2010

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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 Report

General Comments

The introduction of a new specification always presents a number of different challenges to setters, Examiners, teachers and candidates: new topics, new styles of questions, longer papers, new Assessment Objectives and new assessment grids. Now that the new specification has completed its first full cycle, it is satisfying to report that everyone rose to the challenge admirably! At both AS and A2 candidates continue to show their enjoyment of the topics they study in Classical Civilisation. They write with interest and enthusiasm, displaying strong personal response, even if the quality of English is not always as fluent or sophisticated as one might hope.

Examiners were concerned that the quality of written communication and legibility was significantly worse than in previous years. Poor spelling, punctuation and expression can impair the quality of even a well-structured response. Classical names and technical terms which were printed on the examination papers were frequently misspelt. The reports for the individual units explore these issues in greater depth.

In general, there were fewer rubric errors involving answering too many questions or attempting the mix and match approach, but only a small minority obeyed the rubric about starting the essay question on a new page of the answer book. In future, we should like to encourage candidates to start **each new part** of an answer on a new page in order to give Examiners sufficient space to write comments and the marks achieved.

AS Units

At AS the overall aggregation was much the same as last year, with candidates producing work broadly similar in standard to last year, but in individual units there was an improvement in standards. Moreover, some units, especially Roman Society and Thought, Greek Tragedy in its Context and City Life in Roman Italy, showed a pleasing increase in the number of candidates sitting the exams.

Examiners felt that some candidates under-performed because they indulged in generalised argument without supporting evidence or detailed reference to specific incidents in the texts. This was especially true of the Odyssey, Roman Society and the Greek Tragedy units. Candidates need to show Examiners that they have read the texts and not just a book of mythology or a book of notes. In the material culture units it is equally important for candidates to give precise evidence and make deductions from it. In addition, the team of Senior Examiners should like to reiterate a point from last year's report: the bullet points in the essay questions are there to give some general guidance but are not designed to limit the scope of a candidate's argument.

A2 Units

At A2 the overall standard seemed to be much higher when compared to the legacy specification. This was especially true of Art and Architecture in the Greek World and Virgil and the World of the Hero units. The vast majority of candidates were well prepared and had a good deal of relevant information at their fingertips. The factors which differentiated between candidates tended to be the maturity with which some engaged with the material, both primary and secondary sources, and the focus on the questions posed. The ability to draw links between the different aspects of a topic, however, varied across the units. At best there were some superb synoptic responses in the Virgil and the World of the Hero unit, some perceptive arguments on the continuity of different

forms of comedy into the modern world and some lively and vigorous discussions, with insightful observations, of the different art forms studied by the candidates.

Many candidates had studied material beyond that prescribed for individual units and were able to interweave it skilfully into their responses. Reference to a wider range of material or further reading is to be encouraged and is always credited **if it is relevant to the question**. A note of caution, however: such material should not be used to the exclusion of the prescribed material or material specified by a particular question. Of course, not everything that Examiners read was praiseworthy and there are areas which can be improved upon next year. Now that the A2 papers are longer, this gives candidates an hour to **plan and write** each of the two questions they are required to answer. Advice given at INSET in the Autumn was that candidates should spend five minutes of each hour reading the question/passage and planning their response. Examiners were disappointed, therefore, by the large number of very short answers, sometimes less than a side in several cases, and the lack of evidence of planning. Those candidates who did spend some time organising their thoughts, planning their answers and marshalling their material were, on the whole, much more focussed and thoughtful. Some candidates, however, produced lengthy, meandering answers which seemed to touch on the question almost by accident.

Another point to make is that candidates need to read the questions and take careful note of what is being asked of them. Failure to note precisely the angle of the question led to a frustrating lack of focus, and underdeveloped or poorly structured answers. Whilst there were no obvious rubric errors, some candidates had clearly spent a disproportionate amount of time on one part of the commentary question and this either led to cursory attempts at the essay question or, in a number of cases, led to candidates omitting the second part of the commentary question and/or the essay question.

F381 Archaeology: Mycenae and the classical world

General Comments

Examiners felt that there was a general improvement in the quality of responses this year. Although there were a few very weak scripts with very little applied knowledge of the subject most were either solid or very good indeed. Interestingly, in weaker scripts the performance in Section B seemed to be stronger than in Section A, possibly indicating that they had a better knowledge of archaeological techniques than Mycenaean archaeology. As in the previous session, a common area for improvement is the use of specific and relevant examples from archaeological sites. Many candidates failed to capitalise on solid argument through the lack of examples to illustrate the point or by concentrating on individual sites which were inappropriate for the technique under discussion.

Candidates seemed to cope well with the requirements of all the questions and, although some questions were more popular than others, the performance in each question seemed to be similar. Examiners noted that there was a pleasing range of examples being used, including not only the obvious, big sites, but also some more unusual or local ones. However, a small but noticeable minority wasted their effort by trying to bring in examples from outside the Classical world, including, Angkor Wat, Pharaonic Egyptian sites and prehistoric British sites. These examples were counted as irrelevant and failed to earn any credit.

Sadly, it was still a minority who could actually spell both Mycenaean and archaeology, despite both being on the question paper.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1 This was the more popular of the two commentary questions. However, performance in this question appeared to be similar to that in question 2.
 - (a) The photograph was known by almost everyone – only a few candidates failed to give it its proper name, but they still mentioned lions so seemed to know more or less what it was and its location. The greatest stumbling block seemed to be Mycenae's location within Greece. Only a handful of candidates attempted to describe its location and even fewer managed to do so accurately. Examiners were pleased by the number and variety of well-remembered details given, such as the correct material of the Lion Gate, its design as a funnel for the enemy to be trapped in, and the link that scholars have made with Agamemnon and lions in Homer.
 - (b) A few candidates were distracted by writing about art in general and forgetting the 'religion' aspect of the question, but the majority managed to stay on track and refer to relevant artefacts. This question saw the whole spectrum of answers, from the very weak ('they had an idol of a god so we know they had gods' type answers) to the very detailed and thoughtful. This question more than any other on the paper attracted the most 'stating the obvious' type responses. This was a shame as almost everyone knew at least one or two works of art that were relevant, but failed to draw solid conclusions from them and failed to capitalise on the knowledge.

- (c) The most common mistakes with this question were a) not noticing the word 'building' in the question and talking about sites in general, b) trying to discuss as many buildings as possible in the time allowed and c) focusing solely on the building's contents to the exclusion of the building itself. Those who managed to avoid all these pitfalls generally had a lot to say and managed to draw interesting conclusions. Factual knowledge of Pylos in particular tended to be strong when the palace was used as an example.

2 This proved to be the less popular of the two commentary questions.

- (a) Everyone knew that the artefacts were masks and, excepting one misattribution to Troy, everyone knew they were from Mycenae. The material and the finder were also well known, and a good number came up with other interesting facts, such as Schliemann's statement upon finding object B. Very few attempted to place the objects in the correct graves. It should also be noted that for both this question and for 1(a) the dates were wildly placed, anywhere between 2000 – 1st century BC.
- (b) This question tended to be well answered. There was a good range of facts, including not only bodies and wood but also other material such as seeds and leather. In general, the answers to this question were the most perceptive of any in Section A. Candidates regularly drew several sensible conclusions, such as dates, gender and lifestyle from human bones, and several went beyond this to consider such things as isotopic analysis or the glimpses of everyday life seen in the Vindolanda tablets.
- (c) This was such a broad question that it did not create any significant difficulties. The prescription to discuss Mycenae led a few candidates to label what was obviously Pylos as Mycenae, whether inadvertently or not. It must be said that there were certainly some odd selections as the second site – a sizeable minority eschewed a proper site to talk about one building, such as the Chester amphitheatre or one particular house in Pompeii – which led to a somewhat skewed evaluation. Those who selected a more sensible comparison generally did try to evaluate the two sites and had thought about the issues involved – answers were often quite personal to the candidate.

