

GCSE

Classical Civilisation

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J280**

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

OCR Report to Centres June 2016

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

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

General Comments:

See comments for A351/02

Comments on Individual Questions:

There is little to say on the short questions in the Foundation tier other than to highlight common errors.

Option 1 Athens

1. No problems.
2. Some confusion over boy/girl.
3. Answered very well on the whole.
4. Unexpectedly some candidates suggested some slaves would be 'a *mekhane*'.
5. Generally all correct – the few candidates who made errors all tended to get Hermes right.
6. The final box (*paidotribes*) was not always selected.

For comments on Qs 7, 8 and 9, see A351/02 Qs 1, 2 and 3.

Option 2 Rome

10. No problems.
11. Some candidates suggested that the priest 'covered his head in wine'.
12. Generally answered well.
13. In (b) all options were selected by at least one candidate.
14. On the whole this was completed very accurately.
15. Some candidates suggested that a uniform was worn.

For comments on Qs 16, 17 and 18, see A351/02 Qs 6, 7 and 8.

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

General Comments:

As in previous years it was a privilege to read these scripts as there was plenty of evidence of a genuine enthusiasm for the Classical world. For this, of course, the teachers should be credited for bringing alive such a distant and sometimes difficult area of history and society. The vast majority of candidates showed a good clear understanding of the Classical world, and the enthusiastic responses of many candidates were a delight to read. Teachers of this subject are clearly very knowledgeable and skilled in imparting their passion to their students.

As expected a wide range of responses were read which covered all of the available mark range, but, once again, the responses were overwhelmingly produced to a high standard. As I have pointed out in previous reports this is in part a reflection of the fact that this course is an optional one at GCSE, in contrast to the compulsory courses. As usual the examiners were surprised by the range of knowledge shown by the candidates, and, once again, obscure, unexpected, interesting and sometimes amusing facts made their way into the responses. The mark scheme was drawn up anticipating the information that was considered most likely to appear in the answers, but as in past years we were delighted to discover that candidates had been taught all sorts of information that we had not included in the MS. Candidates were, of course, credited for accurate information even if it is not listed in the mark scheme. As in past years the vast majority of candidates demonstrated knowledge apparently drawn from the OCR Classical Civilisation text book, but examiners were instructed to credit any other relevant and accurate information.

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

As usual there were a small number of candidates who attempted **both** the Athens and Rome options. Only the marks from the option with the best responses were counted, not a combination of the best answers from both. A very small handful of candidates answered all three questions in Section A in their chosen topic, and, inevitably, this impacted negatively on their Section B question.

Frustratingly there were a surprising number of candidates who had been given extra answer booklets by the invigilator without having used the extra pages supplied in their question paper. I have commented on this repeatedly over the last few years. This suggests that the candidates had not been made fully aware of the existence of these extra pages (pages 26-28). It would be very helpful to the markers if candidates used the 'extra pages' in their answer book rather than write outside the lines provided for each answer. It is essential that any answers on the 'extra pages' **must** indicate the question to which they refer. It is good practice for candidates to indicate that they have used the extra pages by use of a note, arrow or asterisk. Although this is not an official requirement it can speed up the marking process for the examiner. Please remind your invigilators of the existence of these extra pages within the standard OCR response booklet, and to use these in preference to the 'additional sheets'.

Some candidates squeezed extra lines onto the end of their answers for Section A questions, although, generally, the extra lines would rarely add more marks but be repetition of what had already been stated.

The examiners came across a few candidates who appeared to have struggled with the Higher tier questions and who might have found the Foundation tier paper to be more accessible.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Option 1 Athens

1a. Very few candidates identified Poseidon incorrectly, and most were able to list a range of symbols in the picture that were specifically his. Credit was given for spotting the symbols, as well as identifying the god and his responsibilities.

1b. Most candidates started with the comment that sacrifices were done in order to get something back from the god, and many went on to give examples (eg to Poseidon to ask for a safe sea journey). We were not convinced that sacrifices were made in order to provide meat for the onlookers to eat, and this did not address the question directly, anyway. The best answers contained a range of reasons (eg to ask for a favour, to give thanks, as part of a major festival, to predict the future, as part of transition from one stage of life to another). Some just went for the first, and gave lots of examples, which was fine, but unlikely to reach 'Thorough'.

1c. This produced some really interesting ideas based around the temple as the home of the god, the mystique of the cult statue, the objects left in temples as votive offerings, as well as comments on the architecture and decoration, particularly contrasted with Athenian homes. Some weaker candidates wrote about temples as if they were the same as modern churches, with congregations and hymns. Candidates who mentioned a glimpse of the temple during a major public sacrifice made a valid point, as did answers that referred to the relative inaccessibility of the temple, especially if they emphasised that the actual sacrifice took place outside. As an AO3 question the candidates were expected to analyse the evidence to come up with their conclusion.

2a. Generally candidates either knew this in detail, or not at all. 'Tights' were mentioned in many scripts which, although not accurate, did differentiate from the robes of tragedy. Some candidates based their response solely on describing the figures in the picture, but these answers were generally not very successful.

2b. This question allowed the candidates to discuss both comedy and tragedy, but some just stuck to comedy and so were a little limited in the range of their response. Although the detail of mask design is contentious we credited 'to project the voice' as they must have taken audibility into account when designing them. Answers were generally based around the fact that three actors would have to play multiple roles, although some candidates made accurate comments about the links between masks and Dionysos. Some candidates remembered to include reference to the chorus, too.

