

Classics: Classical Civilisation

Advanced GCE H441

Advanced Subsidiary GCE H041

OCR Report to Centres

June 2012

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, OCR Nationals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

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

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

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

© OCR 2012

CONTENTS

Advanced GCE Classics: Classical Civilisation (H441)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE Classics: Classical Civilisation (H041)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Content	Page
Overview	1
F381 Archaeology: Mycenae and the Classical World	3
F382 Homer's <i>Odyssey</i> and Society	6
F383 Roman Society and Thought	9
F384 Greek Tragedy in its Context	11
F385 Greek Historians	14
F386 City Life in Roman Italy	16
F387 Roman Britain: Life in the Outpost of the Empire	19
F388 Art and Architecture in the Greek World	22
F389 Comic Drama in the Ancient World	25
F390 Virgil and the World of the Hero	28

Overview

General Comments

The 2012 examination session provided further testimony of just how much candidates, at all levels, enjoy studying the different Units in the Classical Civilisation specification. The vibrancy and connection with the different topics of so many responses make assessing Classical Civilisation a truly rewarding one, and it is reassuring to see how ‘alive’ Classics is in numerous classrooms across the country, and even further afield.

The most successful responses came from candidates who had read the questions carefully, focussed on the key words to produce structured and developed answers, and offered detailed, specific reference to supporting textual or material evidence. The level of relevant, thorough and clear support in answers was often the discriminating factor, particularly at AS level. Knowledge of context also played a big part in particular questions for some Units. The quality of argument and the engagement with both the task and the material provided the stretch and challenge element at A2 level. The structure of a successful answer can be relatively straightforward: a simple introduction [avoiding a conclusion in the opening paragraph which is usually contradicted by the end of the response], paragraphs focussing on individual points/evidence and offering some summary judgement at the end of each section can help to develop the discussion of a topic.

Examiners commented on the number of answers which seemed to have been rushed; this was most commonly the result of candidates spending too much time on answering the commentary questions, leaving too little time for the essay. A few candidates did the essay first to ensure that they had time to construct a fully rounded argument. A growing number of candidates seemed to be tackling the paper in reverse order; this strategy was not always successful, as bullet points were then substituted for continuous prose in answering part of a commentary question when time ran out. The commentary questions are designed to build upon each other and take candidates through the material in a logical fashion. Whilst the commentary questions and essays are worth the same number of marks on the A2 papers, on the AS papers the balance is 55% and 45%. Therefore, it was disappointing to see the number of very long responses to the commentary question, followed by a short essay. The need to balance the time spent on questions, to match their mark weightings, should be impressed upon candidates. It is pleasing to note an increase in the number of candidates who took the opportunity to write a brief plan of their answer and this clearly helped in concentrating the mind. Examiners believe that there is sufficient planning time in both the AS [5 minutes] and A2 [10 minutes] examinations.

Examiners noted even fewer rubric errors this year across the specification. Of course, there are still candidates who attempt the mix and match approach with the commentary questions and there was one AS candidate who attempted all five questions. Such approaches cannot gain any extra marks and often result in significantly lower marks than a candidate might expect.

It would help examiners greatly if candidates could be trained to start every answer, including the individual parts of the Commentary Questions, on a new page, so that there is space for examiners’ summative comments and the marks. In addition, this would also allow candidates to add extra material, thought of at a later point, to be located next to the correct question, rather than at the end of the answer book.

Legibility seemed a much bigger issue this year, with a record number of scripts being referred to Principal Examiners and/or the Chief Examiner for decoding. Quality of written communication was also felt to be weaker than in previous sessions. Some of the points raised by examiners include:

OCR Report to Centres – June 2012

- the absence of full stops;
- the use of colons and semi-colons as commas;
- the absence of paragraphs;
- spelling – their/there, its/it's, compliment/complement, were/where, would have/would of, as well as a whole array of names and technical terms;
- whereas [where as] used to introduce a sentence rather than a subordinate clause.

F381 Archaeology: Mycenae and the Classical World

General Comments

Once again, the examiners were delighted by the enthusiasm and eagerness of many responses. Clearly teachers are inspiring candidates with a passion for the subject. Understanding the questions is still sometimes a problem. Responses were sometime weaker because questions or parts of questions were misunderstood and the choices of example or topic prevented higher levels of the assessment grid being reached. This was especially true of Q1(b).

Responses seemed to be less successful on Section A than on Section B in comparison with previous years. Responses displayed greater skill in writing essays - the bullet points were particularly well used this year as essay structures and as guidelines for content.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1 (a) The responses were generally good, but many interpreted 'how the artefacts could have been used' as 'how an archaeologist might use such artefacts'. These responses usually gave few detailed description of the artefacts. The uses they could give were largely guesswork and not very valuable. Those responses not tackling the issue of uses often did give more description. Many responses just gave general lists; some gave lists of specific items; a few gave specific items with descriptions. There were also many examples of the use of Dendra and Vapheio as well as non-grave objects like the Ivory Trio.
- (b) Responses to this question were generally weaker. The hairpin was often not used well and the choice of another object posed problems. Many chose another object(s) from the Mycenaean civilisation; many chose general categories of objects which then prevented them from giving specific information. The Vindolanda tablets were a favourite but responses tended to be about a selection of them rather than one. The best example of a choice was the Amasis Painter pot which was not then well used for its illustrations of women at work! Some chose the head of Claudius; however, this limited what conclusions could then be drawn on everyday life. 'Everyday life' also caused some issues. References to religion as part of everyday life seemed legitimate but discussions of religion in isolation less so.

There was also a problem with definitions of civilisations here. Examiners were told about the 'Gladiator society' that apparently lived alongside the Roman Empire or the Tudor people that followed King Henry, and a lot of Mycenaean sites were treated as non-Mycenaean.

- (c) There was some issue with the phrase ‘other Classical society’, as well as with ‘one’. The focus was often on natural disasters and wars. This could have been done well and been well supported. Another common focus was using the study of skeletons and commenting on the level of nutrition and health. There were some very well supported examples including one which used the findings of the Rome DNA study (romandnaproject.org) which was interesting. Evidence from Mycenae tended to be thinner but Grave Circle B bodies provided some useful information. Some considered level of culture but were often very vague.

Some answers were very short – possibly because candidates were carefully allowing the right proportion of their time to Section B.