Essay Questions

- 3** This was the middle question in terms of popularity, but still received a good number of answers. It was also midway in terms of the standard of answer.

Knowledge in general was very strong and most candidates managed to provide accurate factual detail when answering this question. This year there was hardly any confusion between the different types of geophysical surveys, as compared to the equivalent question last year. Almost everyone came up with at least two different methods of surveying, and a good proportion of candidates poured a huge amount of detail into their answers. Linking the methods to examples was a very decisive discriminator between the weak/average responses and the good ones. There were very few erroneous examples – generally they were simply omitted instead, or one site was used for every single prospective/surveying method mentioned.

All but a few candidates struggled with the evaluative element of this question and there were very few that really satisfactorily grappled with the range of issues that could have been given. The majority were content to list the methods (sometimes with sites), but only to draw a very vague conclusion in a sentence at the end that 'survey is useful because we know where to excavate'. Often candidates knew why archaeologists surveyed (save time, save money, greater accuracy, prevent destruction, etc) but failed to link it to the body of their essay.

- 4** This was noticeably the most popular essay question and also produced the best responses. The weaker answers managed to find something to say on the topic, and the best dealt with it very skilfully.

Again, knowledge tended to be strong, although perhaps not quite as impressively detailed as in question 3. Factual accuracy on dating methods continued to trip up a few candidates. Examiners were pleased to see that some candidates went beyond the obvious dating and surveying developments and looked at such matters as underwater archaeology, the use of computers and databases, GIS and facial reconstruction. Those who engaged with the question had a lot to say. However, as for question 3, the ability to link the technique with an example proved a clear discriminator.

Also as for question 3, there was a sizeable proportion who continued to produce a 'shopping list' of techniques (and sometimes examples), but who did not do much with it. However, this question did afford the opportunity for all candidates to find something useful to say (such as improved accuracy of dating). It should also be noted that a few candidates decided to repeat the questions from last year's paper and did not engage with the specific wording of this year's question.

- 5** There were not many answers to this question and few that were very strong. Its apparent lack of requirement to know specific facts (as opposed to the other two questions) seemed to attract weaker responses.

The wording of the question seemed to be ignored by almost every candidate who answered this question ('choose **two** sites and compare'), as the majority simply wrote about about how sites could be presented, without linking them to specific examples, and certainly without creating a consistent analysis between two sites. Sometimes it was clear that a candidate had been to one site they selected, and here the personal insight was valuable and interesting, but it was rarely upheld for the rest of the essay. This was a shame as several candidates' views were both personal and well thought-out, but hardly ever turned into a proper comparison.

One rather baffling answer wrote about the film 'Troy' for the entire essay, as a way of presenting the site to the public in an 'extremely accurate' way!

F382 Homer's *Odyssey* and Society

General Comments

Candidates seem to have engaged well with the *Odyssey* as literature. This year they showed a particularly good grasp of its context, with strong awareness of the original audience with few anachronistic comments. The register used for written work was generally appropriate, showing improvement from last year: some candidates used bullet points for the part (a) question in Section A, which is perfectly acceptable; in other questions candidates used full sentences and avoided the note form which was sometimes a problem last year. Spelling of classical names was reasonable, with the notable exception of 'Polyphemus' (frequently 'Polythemus'), which suggests that some candidates were spelling it phonetically. The best essays were divided clearly into paragraphs; some candidates had plenty of interesting ideas but were not able to access the highest marks because they did not organise them into a coherent argument. Technical terms such as 'simile', 'xenia' and 'kleos' were used effectively by a large majority of candidates.

Although many candidates showed a wide knowledge of the *Odyssey*, there were a disappointing number who could use only the most obvious scenes to support their arguments. Candidates should aim to include a wide range of details, rather than relying on a handful of episodes. The problem of making up false quotations was far less prevalent than last year, but still occurred occasionally.

The best answers to part (c) and essay questions were from candidates who appeared to be engaging with the task directly and thinking on the spot. Some answers appeared to be minimally adapted from prepared essays and therefore, although they could often gain credit for a good range of factual knowledge, were not fully relevant to the question and did not show a thoughtful engagement with the task. Thus superficially good essays could not be awarded high marks because they did not answer the question set. Candidates seemed familiar with the format of the paper: there were very few rubric errors or obvious problems with timing.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1 (a) Most candidates were able to give a clear account of what happened on the island of Aeolia, though some insisted on continuing their accounts to include the Laestrygonians and Circe. The main confusion lay in the contents of the bag: some thought that Aeolus put all the winds inside, and others that he put only useful winds in it. Some candidates who gave otherwise sound answers added fabrications such as that Aeolus instructed Odysseus not to let his men open the bag.

- (b) Candidates analysed the thoughts and feelings of Odysseus and his men well. Most covered Odysseus and his men effectively, though some did not mention the men's change of feelings in the last paragraph, where they were 'in tears'. Some understood 'tempest' purely metaphorically as 'rage', leading to less effective analysis here. The final sentence ('Covering my head with my cloak, I lay where I was in the ship.') caused some difficulties among those candidates who sensibly chose to discuss it. Answers that focused on embarrassment or shame were less convincing than those that suggested despair or isolation, as were those who asserted that Odysseus 'probably' or 'must have' felt a certain way without supporting their claims with reference to the text.

There were some excellent comments that showed an understanding of the difference between Odysseus' feelings at the time of the incident and those when he retold it to the Phaeacians.

A few candidates did not direct their answers at this question, discussing instead how Homer made the passage vivid (question 2(b)).

- (c) Candidates who focused on communication, rather than being drawn into prepared essays about leadership, often gave very good answers. They discussed communication as a two-way affair, requiring listening as well as speaking, and allowed the possibility that Odysseus' men might have made the wrong decisions even if Odysseus' communication skills were good. Only a few candidates could give details of such things as Odysseus' speech to his men on arrival at Aea or his interactions with Eurylochus. Weaker answers simply listed a few occasions when Odysseus spoke to his men, without analysing the effectiveness of the communication. A few ignored the passage about the bag of winds, or focused on this episode alone.

- 2 (a) There were a few exceptionally good answers to this question, including a large number of the incidents referred to in the mark scheme, such as Penelope asking Phemius not to sing about the Trojan War and then being sent to her room by Telemachus. A rather large number of answers, however, failed to get beyond the fact that Penelope cried a lot and set up some kind of trick involving unpicking her work. Candidates frequently thought she was sewing, knitting or spinning rather than weaving, and that the product was a cloak or tapestry, or a shroud for Odysseus rather than Laertes. Many did not explain the context of the passage, that Penelope had arranged the meeting in order to question the 'beggar' about her husband.
- (b) There were many good answers to this question, with candidates quoting individual words and short phrases rather than making general points or quoting a passage several lines long. Most candidates attempted to explain why descriptions were vivid, for example discussing Homer's use of colour (purple, golden) and explaining how the comparison with an onion skin conveyed the brilliance, the colour and the texture of the tunic. Weaker answers simply noted the similes, or explained them in a way that would apply to any simile in the *Odyssey*.

- (c) Most candidates could give some examples of Penelope and Odysseus testing, though many were surprisingly vague on facts about Odysseus, and the episode of the bed test was not well understood, with many candidates claiming that Penelope asked Odysseus a series of questions about the bed.

The passage itself was often analysed well, with perceptive comments about the way in which Odysseus and Penelope were each testing the other. This led to some interesting discussion of why the testing happened, including testing identity, loyalty and willingness to fight. Some candidates extended their analyses to make convincing distinctions between Odysseus and Penelope, for example claiming that Odysseus' tests were based on deception whereas Penelope's were more straightforward, and that Odysseus wanted to test character, or were perhaps just for fun or from habit (Laertes), whereas Penelope wanted to test the more basic issue of identity.

Essay Questions

- 3 This was a very popular question (about Odysseus' motivation for returning home), and elicited some top quality answers. There was a pleasing awareness of other motivations, such as the desire for *kleos* (glory/reputation) and the role of booty acquisition in this. Many of the best answers discussed what was expected of a Homeric hero. Most candidates knew the Calypso episode well, and used it effectively to support their arguments. Fewer, but still a good number, discussed the year on Aea and the need for his men to remind Odysseus to continue his voyage. Some made good use of the conversation between Odysseus and Anticleia in the underworld and a wide range of other details. Some candidates took *nostos* to be completed with the arrival back in Ithaca, others with the reclamation of the palace from the suitors: either approach is valid, especially if the candidate explains his/her decision.
- 4 There were some weak answers here which discussed gods and goddesses vaguely without reference to the *Odyssey*, or limiting their answer to an account of how Athene helps Odysseus. However, the majority of candidates engaged successfully with the task, giving at least some basic examples, often referring to Athene, Zeus, Hermes and Poseidon in the *Odyssey* and using the story of the adultery of Ares and Aphrodite very effectively.
- Better answers did more than list 'good' and 'bad' actions of the gods; they engaged with the concept of a role model, identifying what was expected of a Homeric mortal. Many commented that Poseidon's insistence on avenging his son was appropriate in the Homeric world and equivalent to Odysseus' punishment of the suitors. Some explained that Greek gods were not thought of as role models, including interesting discussions of gods and morality.
- 5 There were very few answers to this question. As this is primarily a literary unit based on the *Odyssey*, to score high marks, candidates needed to give illustrations from the *Odyssey* and to show understanding of the complex composition of the poem.

F383 Roman Society and Thought

General Comments

This year there was a rise in the entry for this unit which is encouraging. Questions elicited a wide variety of answers which made the marking process very rewarding and interesting. The mark scheme can only be indicative of the wide range of approaches to answering any particular question.

Answers showed a sound knowledge of literature with detailed references made to the texts. However, as a general guidance for improvement, answers could include more detail from Roman society.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1
- (a) There was a general knowledge of the privy council with some answers making reference to the 'friendship' (the term *amici* was used by many), and some ideas over 'possible' purposes of meetings. Many referred to the subject matter of Satire 4 and better answers made reference to Pliny and Augustus.
 - (b) This was answered well for the most part, with 'drawn white faces' and 'quailed' being favourite references. There was some confusion between 'Crispus' and 'Crispinus' and reference to the inverted commas around 'friendship'. Better answers referred to the simile of Crispus and analysed the depiction of Domitian as the cause of this fear (scourge, plague) with one reference to him as the 'elephant in the room'.
 - (c) Better answers made clear distinctions between 'mocking' and 'angry', most using Satire 4 as 'mocking' and Satire 3 as 'angry'. Some made even greater differentiation and the best answers discussed the nature of mock epic and Juvenal's vitriol. Some answers made no real distinction but rather listed satirical or funny comments or lacked a range of examples.
- 2
- (a) Many answers offered the basic information, but the best mentioned Trimalchio's status as an Augustalis and his money making schemes (particularly impressive was the knowledge that Fortunata sold her jewellery and clothes to help fund his second venture). Some answers focussed on the bath incident which is on the same day as the dinner party.
 - (b) Again, this was a well-answered question, though better answers showed more thoughtful consideration of the different effects which different literary techniques had, (ie the exotic dates, multi-sensory effects of size and sound, texture of woven/embroidered). Many candidates seemed to use a list of literary techniques without giving examples from the passage or considering how they made the passage 'vivid'. It is appreciated that the text is in translation and, although discussion of almost all literary devices is credited, focus on punctuation should be avoided.

- (c) On the whole this question was well-answered. Candidates clearly enjoy the *Dinner*, though less successful answers made no mention of events outside of the given passage. Many answers stated that '*Dinner with Trimalchio*' is a satire, but few developed this to say what it was satirising. Better answers made reference to Petronius' contemporaneous society and/or analysed the different kinds of humour. Some answers considered other elements as being more important, besides humour, such as Trimalchio's character and the food or entertainment which was credited.
- 3 This was a popular question but in too many cases was misinterpreted as a question on 'city versus country' and a few answers made no mention of the countryside whatsoever.
- A suitable introduction to this answer would have been a general overview of what life was like in the countryside. Many answers focussed on the disastrous state of Rome in Juvenal Satire 3. Some credit was given for discussion of the city when used in an argument to compare with the countryside. The tale of the town mouse was frequently cited though often with no mention of the country mouse. Better answers considered Horace's Satires and evaluated the possible weaknesses of the country – thieves, hard labour and even mention of the confiscation of farms by Octavian. The best answers could draw on detailed knowledge of the text with reference to Juvenal's claim of being the owner of a single lizard, or Horace 1.1 where the lawyer and farmer want to swap roles. The question differentiated by giving the opportunity to discuss Horace and the countryside with readily available information but requiring deeper thought for examples from Juvenal and/or Pliny.
- 4 A very well answered question with many able to show a range of contextual as well as textual knowledge. Many answers made reference to Fortunata and even made some distinction between her and well-bred women such as Arria and Ummidia. Many criticised Pliny's reaction to his wife's miscarriage but also felt he had a genuinely loving relationship with Calpurnia. The best answers referred to Regulus preying on defenceless old ladies and Juvenal's references for example to Locusta. Less successful answers listed instances of women being mentioned in the authors without evaluation, many choosing to evaluate at the end rather than during the course of the answer.
- 5 Many answers revealed a good understanding of ancient society, but some were less successful in comparing it with the modern world. The better answers considered a range of writers and attitudes and the best structured their answers by argument, not author. Some answers considered modern comedians and media with appropriate links to ancient authors. However, others made little reference to the ancient texts and gave no clear answer to the question.

F384 Greek Tragedy in its context

General Comments

This year, Greek Tragedy has not only maintained its popularity amongst students of Classical Civilisation, but seems to have increased its candidature. The candidates have continued to show how much they enjoy and appreciate all of the plays they have studied. There was a clear empathy with the characters and their situations seen in the personal responses of the candidates, who also showed an awareness of the dynamics at work in the plays. Although most of the candidates dealt with the plays, with better textual knowledge than previous years evident, some still concentrated on the myth. The historical context was sometimes overused at the expense of material from the texts. A pleasing improvement was seen in the use of the passages to answer the (b) parts of the Commentary Questions.