- 2 A much less popular question than Question 1 but most of those who chose it appeared more knowledgeable about the topics than those tackling Question 1. They also made more appropriate selections in choosing comparative sites.
- (a) Responses to this question were good, mostly detailing the site and items from the Tiryns treasure.
- (b) The Mycenaean aspect of the question was usually well done, although few made use of diagrams. The other choice being whole societies allowed the use of widely differing buildings from the Pantheon to Roman villas. A fairly common choice, which did not give a great deal of scope, was the temple of Claudius at Colchester.
- (c) Responses to this question varied from excellent to middling in quality. In terms of its value, Tiryns proved tricky for some to use as a site but some of the finds gave more opportunities. ‘Other site’ gave scope for it to be anything from the city of Rome to a small Roman villa. Those who chose Mycenae, Pylos or Knossos found a lot of similarities and there was some significant repetition. Other choices included Pompeii, Rome, Hadrian’s Wall, Vindolanda (though candidates tended to know only about the tablets). There was limited specific focus on ‘the people’.

Essay Questions

- 3 The most popular choice of the essay questions. There were a lot of references to non Classical sites and a number of descriptions of archaeological techniques which were not linked to the question. However, the question was generally well answered. Most responses used Linear B and the Vindolanda tablets; there was some use of Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Caesar, Tacitus and Pliny.

Curiously the archaeology element was often less well done, with many candidates struggling to list what we can find out from archaeology and most concluding that written evidence is more useful.

- 4** Responses offered a good range of techniques – prospecting, especially geophysics and aerial photography, types of trenches, dating methods, project planning, conservation, presentation, publication etc. Some did not relate the detail of techniques to improvements from ‘the early years’. They sometimes seemed very unclear about when techniques were used and which were modern techniques. Sites used were very varied. It was clear that whole centres had used particular episodes of Time Team and often quoted it for each technique (mostly legitimately). Some clearly had local sites and museums they were familiar with. Some still described techniques in detail with no illustration of where or how they have been used.
- 5** Responses tended to concentrate on the importance of recording so that knowledge was conserved, or on not excavating much or at all so that sites were conserved. There was little discussion of specific conservation techniques used on artefacts but some general, common sense discussion of care and keeping artefacts in the same environment where they were found. Few responses achieved a sensible balance of conservation versus ‘other’, either concentrating almost exclusively on conservation or focusing on the work of an archaeologist going through from project planning to publication. Sites to illustrate conservation of artefacts varied and discussion of sites themselves lacked real detail although many knew about the collapse of the building recently at Pompeii.

F382 Homer's *Odyssey* and Society

General Comments

This unit remains a popular option for candidates in the Classical Civilisation specification. It was felt by several seasoned examiners that the standard of work in this session reflected a real improvement on previous years.

Examiners continue to report the decline of the paragraph and the lack of capital letters for names, the misspelling of Ogygia, Phaeacians etc. The *Odyssey* is neither a novel nor a play. However, this should not detract from the students' manifest enjoyment of the epic which is as strong as ever and there is clearly a huge amount of outstanding teaching and learning being put into practice in a wide number of centres.

Though there will always be vague and superficial answers, this year saw a greater use of detail and real efforts to compose, arrange and support ideas. In particular, it was more than evident that the tips passed on at INSET on how to enhance pupils' performance were being more widely adhered to and effectively incorporated into the delivery of this unit.

Most candidates attempted the context question from book 9. Many candidates preferred the essay question on *xenia* although it was encouraging to observe more candidates tackling the overarching question 5.

Timing did not seem to present candidates with as many problems as in previous years, and for the first time in fifteen years of assessing this unit, the Principal Examiner did not see a rubric error.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1 **(a)** Many responses were good or very good. Most responses made reference to the Cicones, Lotus Eaters and what happened before Odysseus encountered Polyphemus. A number of responses erroneously made reference to the Laestrygonians and many responses would have benefitted from including a greater depth of detail on the immediate context.
- (b)** Once again, there were many strong responses to this question finding much in the passage to discuss. Most responses homed in on the gory detail, but it was only the strongest ones which satisfactorily distinguished between 'what is said and done' and 'the way it is written' in the terms asked. For instance, credit can be given for recognising 'simile' but full credit demands effect of the literary devices be commented upon. Few responses recognised the Cyclops ploy in asking about the ship, although a number of responses made useful reference to Polyphemus' behaviour at the end of the given passage.

- (c) Weaker responses confined themselves to commenting on the ‘fantasy’-element in these tales, writing that they ‘add excitement’, or just ‘add to the success’ of the epic without further explanation or reasoning. Some went on to talk of drama, testing and the opportunity to build heroic status. Few, however, answered the question in terms of ‘...the success of the *Odyssey*’ as a poem/story/narrative, rather than the success of ‘Odysseus’. The supernatural events in these books constitute a taut bit of narrative plotting: without Polyphemus’ curse, Poseidon would not have driven Odysseus to Ogygia; without Odysseus declaring his identity to Polyphemus, the curse would never have been brought down upon him, without Circe’s advice, Odysseus would never have survived Scylla and Charybdis, nor got to the Underworld to get his route-directions from Tiresias.

Many responses unnecessarily argued that the supernatural failed to add anything to the success of the *Odyssey*. This was not required in this type of question and gained no credit.

- 2 (a) Most responses showed awareness of the Suitors’ constant despoilment of Odysseus’ *oikos* and of the consequences for Telemachus and Penelope; of the affairs with the disloyal maids, even of the insults hurled at Odysseus in his disguise. Few made reference to the fight with Irus. Again, there was room to discuss the immediate context to the given passage.
- (b) Most responses discussed how the references to the goddesses added to Penelope’s attractiveness and desirability and also could comment upon the Suitors’ reaction to her presence. A pleasing number of responses made reference to her white skin and were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of Homeric society. The best answers made a distinction between attractive and desirable, e.g. Penelope’s veil makes her more alluring to the Suitors.
- (c) Good responses segregated at once Penelope’s various relationships with Telemachus, her maids (loyal and otherwise), the Suitors, and, a few of them, with Odysseus, and there were some interestingly thoughtful suggestions about her being somehow ‘in conflict with herself’. Weaker responses, however, seldom went beyond saying, in effect, that she sometimes felt suicidal. Many responses would have benefitted from looking at the argument from both angles and including a greater range of specific references to the epic.

Essay Questions

- 3 There was good work on the supplication of Nausicaa where specific details were given. Speeches of encouragement and the clever refusal of Calypso’s final offer were commonly cited. So too were his *bons mots* with the Cyclops, and his ability to fabricate a convincing tale to cover his disguise. Surprisingly few focussed on the fact that Odysseus’ wonderful telling of his adventures is a tour de force in speaking and earns him many gifts.

Better answers balanced Odysseus’ speaking abilities against such other factors as divine aid, his own cunning, or indeed his ‘Iliadic’ warlike accomplishments (the battle in the Hall).

- 4 Despite its popularity, a disproportionate number of responses to this question merely categorised examples of *xenia* into when it was done well or badly. Candidates who did this might have scored highly under AO1 but were limited under AO2 as they had failed to articulate its importance in Homeric society. A surprising number of responses took it for granted what *xenia* entailed or failed to mention Eumaeus. Stronger responses questioned its importance and cited the example of the Phaeacians.
- 5 A majority of candidates referred adequately to both halves of the poem in their answers (as the terms of the first bullet-point indicated). Close readers and thinkers saw it as a chance to score and score they did with some wonderful analyses and engaged, supported opinions. Very weak ones saw this as a chance to just tell the story. There was a general tendency to prefer Books 1-12 because of the adventurous fairy-tale/fantasy element.