There were still ongoing problems in a number of areas, such as the misspelling of names, with the usual suspects (Euripides, Laius, Dionysus, Aegisthus). A very common error was the inability to spell 'villain' despite it being in the question. Misspelling and misuse of technical terms (*anagnoresis*, *peripeteia*, and this year, *kleos*), and using sympathy and empathy without distinction showed no improvement from last year.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

Question 1 from *Agamemnon* was more popular than Question 2 from *Bacchae*.

- 1 **(a)** Candidates were generally secure on the details of events leading up to the passage, although some did go back to the beginning of the play. Many otherwise good answers neglected to mention the interaction between Agamemnon and the Chorus before Clytemnestra's speech to Agamemnon.
- (b)** Most candidates were able to make valid comments on the language and on the confrontation between Clytemnestra and the Chorus. However, a surprisingly large number did not discuss the situation on stage, despite the prompt in the question.
- (c)** Candidates were able to discuss Clytemnestra's masculine qualities in the passage, and compare her behaviour here to the rest of the play. References were made to her dominance over the other characters (although very few could spell 'manoeuvres') and her skill in speaking. Many candidates contrasted her masculine behaviour, such as killing Agamemnon, with her feminine side, giving this as the reason for her actions (maternal bond with Iphigenia and jealousy of Cassandra). These answers were balanced and produced some very interesting discussions.

- 2 **(a)** Candidates generally knew the main details of the play leading up to the passage. However, a significant number spent too much time giving the story of Dionysus' conception and birth, at the expense of details about events in the play. Many omitted any mention of the entry of the Chorus.

- (b) Candidates were able to use the passage to discuss Pentheus' feelings about Teiresias and Cadmus. There was some confusion about the orders to destroy Teiresias' 'oracular seat' with many candidates thinking that this referred to Dionysus. Justification was tackled less well. Many answers ignored the situation in Thebes, and stated that Pentheus should not be rude to his elders, and that they should be allowed to worship whichever god they liked.
- (c) This question produced a full range of answers. Better answers were able to deal with Cadmus' advice in the passage, and his warning to Pentheus, as well as his appearance at the end to bring Agaue back to reality, and his punishment at the hands of Dionysus, despite actually worshipping him. Some candidates did not discuss the latter sections of the play. Weaker answers concluded that he was not important because he did not appear much in the play, but better answers analysed his contribution to the plot and the development of Pentheus' character.

Essay Questions

Of the three essay questions, Question 4 was by far the most popular. Question 3 was attempted by a number of candidates, while Question 5 proved to be the least popular. Candidates were able to produce a good range of detail, and some sound arguments based on a good knowledge of the text. However, like last year, many candidates failed to realise that the bullet points are there as a guide and a help to answering the question, rather than a strict essay plan. Also, an increased number of candidates answered the essay question mainly by summarising the plot of the relevant play(s) with little by way of analysis, or seemed to write essays on a similar theme without taking account of the question set.

- 3 Candidates who tackled this question showed a good textual knowledge. There were some thoughtful answers, dealing both with the 'detective story' aspect of the play (many compared it to modern books/films/TV programmes) and those features of the play which took it beyond the genre. Weaker answers discussed features such as Fate, Dramatic Irony and knowledge, but with little reference to the proposition in the question. There were also a number of answers which seemed more concerned with *Oedipus the King* as the perfect Greek Tragedy rather than as a 'detective story'.
- 4 This was overwhelmingly the most popular essay question. Candidates were fully engaged with the question, with good discussion of both characters, and plenty of appreciation of their respective positions. They were able to consider both Medea and Jason, looking at the factors which made them either a victim or a villain. They were also able to analyse the differing reactions of a contemporary audience, and a modern one. Many answers were not balanced, dealing mainly or solely with Medea, with Jason being under-represented or simply being treated as a typical male of his time. A surprisingly large number of candidates concluded that Medea was more of a victim than a villain, despite the murders of Creon and Glauce, because she **had** to kill her children. There were a substantial number of candidates who discussed sympathy/pity for the characters with little reference to which was a victim or villain.

- 5** There were only a few answers to this question but candidates had plenty of material with which to answer it. As last year, a large number of candidates tried to deal with all four plays, which limited the detail they could use. In most cases, only writing about two plays may have benefited the candidates. Some candidates produced thoughtful and well-considered answers dealing with the limitations and advantages of the plots being known. However, there were a large number of answers which simply summarised the plots of the plays, without considering the ramifications of the question.

F385 Greek Historians

General Comments

There was a general feeling that the answers were stronger this year, perhaps reflecting more confident teaching. Plutarch was much more popular this year which may also reflect the fact that this new specification has had a year to bed in.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

There was no discernible preference for either option.

- 1
 - (a) This was answered well by the majority of candidates, who knew the context for the speech. The number of candidates achieving high marks for this type of question was substantially higher than in the previous session, indicating that candidates are more confident with the level of knowledge and understanding required by these questions.
 - (b) Although some answers tried to recycle prepared material on Thucydides and his style of writing, the stronger responses were those that focussed on the passage and used it intensively. Some were distracted into describing speeches in more general terms, but they did not focus on this particular speech.
 - (c) Some candidates were clearly hoping for a question on bias and really made something of this. Although several used broad brush strokes to answer this, the stronger answers were those that managed to focus on the aspects required by the question – the treatment of the Athenians and the non-Athenians. Stronger answers tended to be the ones that were able to cite specific examples and incidents.

- 2
 - (a) This was something of a Marmite question, with candidates either loving it and being able to answer with a comprehensive account of the battle of Salamis, or hating it and being unable to answer with sufficient detail. Some, unfortunately, tried to tell the Examiners about completely different battles.
 - (b) This tended to be well-answered by candidates. Most were able to make use of the passage and use specific examples from the text to show how the passage was exciting. The Examiners were particularly pleased by some very perceptive reading between the lines.
 - (c) Most responses to this were strong, showing a sound understanding of the nature of historiography and the usefulness, or otherwise, of Plutarch as an historical source. Some relied on generalisations without using the passage or other parts of the text as evidence, but these were not the stronger responses.

Essay Questions

Question 3 was the most popular option, followed by 5, with 4 being the least popular.

- 3** This was generally well-answered, with candidates being able to produce several useful examples and references to specific individuals. Xerxes was used by the vast majority of candidates. There were some rather weak responses that relied on vague generalisations about the question. Higher marks were awarded to those that could use actual examples and evaluate their value in a work of historiography.

- 4** Few answered this question and several of those who did attempt it did not manage to understand what was being asked of them and tended to discuss Thucydides' skill as a historian, which was not totally relevant to the question. However, there were some strong responses that took examples from Thucydides and assessed their worthiness for posterity.

- 5** Although not as popular as question 3, Plutarch has clearly become a popular author. Several answers impressed the Examiners with their detailed knowledge of his work. There were some very strong answers, and these were the ones that tended to compare two authors directly, rather than listing examples from Plutarch before moving onto the other author. Some read the question and answered it without reading the prompts which did not help to create a strong answer.

F386 City Life in Roman Italy

General Comments

There was a rise in the entry for this unit which is pleasing. Many clearly have enjoyed their study of the cities in this unit and it was felt that the quality of answers had also improved.

Comments on Individual Questions

All the questions allowed for a variety of answers and interpretations and so the mark scheme can only be indicative of the wide range of approaches to answering any particular question.

Commentary Questions

- 1
- (a) Most were able to describe *opus craticium* with varying detail, from the basic frame to mention of Vitruvius. Possible reasons for its use which were suggested were: cheap; space saving with thin walls; speed of building after the earthquake of AD 62.
 - (b) There are many versions of the internal arrangements of the House in Opus Craticium so answers referring to 'room 2b' or 'entrance 13' needed to offer some description to gain credit. Credit was given for a range of possible internal arrangements. In general there had to be some appreciation of the change by the creation of flats: the separate staircases/access. There should also have been some assessment of the success of these changes such as the ability to have private access. Surprisingly, very few discussed the balcony.
 - (c) Evidence here could have been drawn from: the House in Opus Craticium and the Samnite House, Herculaneum; the Garden Houses and the Insula of Diana in Ostia. Candidates were at liberty to come to any reasoned conclusion about what life was like but as ever answers supported with specific detail were the most successful.
- 2
- (a) All but a very few identified the amphitheatre as the building for holding gladiatorial shows. On the whole knowledge of the amphitheatre was good but the best answers focussed on describing the building itself. Only a few, however, actually described the shape. A range of detail is expected, so focus only on the seating tended to limit an answer.
 - (b) This question had a wide scope for interpretation. Some credit was allowed for discussion of the passage and for the contextual knowledge of gladiatorial fights. Such answers tended to be general and lacked specific detail. Better answers discussed the riot described by Tacitus in detail by naming Regulus and the Nucerni and remembering that children also died.

Also discussed was the wall painting with impressive knowledge of details such as the number of fighters shown in the arena. Some better answers referred to what Petronius goes on to say after the printed passage about 'half pint gladiators'. Some felt that these were only minor set backs and that on the whole gladiatorial shows were successful.

- (c) Most answers appreciated that the games would provide a boost in Pompeii's tourism and trade – in some cases citing the wall painting as showing stalls outside the amphitheatre. Credit was given for the mention of the same material as in a previous question (ie wall painting) when used in a different way. It was similarly felt that the riot tarnished Pompeii's reputation. Evidence here could also have been drawn from knowledge of inscriptions as this is how wealthy citizens of Pompeii could enhance their reputation. Here details were offered of: those who built the amphitheatre; those who refurbished it and those who donated lighting or put on shows. Discussion of the Colosseum and the emperors was not appropriate for this question which was focussed specifically on Pompeii.

Essay Questions

- 3 This was a popular question but in a few cases was misinterpreted as a question on 'life of luxury in Pompeii and Herculaneum' and a very few answers made no mention of the *domus* whatsoever, describing the baths and theatre instead. Neither was the question a comparison between the housing of the rich and poor, although some credit was afforded those who felt that some owners fell on hard times and had to sell off their garden – as in the case of the Samnite House in Herculaneum. Life for these would not have been so luxurious.

Answers which were the most successful were those which discussed the houses of Menander and the Stags, as well as other houses such as the houses of Octavius Quartio and Umbricius Scaurus. Full marks were available to answers which used detail from houses in the specification. However, there was an opportunity to offer detail from other houses and those mentioned included: the House of the Faun; the House of the Wooden Partition; the House of the Mosaic Atrium. The principal focus was on the layout of houses, decoration and use of space as well as an assessment of lifestyle. Decoration could cover named mosaics, wall paintings and statues. However, too many answers made reference to styles of painting such as 'Fourth style' without explanation or examples. Similarly reference to the 'paintings in room 23' with no further detail gained little credit.

- 4 A well answered question with many able to show a range of contextual as well as archaeological knowledge. Many answers made reference the temple of Isis in Pompeii and the various Mithraea in Ostia but without widening the scope to other temples, tombs and shrines. These answers were limited by the range of examples offered. The best answers referred to named examples of a wide range of religious buildings and artefacts including state religion, cults, Judaism and Christianity. Less successful answers listed buildings without evaluation of what the evidence tells us.
- 5 Many answers revealed a good understanding of the degree of danger of living in a Roman society, with Ostia being deemed the most dangerous. More general answers considered theft from the rich in Herculaneum and the risk of living in a port. Some answers referred to the specific damage caused by the earthquake in Pompeii and, of course, the eruption of Vesuvius. Better answers considered a range of dangers such as fires in Ostia and the resulting Fire fighters' barracks to protect the grain in the warehouses; piracy was considered; the account of the killer whale was also remembered.

F387 Roman Britain: life in the outpost of the Empire

General Comments

The Examiners are pleased to report that the structure and composition of the new examination paper set on Roman Britain, appears to have been tackled without too many problems. This new course includes the study of inscriptional evidence, which, while familiar in the legacy Ancient History specification, had not been required by the legacy Classical Civilisation Roman Britain units. While it was anticipated that questions using epigraphic evidence would take a little while to bed in, those who attempted Question 2 did not seem to struggle and performance was similar across both the Commentary Questions.

In terms of performance and quality, the range seen by the team of Examiners was extremely wide. The most thorough and carefully-crafted responses paid close attention to detail in all parts, referring to relevant points concerning the sources provided in the Commentary Questions and deploying detailed factual knowledge relevant to the question. Responses to all four questions were seen at this level. At the other end of the scale, there were significant numbers of answers in which there was very little evidence of any detailed factual knowledge or contextual understanding. A substantial number of responses seemed to regard towns or roads in Roman Britain as some kind of permanent entities, and there was little awareness of change over time or development during the occupation period. This need for candidates to be aware of the context of examples discussed may require additional emphasis during teaching, particularly if a thematic approach is taken to the introduction of topics.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

The anticipated division in popularity between Questions 1 and 2 was borne out by candidates' responses, with about 80% opting for the Rudston Venus question, and about 20% choosing to answer the question on inscriptions.

- 1 (a) This question was mostly done quite well. The question specified a discussion of 'artistic representations'. Examples needed to be of 'Roman gods and goddesses', and while the Examiners were prepared to stretch a point and include characters such as Orpheus and/or the Roman emperors Claudius and Hadrian, choices such as the *genii cucullati* were not relevant. Useful examples regularly cited included Mercury from Uley and Minerva from Bath and the best responses focused on detail here and saved wider discussion for part (b). There were some good, delicately-worded comments on the finer points of the Rudston Venus (if 'finer' is an appropriate epithet here) with some sensible comparisons. There were also some responses with good awareness of the rest of Rudston panel, in terms of artistic quality and content. However, some of the strikingly obvious detail in the printed source was passed over in silence, be it detailed description and comment about the hair, proportions of the limbs, exaggerated hips and obvious genitalia. Some responses showed evidence of either not looking closely at the images of these artefacts or mindlessly repeating criticisms from secondary sources. Other weaker responses simply described the images printed on the question paper.