F383 Roman Society and Thought

General Comments

Candidates had a sound knowledge of the prescribed texts and displayed an improved knowledge of Roman society. Overall, the levels of interest and enthusiasm far outweighed the concern over the frequent misspelling of technical terms and names of characters and authors (e.g. Zozimus, Domition, Horrice). Candidates might be advised to keep a glossary of names and terms.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1
- (a) Almost all responses identified Maecenas as Horace's patron with most identifying the role of Horace as his client from the passage. A few could go no further. Some responses provided detailed information about Maecenas' political role as Augustus' right-hand man. The term 'spin doctor' was frequently used. A few responses had him flourishing in the time of Domitian or misunderstood the passage and the identity of Quintus.
 - (b) This question was well answered and candidates communicated their enjoyment in their responses. There is some merit in giving students the opportunity to practise answering literary questions. Responses generally described an impression of the hectic nature of Rome created by the passage using relevant references to the passage. More successful answers covered a range of other impressions. The most successful answers commented on the literary devices used to create these impressions. More effective answers also included some evaluative ideas on why the alliteration and onomatopoeia were successfully and vividly used.
 - (c) Weaker responses understood 'only interested in himself' as selfish. More successful answers saw that Horace used himself and a range of personae to convey his philosophical message, teachings and themes. The most successful answers supported their points with a range of detailed evidence from the *Satires*. Some candidates referred to *Satires* '1-4', but it is clearer for examiners to refer to the more conventional *Satires* 2.8 for instance, to avoid confusion. A few responses offered a limited range of references to the *Satires*. The question set well-focussed candidates on the path to some very clear reasoning and there were some good quality answers.
- 2
- (a) Although the 'why' part of this question could be found in the passage supplied, the 'who' part was less well done as responses could go no further than Lucilius was the first satirist. However, a number of responses also demonstrated detailed knowledge of Lucilius and the role of his patron and the republic in his greater freedom of speech.

- (b) This question was well-answered. Most candidates were able to select relevant parts of the passage. The most successful answers identified a range of rhetorical/literary devices and analysed them effectively in answer to the question. Mention of Juvenal as the ‘angry’ satirist was popular and some rhetorical flourishes were brought out such as ‘ruinous zenith’ and even the metaphor of ‘Satire’s naked sword’ was identified. A significant few interpreted the allusion to public burnings as an explanation of the death of Lucilius.
- (c) Most responses showed an appreciation of why Juvenal did not have the freedom of speech afforded to Lucilius. In answers, candidates referred to *Satire 4* with Domitian chairing a meeting of the Privy Council. Better responses widened their use of material. Surprisingly few answers mentioned the general groups of people mentioned in *Satire 3* although very good answers also discussed his use of epic references in *Satire 1*.

Essay Questions

- 3 On many occasions this question was answered very well. Frequently, responses offered knowledge of all three authors, although there were some very good responses making reference to only two. Responses which quoted from Juvenal (especially those with accurate recall of Crispinus) showed understanding. Pliny was often seen as being so generous and compassionate that he was too good to be true. Zosimus was often erroneously described as a ‘slave’. A successful approach to this question was to explain the position of slaves and freedmen from candidates’ knowledge of Roman society and to support the subsequent discussion with references from their chosen authors.
- 4 Again there were some very good responses. Some could have included more about the patron- client relationship as an introduction. A few answers focussed solely on ‘who you know’ and did not address ‘what’. Those who considered both sides of the quotation were more successful.
- 5 Wide-ranging coverage produced the best answers on this essay. Sadly, as ever, a very few candidates did not appreciate that Pliny is not a satirist. Responses were good on the *range* of satires; those who planned their responses did best. However, the *purposes* of satire could have been discussed in more detail. Stronger answers used the persona of Ofellus as the voice of moderation and exemplary behaviour.

F384 Greek Tragedy in its Context

General Comments

Greek Tragedy continues to be a very popular topic for students to study, as can be seen from high number of candidates taking the module. This year saw the introduction of two new plays, and it was very pleasing to see the enthusiasm with which they were greeted.

All questions produced wide ranging detail in responses, and varying opinions. The candidates had clearly thought about the plays, and were able to discuss their ideas and interpretations effectively. The enjoyment and appreciation of the plays, especially the new ones, by the students was evident in their answers. The appreciation of the plays as pieces of drama continues to grow.

Candidates were generally able to write fluently, and express their ideas in well structured and thought out arguments, although there were still some issues in their use of English; the new plays added to the usual spelling suspects, with names such as Teucer, Tecmessa, Astyanax and Andromache causing some candidates problems. There was also more evidence of slang usage ('Medea winds Jason up and messes with his head') and more frequent use of Greek terms such as *kleos*, *timé* and *hybris*, not always correctly.

It was pleasing to see a more or less even split between the questions. Of the questions, Question 1 on Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* proved to be marginally the more popular of the Commentary Questions, while of the essay questions, Question 4 on *Medea* was answered by a significant number of candidates, with Question 3 (*Ajax*) almost as popular. Even Question 5 (death and violence) had more than the usual number of answers.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1 (a) Responses generally included the most important and relevant details. Most gave an account of the events which occurred. A few still interpreted 'since' to mean 'before'. The details of the tapestry (carpets, rugs) scene were generally the best known part of the answer. The conversation between the Herald and the Chorus was not as well known, with many leaving out the conditions at Troy and the loss of Menelaus.
- (b) This question produced a full range of answers. Responses used the passage to extract relevant textual detail, and usually explain how this made the passage dramatically effective, although some merely stated 'this makes the passage dramatically effective' without saying why. Many commented on the effect of the Chorus' lack of understanding and the dramatic irony this produced. Use of the situation on stage was varied with some responses discussing it in detail however often it was not discussed at all. Better answers contained details of Cassandra's raving and the separation of the Chorus from her.