- (b) This question opened up the possibilities for a wider discussion making use of any art form. The key word we hoped would prompt some discussion of change over time was 'emerged'; but this was quite rarely dealt with. A number of solid answers were seen which began with well-known Pre Roman Iron Age examples, then discussed classic Roman art, and concluded with equally solid examples to illustrate 'fusion', such as the Bath Gorgon, Rudston's Venus or the Hoxne 'pepper pot'.
- 2 (a) This question differed from 1(a) in that full marks were theoretically possible in an answer which concentrated solely on the *usefulness* of the inscriptions and the contextual material subscribed to each. This question was done extremely well by a few, and less well by many although most were on the right lines. Some candidates did not seem to realise that they had to *evaluate* the inscriptions on the paper – and a few others did not even refer to them, apparently answering a general 'what do we learn from inscriptions ...?' question.
- Inscription (i) caused confusion for a few candidates who assumed that the altar was found on a *Roman* old market site; and some had very limited knowledge of the cult of Asklepios, 'Hygeia' and 'Panakeia'. The best responses noted that this cult is without parallel in Britain, noted the name Antiochus (possibly of Eastern origins, certainly not Roman or Celtic) and the military location.
- Inscription (ii) was evaluated better, with a good number of candidates picking up details about the rank of the benefactor and the pre-existence of Isis' cult ('had collapsed through old age').
- Inscription (iii) elicited some good contextual knowledge but having described Mithraism in a fairly solid way they did not note the location either of this or of other Mithraea in military contexts, which has a bearing on 'useful'.
- (b) This question was intended to open up the discussion. Candidates whose focus had been poor in (a) often repeated material in this answer. There was a good spread of knowledge about 'foreign cults'; the term is used in the specification with the normal fairly narrow sense of 'foreign to Rome' – thus embracing Isis, Mithras, Cybele, at a pinch Dionysus, and definitely Christianity. The Examiners were prepared to allow the sense of 'foreign to Britain' if this was made clear by the candidate – though inclusion of the imperial cult and the Capitoline triad tended to weaken the discussion of 'how far' and 'widely practised', the latter element rarely being addressed in any depth. Discussion of town v. country, military v. civilian, and chronological issues – let alone the dearth of material on most of these, including Christianity – was all grist to the mill.

Essay Questions

In the case of the essays, about a third of candidates chose to tackle the importance of roads in the economic development of Roman Britain, and two-thirds tried to explore the extent of the contribution made by the development of towns to the Romanisation of Britain. There was of course some opportunity for candidates to incorporate some knowledge of roads in the essay on towns and vice-versa! In developing an evaluated response to either question, such crossover is inevitable. There were also some responses in which a very general attempt at tackling the question set (or ignoring it all together and simply discoursing on Romanisation) made it hard from reading the essay to work out exactly which topic was being attempted, despite the number placed in the margin.

Problems with very short answers, lack of plans and limited use of specific examples or awareness of context were particularly evident in the essay questions.

- 3** The better responses were marked out by an awareness of the development of roads during the Roman occupation, their primary purposes, and then their secondary but still important role as catalysts for economic growth. The use of the term 'economic development' in the question served to differentiate between those answers which simply discussed the 'economy of Britain' as though it were an undifferentiated reality with no geographical or temporal variations, from those with a more measured and perceptive approach.

The better responses also made use of specific examples of villas in close proximity to roads (and therefore towns) and some answers linked the provision of roads to international traffic at ports, either directly or via rivers. There were also some good detailed examples of pottery industries and mineral extraction being dependent to an extent on roads, and the Vindolanda letter about the bad state of roads was often noted and well evaluated. Other causes of economic growth were frequently mentioned and these were used to lead to a supported and evaluated conclusion which addressed 'how important' very clearly. Less focused and supported answers adopted a 'kitchen sink' approach almost from the outset, with little or no actual evidence included.

Some candidates asserted that 'there was no means of communication before the Romans came'; Centres need to give a realistic picture of Pre-Roman Iron Age Britain to dispel some of these myths.

- 4 This question also included a number of aspects which differentiated between candidates. First, there was the obvious need to address 'to what extent'; but also to explore 'development of towns' (ie not just their existence) and 'contributing to the Romanisation of Britain'. This needed a bit of unpicking and exploring, and was carefully evaluated in answers gaining marks in the top bands of the marking grids. Sadly, most answers were not so perceptive.

Often candidates tried to cite a range of evidence starting with *oppida*, sometimes with named examples, followed by outlines of the various different kinds of towns found in Britain, with or without a few named examples but with no sense of chronological development. There was some attempt at engaging with 'to what extent' but without context these arguments tended towards the superficial. As an example of this kind of muddle, one answer noted (a) the implantation of *civitas* capitals such as Wroxeter and Cirencester, and then (b) discussed the role and purpose of *coloniae* such as Colchester, Lincoln and York, and then (c) brought in Boudicca and her rebellion as an instance of resistance to this policy imposed by the Romans. Given that most of the towns cited post-date Boudicca, it is hard to regard such discussion as well-founded. In terms of evidence Examiners found that middling responses were improved if candidates had a firm grasp of a set number of examples to which they could refer, rather than a general awareness of what sorts of buildings were in towns. Common generalisations were that all towns had amphitheatres, theatres or substantial bath-houses and the distribution of towns across Britain was rarely discussed.

F388 Art and Architecture in the Greek World

General Comments

Examiners were pleased by the overall standard of the answers in this first year of the new Art and Architecture specification, and delighted by some individual responses. Many candidates had a good knowledge of the prescribed material and some showed knowledge of examples beyond those required by the specification. The level of engagement and personal response shown by candidates of all abilities was impressive. This was particularly shown in the questions on the Amasis Painter and the metopes.

There were some common errors which appeared in a large number of answers:

- confusion between a painted line and an incised line;
- the belief that the background in the black-figure technique was white;
- use of the word carving to mean incision;
- the use of the verb built in connection with statues and vases;
- the use of the term vocal point instead of focal point;
- the confusion of Polykleitos and Praxiteles.

There were no rubric errors but there were several papers where candidates did not answer the (b) part of the commentary question or the essay because they failed to allocate their time effectively. As with other units this year, the level of legibility, spelling and general quality of written communication gave examiners cause for concern. As well as the usual problems with symmetry, repetition, anatomy and confusion between sculptor and sculpture there were several new misspellings this year: Meanads, Kirace Warriors, Catriyatids, complexed (for complex), exadurated (for exaggerated), intent (for intense), kneck (for neck), verital (for vertical). There was some useful new vocabulary employed – words such as inovention and crudimentary.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

The vase-painting question was by far the most popular with around 90% of the candidates tackling this question. The relatively small number of candidates who answered the question on temple architecture often showed a good deal of personal insight.

- 1 (a) This question was a pleasure to mark and most candidates wrote at length, clearly enjoying interpreting the various decorative elements of the image of Dionysus and the Maenads. A pleasing number knew the technical names for the patterns and the parts of the vase, and did a thorough description, including the central panel and the vase as a whole.

The best answers analysed the visual ideas of the painter, exploring the effects he was able to achieve with the limited artistic tools at his disposal. Others were too concerned with whether the painting was literally a 'decorative delight', and, having explored some successful aspects, they went on to a sharp recantation in 'part 2' of the answer, saying it was not a decorative delight because the image was unrealistic: the feet and hands were too big and pointed, the frontal eyes were wrong, the Maenads' arms were deformed, the Maenads were indistinguishable, you couldn't see the animals against the dress, or the kantharos against the robe, and the image was too flat. A blended argument worked much better, where the archaic features were acknowledged, but accounted for in terms of the style of the period.

There are several other points which Examiners were pleased to note:

- the equal balance between the Maenad group and the weightier Dionysus;
- the contrast of skin colour – black/clay colour with outline (though many said the Maenads were painted white);
- the interesting positions of all 6 arms – the pattern made by the two Maenads together and Dionysus' arm positions mirroring those of the two Maenads;
- exploration of the clothing patterns, which distinguishes between the characters whilst adding richness;
- the incision is very fine and added colour enriches the design;
- the ivy branches enhance the movement of the Maenads, and are created with a mix of painting on the background and incision against the black dresses.

- (b) There was a range of pots from the specification which could be used to answer this question, from the François Vase to the lekythoi depicting the Wedding Procession and the Women Weaving and Exekias' pots depicting Achilles and Ajax and Dionysus sailing. Some candidates went beyond the prescribed material to mention the pots depicting Achilles and Penthesilea and Ajax. Not everyone could remember detail of the François vase, with many candidates wrongly assuming that there is a profusion of filling ornaments on the volute krater, or even confusing Kleitias with Sophilos and his animal processions. Of course, there were many who were keen to list all the myths included on the different narrative friezes on the François vase. There was often detailed comment and discussion of the Troilos frieze. A few candidates were able to compare the frieze depicting the wedding of Peleus and Thetis with the Wedding Procession lekythos but seemed unaware of how small the latter pot is – leading to some insecure comparisons and conclusions.

Detail of Exekias' Achilles and Ajax amphora and his Dionysus Sailing kylix was well known and candidates of all abilities could recall specific features and elements of these designs and compare them with the work of the Amasis Painter. A pleasing number could analyse the compositions of the two amphorae and compare them in a relevant manner, eg: the large scale, the focal point, the symmetry, the creative content, the adaptation to the vase-shape.

The very best answers offered a balanced argument leading to a nuanced conclusion showing ways in which Kleitias and Exekias were both comparable to and different from the Amasis Painter.

- 2 (a) There were very few answers to this question. It was answered at every level from the very detailed and accurate, to the quite random and inaccurate. Some candidates could describe the Doric format in some detail, and could point out several ways in which this temple differed, and could relate these differences to Ionic style and to the Parthenon. Most candidates, however, only selected and described one element of the Doric order, usually the columns. Examiners felt that many candidates were simply working from the photograph: they claimed that there were no carved metopes and seemed to have little or no knowledge of the Ionic frieze.
- (b) Most candidates could compare the local Athenian setting with the pan-Hellenic sanctuary but some were tempted into long comparisons of mythology as well as of the subject matter of the sculpture. There was less awareness of topography, with some thinking that Olympia must be near Mount Olympus or that it was on the top of a mountain. Some candidates had obviously been to the sites and could compare the expansive flat site of Olympia with the small hill next to the Athenian Agora. Comparisons of the temples' architecture were infrequent, although a few contrasted the massive columns and low entablature of Zeus with the slender columns and high entablature of Hephaestus. The context of the metal workers' zone was rarely mentioned.

Common errors included: the Doric order having three stylobates, Doric columns having sharp plates (flutes), confusion over what constitutes a frieze and the idea of a continuous metope rather than a frieze.

Essay Questions

- 3 This question was surprisingly popular in comparison to similar questions on architectural sculpture from the legacy specification, with about 30% of the candidature attempting the question. A sizeable minority was unable to distinguish between metopes, friezes and pediments and so offered examples which were not relevant to the question posed.

Successful responses provided detail of the content **and** composition of a range of metopes from both temples. In addition, the terms revolutionary and conventional were defined and applied to the selected metopes to support a range of different opinions. There was no consensus about the definition of terms in the title, but there were plenty of creative interpretations. Moreover, there was no agreement about the success of individual metopes either. The best answers were from those who looked and responded for themselves, trying to say something fresh about the metopes. There were some particularly sensitive descriptions of the Nemean Lion metope (Heracles' pose was described as partly triumphant and partly despairing) and the Dead Lapith metope [XXVIII] (seen as a successful composition because it showed a graphic confrontation of civilisation and bestiality, and pathos in the pose of the Lapith). The Cretan Bull was popular, even though some found it 'conventional' because it showed a fight in progress. Very often, a static metope, such as the Augean Stables or the Golden Apples, was seen as conventional. The best answers showed appreciation of the unusual humanity in the Heracles metopes, and there were some nice appreciations of the figure style and anatomy in the Parthenon metopes.

Sometimes candidates were unable to offer full explanations of their ideas about revolutionary and conventional, eg the Parthenon was revolutionary because of the amount of sculpture or the temple of Zeus was revolutionary because of the unified theme for the metopes. Such views often resulted in very generalised responses with little reference to detail from individual metopes.

- 4 This was by far the most popular essay (answered by about 70% of the candidates), and it produced the widest range of marks on the paper. Almost all candidates were able to offer quite a wide range of examples of free-standing sculpture from both the fifth century and fourth century, but it was also pleasing to read answers which interwove examples of architectural sculpture into a well-structured argument. Most candidates gave a blanket approval to the 4th century, although some showed that its success depended on the achievements of the 5th century, or even that the 5th century held its own.

A fair percentage of candidates got into difficulties by muddling the 5th and 6th centuries and by concentrating on examples from the Archaic period. Some also confused the 4th and 5th centuries; this was not always disastrous if done consistently and if individual works were not misplaced. A small minority of candidates wrote about vase painting. The best answers were those that looked for the merits of each period rather than favouring just one: comparisons were successfully made either thematically, or by comparative pairing of works, not just by working through each century chronologically. Those candidates who could take on the question and offer ideas on what 'better' and 'more successful' might mean in terms of sculpture scored well, with some producing quite stunning responses in terms of the range of examples and the quality of the evaluation offered. Essays worked better when there was some specific structure, rather than a general characterisation of each century as a whole, or random pulling out of examples. Too often, however, the responses turned into reasonably competent development of sculpture essays.

The Art units have always produced lively and interesting interpretation of the works under consideration, and this year was no exception. A candidate who offers his/her own analysis and sends the Examiner back to the books to observe it with fresh eyes is doing very well. Attempts to discover the Greek sculptor's purpose yielded good fruit: for example, the extravagant Aphrodite of the Agora was seen by some as expressing emotion through its use of drapery, though many found it ridiculous and excessive; the grandeur of the Riace Warriors was praised by some, though others found them exaggerated; some praised the subtle drapery and spiral pose of the Delphic Charioteer, though many found him dull. Examiners look forward to reading many more individual interpretations next year.

F389 Comic Drama in the Ancient World

General Comments

This was the first year of the new Specification and the first year in which Roman Comedy has been examined. As in previous years, most candidates displayed signs of enthusiasm for the material and answers often indicated personal engagement with the texts, making it very clear which plays they had enjoyed. With the greater emphasis on context, Examiners were pleased that candidates showed a good general awareness of the general historical background, the differences between Old and New Comedy, and most knew the basics of ancient performance conventions.

Some candidates had obviously been well prepared for this exam and were able to cope with the synoptic/comparative questions very ably. Some seemed to twist the questions on the paper into the questions they wanted to answer (Why is this funny? Compare old and new comedy?). Examiners would advise teachers and candidates to check that they are working from the correct version of the Specification, a number of candidates had obviously studied six plays instead of the four specified for examination in 2010. The plays prescribed for this Unit up to and including the June 2012 examination are *Wasps*, *Frogs*, *Dyskolos* (*Old Cantankerous/The Bad-Tempered Man*) and *Pseudolus*. From the June 2013 examination the plays are *Frogs*, *Lysistrata*, *Pseudolus* and *The Swaggering Soldier* (*Miles Gloriosus*).