- (c) This question was often not done as well as the other two parts. Responses offered a variety of interpretations of omens, including quite a few which took it to mean ominous and used the Watchman's speech, or the Chorus' welcome of Agamemnon in their answers. Many concentrated only on Cassandra's speech, even then not mentioning Orestes' return or Cassandra's death. The omen of the Eagles and the pregnant hare was not mentioned in many responses, neither was Calchas. There were also some outstanding answers, with very thoughtful analysis of the full range of examples, but quite a few answers concluded that omens and prophecies were not important, as they had no effect on the outcome of the play. Despite being on the question paper, there were several variations of the spelling of prophecies.
- 2 The large number of answers to this question shows how candidates have engaged with this new play.
- (a) The majority of responses showed awareness of the main details. There were good accounts of the scene between Andromache and Hecabe, and Talthibiuss bringing Astyanax' body back, but a surprisingly large number of responses did not mention, or skirted over, the scene with Menelaus and Helen.
- (b) This question produced a wide range of ideas. Responses used the passage well, and included examples of the different techniques used by Euripides to create pity for Astyanax. The vast majority concentrated on the actual question, without veering off into "dramatically effective", and used a methodical approach in the answer. The situation on stage was often neglected, ignoring details such as Hector's shield. The question produced some very personal responses and showed that the students had really engaged with the play.
- (c) This question produced a range of answers, with personal reaction evident. Most used the passage well, and were able to compare it to the rest of the play in varying amounts of detail. Opinion on Hecabe varied, with some seeing her as a self-pitying, broken old woman who spends all her time lamenting, while others saw her as a strong queen trying to bring comfort to her family despite the situation. Failure to mention the scene with Menelaus and Helen meant that many candidates did not discuss her attitude towards the Greeks; the ending of the play and her attempted suicide were also often not mentioned.

Essay Questions

- 3 Responses to this question showed a sound knowledge and use of the text, with good appreciation of the play. Once again, the approach of the candidates showed that they had enjoyed studying *Ajax*, and the answers to the question proved interesting to mark due to the committed personal response and original insight. Answers to the question varied according to the definition of honour, with some showing good knowledge of the cultural context, and the meaning of honour to an 'Homeric' hero and his relationship with his wife and son. Another factor that caused a division in opinion was the reaction to Ajax' suicide. Some saw this as the ultimate act of honour, while others thought it the act of a coward. Better answers mentioned that the reason for his suicide was his failure to carry out his revenge, rather than what he tried to do. The opinions of the other characters, such as Odysseus and Teucer, formed a major part of a good many answers. Fewer considered the nature of his relationship with Athene, and his *hybris*.

- 4** This question produced a wide range of responses. Better answers looked at not just Medea herself, but also the other characters, such as the Nurse and Glauce. However, quite a few answers concentrated almost exclusively on Medea herself. Many responses, despite the bullet point in the question, only discussed the portrayal of the characters, and did not mention the opinions expressed. Few discussed Medea's speeches, especially her 'feminist' comments to the Chorus. Some of the better answers considered the contemporary views of the audience, that Euripides was writing to try and win the dramatic competition, and Medea's origins. Textual knowledge was, on the whole, good, but not always applied accurately to the question. Better answers had a balanced argument, but many candidates considered that the portrayal of Medea as evil showed Euripides to be a misogynist, with some also maintaining that the horrible nature of Glauce's death was proof that he hated women. However, there were also some thoughtful answers which discussed Euripides' portrayal of both sexes, and Medea's barbaric and divine nature.
- 5** This question produced quite a few answers. A common approach was to go through the plays making a list of instances of death and violence, and then discussing other aspects. This meant that a lot of responses were narrative, and struggled to find enough material for good AO2 marks. There were some thoughtful and informed answers; they used specific detail, and considered other themes, explaining how death and violence contributed to the development of these deeper or more important themes, or resulted from them. Better answers also often distinguished between death and violence. Most answers used all four plays, although some were more selective in their choice of material, with *Medea* and *Ajax* being the most popular choices for examination.

F385 Greek Historians

General Comments

As ever, the examiners were delighted by the enthusiasm of the candidates for this subject. Although for some candidates, the film *300* has clearly been a significant influence, many candidates demonstrated a passion for and clear understanding of the material that is being taught. Herodotus is evidently popular for his style of writing and Thucydides is liked for his historical value. It was felt that there was a better use of text to consolidate arguments this year than there has been in previous years. It is worrying that a large number of candidates attempted Question 5, which required an assessment and evaluation of all three authors, but failed to refer to Plutarch at all.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1
- (a) Most responses displayed a reasonable range of detail, while a worryingly large number was able only to paraphrase the passage. There was the occasional confusion between Battle of Artemisium and Queen Artemisia.
 - (b) This question was generally quite well done. Responses distinguished typical features, such as the characterisation of Xerxes, use of Artemisia, conversation etc. Stronger answers mentioned details that were missing, such as the supernatural and digressions.
 - (c) There were some strong answers, but most struggled to grasp what was required. The word 'sympathetic' led to many not being sure how to interpret it. However, there were some well-argued answers, including those who said he was not sympathetic at all.
- 2
- (a) Good detail was shown in general, although many missed out Plataea, but virtually all had the invasion of Attica, the Funeral Speech and the start of the plague. Many included detail of events leading up to the war, as well as (or instead of) during the war.
 - (b) Generally good use was made of the passage. Responses included appropriate quotations and used them well. The range of information varied, but all candidates had something to say.
 - (c) There was a variety of answers, but many did not use the passage, relying instead on prepared essays. There was a lot of reference to Thucydides' methodology, especially his speeches. There were a number of references to potential bias as a result of Thucydides being a general in the Athenian army. A few did not discuss which events Thucydides may have witnessed himself.

Essay Questions

- 3 There was a lot of reference to Thucydides' assertions about his style. Generally good knowledge of content was shown. Some sensible opinions, including a few who did not think he was dull. There were some candidates who seemed to want to agree with the statement but felt that they had to disagree to please the examiner. Any argument is valid as long as it is supported by reference to the text.
- 4 Very few attempted this question. However, it tended to be the better done of the essay questions. All who attempted it knew details of how each figure was portrayed by Plutarch. Differences in portrayal were discussed, including Plutarch's stated aims.
- 5 This was the most popular question. Most answers concentrated on Herodotus and Thucydides, with Plutarch hardly mentioned, if at all. It was very rare to see an essay which did more than name-check Plutarch, if even that. Stronger answers discussed all three in good detail. Herodotus was the most popular choice, because of digressions, stories etc. Plutarch got a few votes. Thucydides was seen as inspiration for documentaries and modern history books. A fair few mentioned *300* as evidence for Herodotus.