References to works not on the specification can in some circumstances contribute to 'understanding/awareness of context' in AO1 or 'evaluation' or 'argument' in AO2, but they are not necessary for a good mark, and candidates should beware of including such references instead of other material more obviously relevant to the question. In answer to question 1(a), for example, pertinent references were made by a few candidates to the contrast between the Dionysus of *Bacchae* and the Dionysus of *Frogs* as a way into an examination of the portrayal of the two gods in the passage printed on the paper. Some useful comments were also made about Homer's portrayal of the gods, often in the context of arguing that Aristophanes was doing nothing new in portraying the gods as humans. Likewise references to *Lysistrata* or *The Swaggering Soldier* were credited in answers to questions 3 and 4 where the questions did not specify which plays candidates should use.

Finally, although all these plays are read as texts, candidates are reminded not to lose sight of the fact that all were – and sometimes still are - performed. Candidates who made use of their own experiences of watching or participating in stage performances of any kind were able to make good comments on the works as plays in performance rather than just as literary texts with a lot of complicated cultural references.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1 (a) It is important that candidates think carefully about what the question is actually asking. Good answers to question 1(a) came from candidates who had not allowed themselves to be distracted by thinking that all questions were just disguised versions of 'Why is this funny?'. This sub-question was quite wide-ranging, requiring discussion of the portrayals of both Dionysus and Heracles in the passage and also elsewhere in Act 1 and there were some very good answers which did exactly that. Several made good use of the reference to the stock comic portrayal of Heracles made in the Parabasis of *Wasps*. In many cases, however, candidates said little or nothing about Heracles or thought that the question required just evidence from the passage printed on the paper.
- (b) Similarly, there were some very good answers to question 1(b) which did exactly what was asked. They gave examples covering both the passage and other areas of *Frogs*, as well as *Wasps*, and pointed out (with examples) categories of humour which were not seen in the passage. Too many, however, simply repeated the points they had made in answers to 1 (a) or thought that this was a 'Why is this funny?' question.
- 2 (a) Question 2 was much less popular than Question 1. In general too there were fewer good answers, the most common problem in part (a) being a failure to discuss Sikon, even though it was made clear in the question that this was necessary.
- (b) Some candidates seemed unsure of the convention of giving a title in italics. This caused problems in part (b), when there was confusion between *Pseudolus* (the play) and Pseudolus (the eponymous hero of the play) with consequent difficulties for the candidates in fully addressing the question.

Essay Questions

- 3 While providing many thoughtful definitions of 'timeless' and 'of its own time', this question also produced a number of answers which boiled down to an analysis of the differences between Old and New Comedy. Parallels between ancient and modern comedy can be helpful – for example, to show the continuation of some stock situations or characters – but candidates should beware of enthusing so much about this that they forget to include any content covering the plays on the specification. Some candidates were confused as to the difference between 'play' and 'playwright' and did not always make it clear which play, if any, they felt most deserved the description given in the title. Others had clearly not understood the question and simply asserted that each play (or author) was 'timeless and of its own time' and then named their favourite.

- 4 This question provided a wide range of answers. The best made it clear, either overtly or implicitly, how the candidate intended to define 'success'. The framework thus provided often resulted in a well-constructed argument and produced a balanced discussion examining factors such as the conditions of performance (competition or not?), complexity – or existence – of a plot, characterisation, audience response, literary skill, or even whether they gave opportunities for actors to show off their talents. It was not necessary to recount the plot of each play in full; candidates who did this sometimes lost sight of the question. Interestingly, the main examples given of good staged visual humour in *Dyskolos* were 'Knemon falling into and being rescued from the well,' 'Knemon throwing things at Pyrrhias' and 'Sostratos working in the fields in his aristocratic clothing.' None of these are shown on stage, all being reported, though in a range of different ways. Candidates who referred to these clearly lost an opportunity to discuss the importance of good narrative technique or the comedic version of a 'messenger speech' in stimulating the audience's imagination.

F390 Virgil and the world of the hero

General Comments

Generally, the calibre of candidates was high. Responses displayed considerable familiarity with the text and the issues which the epics raise and candidates used the extra thirty minutes in the examination to significant effect. There also seemed to be a greater maturity of thought evident in the way candidates argued their case and especially in the way they made comparisons between the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*. Perhaps, surprisingly, the quality of the synopticity was greater than had ever been seen on the 2749 Greek and Roman Epic module. Candidates were also making a wider range of reference to the secondary sources.

Spelling was generally fine although there were significant numbers of candidates who spelt *Iliad*, *Aeneas* and *Aeneid* incorrectly – they were all printed on the examination paper. In many cases, however, the paragraph seems to have faded into the past.

Given the fact that this was the first paper of a new specification there were very few rubric errors, though several candidates analysed the literary merits of the passage from the *Iliad* instead of the *Aeneid* in Question 2 or explored whether Book 4 was optimistic or depressing. Timing was not a problem for the vast majority of candidates. Questions 2 and 4 proved to be the most popular, although many also tackled Questions 1 and 3.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1 (a) At the top end, the mark scheme was redundant as candidates set the agenda and explored the topic very well making a host of telling comparisons between the passage and Books 1 and 4. Sadly, in some cases the passage was just used as a springboard to offer a general essay on the character of Dido and only considered the 'how typical' element of the question in the concluding paragraph. The passage itself was, in general, not explored enough. It was a very rich passage and should have attracted more attention than it did. Some did focus on the wound and related it to the doe and to the emotional wounds – however, there was greater room to explore the whole of the passage along these lines.
- (b) A few candidates ignored 'Book 6' and discussed the whole of the *Aeneid*. Better answers gave a range of examples beyond the passage, although sometimes this was done at the expense of quoting from the passage. There was generally a good focus on discussing both the pessimistic and optimistic elements of the passage and the best saw how the pageant of heroes was a hugely optimistic scene for the contemporary Roman audience.
- 2 (a) There were many excellent answers and candidates seem to have improved their technique in responding to this type of question, especially in quoting from the passage. The weakest answers, again, did not unpack the images and might have offered more on the language techniques. They spotted repetition and alliteration but did not comment on effect. For instance, many quoted the 'now...now' without discussing how this made the passage more vivid.

- (b) A few responses lost focus and ignored the comparison between Turnus and Hektor, preferring to compare Turnus with Achilles. However, a significant majority of candidates used both of the passages as a springboard for their discussion before making a range of telling comparisons between the two heroes. Perhaps there was room for sharper recall from the text when discussing Turnus, but there was often a fine knowledge from the *Iliad* on display.

Essay Questions

- 3 This Question did not prove as popular as Question 4 and there were often whole Centres which did not attempt it. There were also a not insignificant number of candidates who did not appear to have studied the concept of the hero or the heroic code. Too many saw a hero as Rambo. This was somewhat surprising given the fact that the unit is entitled 'Virgil and the world of the **hero**'. However, there were many good answers on the development of Aeneas from the Homeric hero to the Roman hero and these were well supported with detail from the two epics. Candidates who cited examples from the *Odyssey* were credited but this was not expected and responses which focused entirely on the *Iliad* and *Aeneid* could achieve full marks. Understanding of how the *Aeneid* fitted into the Augustan regime was surprisingly good and creditworthy.
- 4 A few candidates fell into the misconception that this essay was a 'role of the gods' theme. The best answers considered hindrance, help, Aeneas and his mission. Some answers became a list of hindrance and help and lacked discussion or analysis. Although such responses could score highly under AO1, there was not much to credit under AO2.

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