F386 City Life in Roman Italy

General Comments

It is pleasing that most candidates are very aware of the sources of their knowledge for this unit. They draw on the full range – from literary sources to specific archaeological details. The increase in the use of literary evidence this year was noticeable and welcome in responses. Some concern was expressed over the frequent misspelling or use of technical terms and proper names (e.g. 'transgender' for the transient population of Ostia). Candidates might be advised to keep a glossary of names and terms.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1
- (a) Most students understood the significance of the garden and the sight lines from the triclinium and biclinium, although some were clearly unsure about the detailed layout. There was a tendency to describe the house and its atrium as small when it is quite large in comparison to other houses, just small in comparison to the garden. Some answers only discussed the garden offering no detail of the house at all.
 - (b) This question was generally well answered. Most responses showed understanding about sight lines – 'visual axis' being the most popular phrase, but often not explained – from the entrance and the impressive atrium area. Many knew about the gaps in the peristyle columns to produce views of the garden and some knew about the optical illusion element of the columns of the peristyle. 'How impressive' was generally dealt with well but only a few responses offered any counter argument. Some responses made a point of the slaves' quarters being hidden round a corner, out of sight, as being impressive. Most mentioned the baths, relishing in the opportunity to offer detail of the mosaics.
 - (c) Some responses interpreted the question to mean: compare the houses in Pompeii with those in Herculaneum. Although most showed a good understanding of the atrium style house, few actually made comment on a typical layout. An introductory paragraph on the typical layout of atrium style house would have been beneficial and gained credit. Many took pairs of houses and compared them, e.g. houses with gardens, or houses of multiple occupancy (often using Ostia). In terms of analysis, most considered similarities and differences in some way and concluded that Pompeii was a much richer and more prosperous town than Herculaneum.
- 2
- (a) Most responses detailed all about baths and the bathing process and listed the rooms easily. However, some could go no further in describing the rooms or activities. Many responses enlarged on the answer by adding atypical elements.

- (b) Most answers accepted the luxury of the Suburban Baths and did not challenge the description. Most assumed they were large, with only the more perceptive responses commenting on the small space available, and many assumed they had a palaestra. Descriptions were mostly from the plan and details of the decorations assumed mosaics and paintings without offering knowledge about the domination of marble and stucco. Some responses displayed knowledge of the 'brothel' room, which was regarded as an impressive feature.
- (c) Answers to this question included details about the Herculaneum Suburban Baths and the existence of the Mithraeum and the Imagines Clipeatae at the Baths of Mithras but offered less information about the Forum Baths in Ostia. Responses offering specific detail from the baths at Pompeii were given credit, even though this is beyond the expectation of the specification. Most responses included general use for washing, socialising and business without any specific evidence. Some referred to Seneca as evidence of the heavy use of baths. Many referred to location and benefactors. Contrast with the private baths in the House of the Menander was sometimes mentioned. Importance was usually measured by amount and value of sponsorship. More common errors in responses were generalised comments with few or no supporting examples.

Essay Questions

It was felt overall that candidates had a good knowledge of prescribed material but that the use of analytical skills was less effective.

- 3 Most responses offered sufficient detail about the buildings of Pompeii and Ostia to gain marks under AO1 criteria (factual knowledge). Most used the Great Warehouse, the Piazza of the Corporations, and the Barracks of the Vigiles with the House of Scaurus and the Eumachia building. Many added legitimate references to private houses and tombs where they supported trade (including a few who mentioned the House of the Dioscures' mosaics). Most included good analysis by assessing and concluding that trade was very important, often suggesting that it was more important to Ostians than Pompeians (a few stated that Pompeii had no port) but only a few suggested that other issues were more important than trade. Frequent use was made of literary sources – various writers on the Claudian and Trajanic harbours and the Satyricon.
- 4 Some responses approached this question well but too many gave general, largely unsupported responses. There were many (usually generalised) descriptions of the destruction but few offered the date of the eruption of Vesuvius or details of the subsequent discovery and excavation. There was little analysis of how unique the two towns are in preserving wall paintings and organic materials or artefacts in situ. Most mentioned the plaster casts of bodies but few knew of the analysis of the skeletons at Herculaneum. Many gave the example of the good preservation of Herculaneum's Suburban Baths and some the examples of wooden furniture.

- 5** Most answers had no difficulty in offering plenty of facts. Tomb inscriptions of Naevolia Tyche, Balbus, Eumachia, Younger Scaurus were very common. Literature was mostly limited to Pliny's letter about his statue and Trimalchio. Buildings were often omitted, except for Eumachia's, but the most used otherwise were the houses of Scaurus, Octavius Quartio and Menander, and some references to the House of Apuleius and House of Diana. Quite a number did not use the sources as instructed or only used Source B. A number only used examples from Pompeii. In terms of analysis, the question was often taken to mean what can individuals tell us about Roman life and answers quickly moved from the specific to generalisations. General interpretation was that, despite all the available evidence, we can know little about individuals, a point commonly illustrated by the lack of information on Eumachia's tomb. Usefulness was for the most part ignored.

F387 Roman Britain: Life in the Outpost of the Empire

General Comments

Examiners reported a very wide range of responses this year. The most confident and well-informed candidates were able to deploy a wide array of information, including many specific examples drawn from a broad variety of areas, and showing evidence of reading around the topic. There were thoughtful answers which engaged carefully with the questions and demonstrated a very good understanding of the context of Roman Britain – that it was not a static entity, but appears to have gone through a number of phases. Conversely there were a substantial number of weaker responses to the commentary questions. It was not uncommon for candidates to score almost twice as many marks in their essay as they did in the combined parts of the commentary question attempted.

Some responses displayed rather simplistic and superficial knowledge and understanding of the Roman occupation of Britain. During the Roman occupation, Britain underwent considerable development in a period of over 350 years. Awareness of context is one of the descriptors in the AO1 assessment grid and so candidates need to be able to place all material evidence in a secure context by showing awareness of the PRIA context, the geographical context and the chronological context. In the essay on religion, mosaics from Fishbourne and the Rudston Venus were often juxtaposed with no awareness of the difference in geography or the fact that they are hundreds of years apart.

As in previous years, the majority of responses seen had no evidence of planning at all; those that did were on the whole more focussed and thoughtful, although some weaker answers contained quite extensive lists with little reference to the question posed. Quality of written communication seemed markedly worse than in previous years. Candidates need to be able to use technical terminology relevant to the unit accurately; for instance, they need to know the difference between *Britain* and *Britons* and that the population of Britain may be *Celts* but never *Celtics*. In addition, the terms *Inferior* and *Superior* are not judgemental terms, simply geographical ones.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

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

- 1 (a) The major challenge in (a) seemed to have been the task of dealing with both roads and agriculture, and evaluating any links between the two. Very few responses were prepared to challenge the question or to think of other reasons for the development of agriculture. There were many generalisations along the lines of ‘the Britons survived only on subsistence agriculture and did not trade’, ignoring the evidence from Strabo. Better responses displayed a more sophisticated appreciation of the Celts’ pre-Roman society, challenging unsupported preconceptions about the Britons. Better responses also supported their views with reference to *some* specific information about the developments in agriculture, such as named sites and actual finds. There is some useful information in Salway, *Roman Era*, Chapter 5, ‘The Human Impact on the Landscape’.

- (b) Some weaker answers did not pick up on the terms 'economy' or 'regions' in the question. There were some very good answers which looked not only at different regions of Britain but also looked at different types of economic activity and the effect this would have on those regions. Examiners were particularly impressed by the idea that, despite a thriving tin industry in Cornwall, as this was carried out under Imperial control and used slaves, it would have had little actual impact on the economy of the area. However, there were some sweeping discussions about areas *outside* Roman control and, once again, the idea of the north being a 'militarised zone', where no towns existed at all, was used in many responses. Examiners were disappointed to see the north written off in this way as there *were* towns, and other evidence of Roman civilian government (as an extreme example, the 'Curia of the Textoverdi'), north of the Fosse way.
- 2 (a) Good responses found instructive material to unpack and discuss. There is some merit in giving students the opportunity to practise these types of questions in class to explore the detail of inscriptions and locate them in their proper contexts. Responses were not always able to evaluate the sources fully, and identify relevant parts of the sources provided. This was particularly true of the third source, which was often taken to mean that Javolenus Priscus was governor of all the places mentioned in the source simultaneously; many also failed to note his specific legal role in Britain, or its placing at the head of his 'CV' after his military appointments. The first two sources were the most straightforward to explain, and there were also some very confident and detailed answers which fleshed out the division of Britain into two, then four, and perhaps even five, provinces. Examiners were particularly pleased that some candidates were able to discuss what was absent from this selection of sources, i.e. the absence of any reference to *local* government. Weaker answers failed to grasp the development of government and administration over time; the weakest simply copied the inscriptions out with little or no evaluation.
- (b) This question opened up the discussion while keeping the focus on 'Government and Administration'; but candidates whose answers had been limited in (a) found it hard going, and often tended to take a very general 'what have the Romans ever done for us' approach. Better responses discussed: the benefits to client kings of their status, the imposition and/or provision of law and order; property records, the involvement of local aristocracies in the *ordo* at civitas capitals, and the security provided by the Roman army. They also noted the disadvantages of increased taxation, and the difficulty of answering how most of the Britons in the countryside actually felt, since they left little evidence one way or the other.

Essay Questions

Question 3 was a little less popular than Question 4, though answers to these two questions were of a similar quality. Answers were often very short.

- 3 This question asked for a consideration of 'success', both in the establishment of towns, and their ongoing life. As noted above, there needs to be a much more detailed appreciation and secure knowledge of towns in the north, dismissed as a 'militarised zone', or Wales – this may be true of the earlier period, but developments in Carlisle and Aldborough might be considered; the better responses to Question 3 were marked out by a good range of specific examples, and there was some detailed discussion of changes in use of basilicas (Silchester) and the theatre at St Albans.

Weaker answers seemed to be aware only of London and one or two other named examples; the weakest were simplistic accounts of what a theoretical Roman town ought to look like, or they provided discussion of villas instead. Some responses appeared to have seen only the word 'success', and then covered every aspect of what the Romans did in Britain (in one notable instance, omitting towns almost completely!). Whilst responses taking the 'what have the Romans ever done for us' approach scored some marks, better focus and selection of detailed material/evidence would have led to more successful answers.

- 4 Better responses to this question included a discussion of the evidence for religions introduced by the Romans **and** the continuation of Celtic religious practices, and then provided some analysis of the 'extent' of any change. The bulk of those attempting this question knew quite a lot of information, but found it hard to answer the question directly.

Evaluation of sources posed a problem, too. Many pieces of evidence were described in terms of artistic style, but with little discussion in terms of *religion*. For example, there was discussion of the 'Imperial Cult', and the temple of Claudius at Colchester, but not much discussion of *why* this was introduced and *who* was encouraged, urged or forced to take part in it. The short discussion on 'context' applies very much here: the Maryport altars are military; but are they really evidence that all the Britons (or 'Celts') in the area shared in this worship and practice? There is evidence for worship of Mithras in London, and on Hadrian's Wall – this does *not* mean that it was a widespread religious cult! Often, a sound conclusion was provided, but it did not seem to develop from the evidence and discussion preceding it.

F388 Art and Architecture in the Greek World

General Comments

Candidates studying Greek Art and Architecture continue to display their enjoyment of the subject and their engagement with the different media in their work in the examination. Examiners were once again delighted by the insights offered by candidates, at all levels, as they discussed their favourite works. Overall, it was felt that candidates displayed a good level of knowledge of the topics on the specification, though the level of specific detail was often an issue.

Whilst Question 1 and Question 4 was the most popular combination, Question 2 and Question 3 were generally better answered. Candidates tended to perform better on the essay questions where they were able to display their knowledge to better effect than on the structured commentary questions. In addition, those candidates who had taken time to plan their answers often offered more logical responses and communicated their ideas more effectively.

Responses displayed the ability to express ideas confidently, if not always in a fluent English style. Examiners were concerned by the number of candidates who were unable to spell correctly words given in the questions: Piraeus, aesthetically and narrative. Other common misspellings include the perennial *symmetry*, *repetition*, *separate*, *criticism*.

Most candidates made good use of the time available, though it was evident that candidates sometimes spent too long on the commentary questions at the expense of their essays. The majority of candidates followed the rubric for this paper correctly. It was pleasing to note an increase in the number of candidates who took the opportunity to offer sketch diagrams; this was particularly apparent in Questions 1(a), 3 and 4.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1 (a) Almost all responses displayed knowledge about Archaic statues and reference to statues other than the Piraeus Apollo. It was not always understood that the Piraeus Apollo was made from bronze, or the point was not developed in sufficient depth e.g. candidates did not discuss the raised arms or the downward tilt of the head. Less good answers found the concept of transition difficult, identifying purely Archaic features and exaggerating the likeness of the Piraeus Apollo to the New York Kouros or Kleobis and Biton; some did fine-tune the features which did not fit this comparison.

- (b)** Despite the really helpful colour photos, many candidates missed some obvious points like the materials employed, the positioning of the arms, and the struts at the wrist. Candidates should be advised to make full use of photographs and diagrams where they are provided and not simply write from memory. Examiners felt that some candidates had not looked at the photograph at all.

Candidates should also be advised to read the wording of the question carefully and focus on that in their answers. Some responses appeared to re-answer question 1(a), focussing on how far each statue was typically Archaic, rather than focusing on the key terms 'compare' and 'aesthetically pleasing'. This led some into lengthy and random criticism of proportions, e.g. the thighs were considered too long for the calves and the thighs too chunky for the calves or the torso. Others compared the Aristodikos with a range of Archaic examples or simply described both statues.

On a more positive note, there were many sensitive and perceptive responses, supported by pinpoint reference to aspects of both statues. Such responses offered many of the following points:

- the softer hair on the Piraeus Apollo despite the Archaic style compared with the short hairstyle of the Aristodikos Kouros;
- the different leg pose of the Piraeus Apollo, with its feet closer and slightly splayed;
- the tilted head and differentiated lifted arms on the Piraeus Apollo and the wrist supports on the Aristodikos Kouros;
- the certain relationship with the viewer resulting from the pose;
- the more fluid pose, but more Archaic head of the Piraeus Apollo;
- the soft musculature with emphasis on pectorals and upper arms;
- the more realistic body and head on the Aristodikos Kouros, but the stiffer pose;
- the finely modelled feet and hands on the Piraeus Apollo;
- the use of bronze for experimentation, as well as imagining the original gleaming appearance, when compared to marble.

- 2 (a)** Almost all responses to this question offered a good deal of accurate, detailed factual knowledge about the temple of Apollo at Bassae, making reference to the internal alcoves, the Ionic capitals and the single Corinthian column; the continuous frieze was sometimes omitted. By understanding the details of the temple, and with the illustrations as an aid, responses were clear and scored highly on the assessment grid. Most answers displayed a good engagement with the key words of the question, with 'different and daring' being the almost universal assessment of the temple.

- (b)** The candidates who tackled this question mostly seemed to have enjoyed mastering the complexities of the topic, and gave quite creative and thoughtful answers to the question about the advantages of combining the orders. Some responses were very good indeed, merging a very good grasp of facts with an excellent understanding of the issues involved. Most developed the aesthetic and impressive advantages of combining the architectural orders but were less successful when it came to commenting on the functional and practical advantages. In weaker responses, there were references to buildings which do not combine the orders, e.g. the temple of Aphaia, the temple of Athena Nike and the Erechtheion, whilst others made no reference to the Bassae temple.

Essay Questions

- 3 A significant number of responses to the question on the Pioneers and Mannerists did not display a secure knowledge of which painters could be considered as members of the two 'schools' of vase-painting, despite the help given in the question. Some answers treated the terms as though they had lower case initial letters, allocating painters to the groups as they saw fit; thus, Exekias became a 'pioneer' because of his innovative approach to decorating the Achilles and Ajax belly amphora and the Andokides Painter because he pioneered the red-figure technique. A few responses resorted to giving a history of vase-painting from the Dipylon pot to the Meidias Painter hydria. The work of the Meidias Painter and the Pan Painter was often not well known.

There were, however, some stunning responses, with answers referring to specific pots in great detail and offering perceptive comment on the aims of the painters and the techniques employed by them. Such responses showed a knowledge of a range of relevant pots and discussed them creatively, noting aspects such as:

- the anatomical experiments in '3 Men Carousing';
- the appropriate expressiveness of the scene;
- the intricate composition of 'Herakles and the Amazons';
- the different approach to space in the Mannerists;
- the interest in mood and character in the Mannerists;
- the expressive use of drapery in the Meidias vase, with its more urbane approach to myth.

- 4 The question about which pedimental sculpture might be considered 'rich in narrative' was the most popular of the essays, though it was not always well answered. There was some tendency to hark back to questions from previous examination sessions, with some answers suffering from too much focus on the challenges posed to sculptors by the shape and on suitability of a pediment's subject matter to a given sanctuary at the expense of focusing on rich narrative.

Many candidates were able to write in depth on a variety of pediments from the specified material. Knowledge of the pediments from the temple of Artemis at Corcyra and the temple of Zeus at Olympia was often stronger than that of other pediments. Weaker answers resorted to telling the story behind a pediment rather than referring to specific figures and analysing and evaluating whether the pediment was 'rich in narrative', or not. The temple of Aphaia proved a popular choice but many responses did not develop the points fully and often simply offered detailed comparison of the dying warriors in the corners. Similarly, when discussing the east pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia some figures were well known but there was sometimes little attempt to relate that knowledge to the question. The best answers were able to offer a clear definition of what 'rich in narrative' might mean, before going on to apply the elements of the definition to carefully selected examples. Such responses were characterised by a clear focus on the quotation and the question, and an ability to analyse the aspects of the design and portrayal of the figures that contributed to the narrative.

Of course there were also responses which misattributed pediments, figures, stories and temples. Some candidates confused pediments with metopes and continuous friezes.

F389 Comic Drama in the Ancient World

General Comments

It was pleasing to see an increase in the number of entries for this Unit, and to note the range of individual responses to the different plays studied. There was also an increase in the number of candidates who appreciated that these were indeed plays intended for performance rather than just 'books.' This meant that there was a wider range of perceptive comments on performance practice and audience response, in some cases clearly derived from personal experience.

A few candidates were familiar with a wide range of Aristophanes' plays and made use of their knowledge effectively in their responses to Questions 1(b), 3 and 4. In other cases, unfortunately, these references replaced relevant material from the plays which candidates had actually been asked to discuss or else resulted in candidates losing track of the question. To balance this there was also an increase in responses which demonstrated only a superficial knowledge of the plays. There was also an increase in the number of well-rehearsed responses to questions not on the paper.

The usual cast of spelling errors appeared; it would be helpful if candidates could spell Aristophanes, playwright, humorous, Euripides, Aeschylus, Aeacus, Charon (who is not the same person as Chiron!), Dionysus, Xanthias and Pseudolos. Paradoxically, attempts to spell the name Polymachaeroplages were remarkably successful. It is hoped that the name Pyrgopolynices will be equally well-known in 2013 when *The Swaggering Soldier (Miles Gloriosus)* replaces *Dyskolos*. That will at least reduce the references to the playwright 'Meander.' This is possibly also the moment for a reminder that *Lysistrata* replaces *Wasps* for 2013.

Commentary Question 1 was much preferred to Commentary Question 2; the split between Question 3 and Question 4 was approximately 60:40.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1 (a) Most responses commented on the differences between Philocleon in this scene and his behaviour at the start of the play, but evidence was not always adduced to support those comments and only very strong answers used more than the odd phrase from the passage. Many appreciated that his change in lifestyle was not necessarily for the better, though fewer addressed the issue of what a 'better' lifestyle might have been in the context of the play. Some good answers used evidence from the *parabasis* to discuss whether Bdelycleon's supposedly sophisticated lifestyle was in fact 'better' and there was some good recall of the arguments from the *agon*.

There were some perceptive comments about redirection of addiction. Some responses contrasted Philocleon's drunken state with his earlier comments about the consequences of drunkenness or juxtaposed Xanthias' comments about 'madness' in the passage with recall of the attempts to cure Philocleon's 'trialophilia'. Weaker responses demonstrated confusion over where the passage appears in the play, several giving the impression that we were seeing the symposium which Philocleon had attended. Some very weak ones simply commented on how nasty Bdelycleon had been to make Philocleon wear Persian national dress.

- (b) Most responses stated that fantasy was a greater source of humour in *Frogs* than in *Wasps* because there was more fantasy in *Frogs*; this did not fully address the question. Frequently omitted instances of fantasy were references to the dramatists' *agon* in *Frogs* and the trial of the dog Labes in *Wasps*. Some good responses argued that it was the intrusion of the everyday into the fantastic setting in *Frogs* which was the real source of humour in that play, while in *Wasps* it was the fact that fantasy had been brought into an everyday setting. There were some good comments on how fantasy contributed to other sources of humour (costumes, Chorus, slapstick). Weaker responses simply mentioned the stimulus passage, the Frog Chorus, the beating of Dionysus by Aeacus and the parody of *Odyssey* Book IX. Some very weak answers disagreed with the statement on the grounds that nothing happened in *Frogs* – it was just people arguing about poetry – so it was less funny than *Wasps*.
- 2 (a) Too many candidates read the question as just requiring an account of all the times in the play when Pseudolus showed how clever he was. There were, however, some good discussions of the way the passage indicated Pseudolus' cleverness; humour was less well covered, though there were some good references to the use made of asides, puns and wordplay. The rest of the Harpax/Pseudolus meeting was sometimes ignored, as was the scene later in the play when Harpax is mistaken for an imposter by Ballio and Simo.
- (b) There was a wide range of answers, some dealing with the question very well, including looking at what the success of a play actually means. Some very interesting responses drew a distinction between chance and coincidence. Most pointed out that Pseudolus had no real plan until the chance appearance of Harpax at a time when Ballio was out of the way, and on the chance availability of Simia. In *Dyskolos*, most were able to comment on Knemon's change of heart after falling down the well and on Sostratos' meeting with Gorgias. The appearance of Pan was noted but not always effectively used, though some responses discussed which events in the play had been caused by Pan and which might be chance. Weaker responses simply pointed out that in New Comedy the plots were predictable so nothing happened by chance. Some candidates attempted to mask their total lack of recall of the plot of either play by giving general answers on the role of coincidence in the writing of a play.

Essay Questions

- 3 There was a wide range of answers, reflecting varying amounts of attention to the wording of the question. Weaker responses demonstrated the art of re-working prepared responses, discussing how entertaining the plays were, whether they appealed more to a modern or an ancient audience, how funny they were or which had the most important political message. Some simply discussed the differences between Old and New Comedy or gave examples of types of humour. While most responses did say something creditworthy about Aristophanes, many dismissed both Plautus and Menander in one paragraph, failing to distinguish between Greek New Comedy and Roman Comedy. Stronger responses covered all four plays, giving much evidence about the visual, topical and satirical elements of Aristophanic Comedy to back up their agreement with the assertion. Discussion of the Chorus was used either to support or to disagree with the assertion. Better answers found reasons for all the plays being exciting, often commenting on how the writer had created interaction with the audience, before deciding which author's work would be most exciting.

- 4 This question produced a wide range of answers, the best focusing on how the plays made the audience think. Most candidates were able to identify issues raised in *Frogs* and *Wasps*, usually through the *agon*. There were some good comments on the content of the *parabases* of the two plays, but there was confusion between Cleon's response to *Babylonians* and Aristophanes' rebuke to the audience for not sufficiently appreciating *Clouds*. Ideas discussed included the political messages of Aristophanes, father/son relationships in *Wasps*, town/country and rich/poor in *Dyskolos* and the treatment of slaves in *Pseudolus*. Better answers also discussed how successfully the messages were put across. A few responses focused on the universality of themes and messages, showing that modern society can also benefit from thinking about the content of these plays; some cited productions of *Lysistrata* as a response to war in Afghanistan, Iraq or Bosnia. Many weaker responses, however, showed evidence of misreading of the question, discussing how the plays reflected their own society. Others simply took the question as an invitation to give general responses to questions from previous years' papers or to give a list of the differences between Old and New/Roman Comedy, with a comment about which they preferred.

F390 Virgil and the World of the Hero

General Comments

This unit was the most popular of the A2 units. Once again the calibre of candidature was in many cases high. Responses displayed considerable familiarity with the texts and the themes which the epics raise. There were few responses which showed little acquaintance with the texts. Encouragingly, there was a significant improvement in candidates' appreciation of the nature of heroism. Responses were also making greater reference to the epics themselves and secondary sources. For candidates attempting to answer questions involving both the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*, it would be worth encouraging them to make direct comparisons between the two epics so as to ensure that they are answering the given question. Questions 1 and 3 proved the most popular combination but there were also many candidates attempting the other two questions.

Spelling was generally fine, although there is a sizeable minority of candidates who continue to spell *Iliad*, Aeneas and *Aeneid* incorrectly – they were all printed on the examination paper.

Comments on Individual Questions

Commentary Questions

- 1 (a) Most responses identified the relevant material well and used the whole of the passage, including the final paragraph to explain how what was taking place in the passage helped to make it a vivid piece of writing. The best responses, of which were in the minority, were able to analyse the passage in terms of the way it was written. A large number of responses simply stated that 'this makes it vivid', without explaining how and this weakness seemed more endemic than in previous years.
- (b) Better answers gave a range of specific 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 sides of the argument and many candidates argued that Turnus was more of an innocent victim than a barbaric savage. A few responses picked up on the difference between being innocent and being a victim or explored the question from both an ancient and modern day perspective.
- 2 (a) Almost all of the candidates identified relevant suspects responsible for the death of Dido, the most common being Aeneas, Juno and Venus and again there was good use of the passage as a starting point for discussion. A surprising number of responses overlooked the contribution of Anna, Fate, Jupiter and Dido herself. Responses scored highly under AO2 when they assessed the culpability of each figure and reached a conclusion as to who was most responsible.
- (b) A few responses lost focus and ignored the comparison between Dido and Hektor and examined why each demise was tragic, without arguing which was the more tragic. 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. Perhaps there was room for sharper recall from the relevant books as a whole so as to broaden the discussion even further.

Essay Questions

- 3** This was the most popular essay question. Most responses managed to identify a range of suitable episodes from the text, especially in connection with Aeneas' *pietas*. Recall from the earlier books of the epic was strong. However, reference to the second half of the poem was sketchy and many responses failed to include more than passing reference to the deaths of Pallas and Turnus. The best responses were those which picked up on the Augustan context, kept the focus firmly fixed on the question of Roman role model and developed a counter-argument. There were unfortunately many candidates who reproduced a response more fitting to a Greek or Roman hero question, rather than a role model. Such responses did not necessarily score highly under AO2.
- 4** A few candidates fell into the misconception that this essay was a 'role of the gods' theme and just wrote a list of divine involvement in both texts, without much analysis. However, the majority were able to identify a good range of relevant examples from both epics and to assess their care and compassion. The best responses were those who compared the actions of the deities from both epics, coming to a conclusion as to whom they thought were the more compassionate, which was argued throughout the essay. It was surprising how many responses judged Venus to be a caring and compassionate mother, without picking up on the ambiguities in her portrayal.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Education and Learning

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations
is a Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England
Registered Office; 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU
Registered Company Number: 3484466
OCR is an exempt Charity

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553

© OCR 2012