2c. Stronger candidates produced responses balancing the entertainment of the plays with the more serious responsibilities involved in a religious festival. Stronger candidates also had information beyond the theatrical aspect which clearly showed differentiated knowledge between the City Dionysia and the Panathenaic festivals. Weaker candidates generally listed some events from the festival and then added that watching lots of plays would 'become boring', or the 'seats were uncomfortable'. Either way it was encouraging to see that most candidates approached this AO3 question in the right way. Although a few candidates referred to the 'City of Dionysia' we only saw a miniscule number of answers which described a place instead of an event – it is good to see that this is less common than previously.

3a. This question is an AO2 question, but in the place normally occupied by an AO1. One or two candidates just stuck to descriptive answers, but most linked the skills taught to the events of a *symposium* very effectively. Good links were made between the skills taught by the *grammatistes* and the *kitharistes* such as reciting Homer, and playing an instrument, to the running of a *symposium*, a few candidates going so far as to suggest that physical training by the *paidotribes* was important so the younger men would appear fit and healthy and better potential husbands to their host's daughter.

3b. A straightforward AO1 'describe' question that candidates were generally very well prepared for.

3c. This was one of the best answered questions in the whole paper. Strong arguments were expressed arguing one way or the other, but it appears that, on the whole, the candidates believed that girls' education was more relevant than that of boys. Of course it did not matter which side candidates agreed with, as long as evidence was provided and analysed. The best responses examined the usefulness of both boys' and girls' education. Some candidates were apparently unaware that girls received an education at home.

4. This was the more popular of the two Athens essays. Generally speaking candidates believed that the life of a household slave was pretty reasonable as they had food and housing provided, and their tasks, if repetitive, were not too physically demanding. Of course a massive range of responses were read, and many argued the opposite. To reach the higher levels candidates were expected to argue both ways, as usual in this specification. Good knowledge was shown of various types of slaves in comparison with 'household' ones. Many candidates took the word 'household' literally and compared them with farm workers, while some understood that 'household' is the usual translation for '*oikos*'. Both types of response were credited. We were surprised that so many candidates wrote about the ease with which Athenian slaves could buy their freedom – our understanding was that this was very rare. However, there are some popular texts (eg Renshaw) that emphasize the ability of slaves to earn money and buy freedom, so it was credited.

5. Some candidates appeared to see the word '*symposium*' and then go in to 'autopilot' and write down everything they know about the planning and running of these events. But by doing this they would sometimes lose sight of the question, perhaps only addressing it at all in the final paragraph. One marker commented that it appeared that some candidates were answering different questions. Generally the knowledge (AO1) of the *symposium* was very good, but the analysis (AO3) was not so strong. Many candidates wrote that men had a great time, and women had a terrible time, but the stronger candidates identified that men would have been under a lot of pressure at the event, having to demonstrate a range of skills in order to gain a business deal, or a marriage or whatever. Some markers were a little concerned about the responses that mentioned the difficult issue of the *hetairai*, and whether they would have 'had a good time' or not, but the stronger candidates were able to deal with this very effectively and sensitively.

Option 2 Rome

6a. Although there is an argument to be made that this was 'Poseidon' it was felt that as this topic is specifically centred on Rome then he should be identified as 'Neptune'. Only a tiny number of candidates misidentified Neptune, and most were able to say that he was god of the sea, horses and chariots, as well as identify his symbols of the trident and etcetera.

6b. Most candidates started with the comment that sacrifices were done in order to get something back from the god, and many went on to give examples (eg to Neptune to ask for a safe sea journey). Some candidates raised the issues of the importance to the Romans of

demonstrating one's wealth in public. We were not convinced that sacrifices were made in order to provide meat for the onlookers to eat, and this did not address the question directly, anyway.

6c. This produced some really interesting ideas based around the temple as the home of the god, the mystique of the cult statue, the objects left in temples as votive offerings, as well as comments on the architecture and decoration, often linked to Roman prestige. Some weaker candidates wrote about temples as if they were the same as modern churches, with congregations and hymns. As an AO3 question the candidates were expected to analyse the evidence to come up with their conclusion. See also comments on 1(c).

7a. As anticipated there were no problems with this AO1 question and candidates produced convincing lists of subjects taught, the better candidates covering all three stages of education. Not all candidates knew where the lessons were held, and a significant minority mentioned large school buildings.

7b. As this course is based on a study of city life in the Classical world we are looking for knowledge and understanding that is specifically linked to that world. Generic answers to this question such as 'so he can get a good job' do not display either knowledge or understanding of that world and so would not be credited above the lowest levels. Answers that revolved around gaining knowledge of epic poetry to impress clients at a dinner party, or learning public speaking from a *rhetor* in order to conduct legal cases in the forum were credited highly as they focused specifically on ancient Rome.

7c. As with 7b this invited the candidate to show their knowledge of ancient Rome, so answers based on generic comments which could apply to any society and any time were not credited highly.

8a. Besides the expected beast versus beast fights, animal hunts and the *bestiarus*, other popular events were executing criminals, chariot racing, animals doing tricks, and parades. Sacrifices were not considered 'entertainment' and so this was not credited.

8b. Some great ideas were expressed here ranging from being a chance to see hitherto unknown beasts to an opportunity for the sponsor to demonstrate his power and/or to gain political support. The power of Rome/the emperor, and the size of the empire came up regularly, too.

8c. This question provided an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of a day's events at the colosseum, as well as to analyse the relative impact of the events on the spectators. Although some candidates made generalised comments based on the 'excitement' of animal fights compared to gladiators, the stronger candidates were able to pick out details to construct their argument (for example, a gladiator fight gave the opportunity for audience participation to decide if the loser lived or died, or an animal hunt entailed seeing the trap doors in action as the scenery was produced).

9. Similarly to question 5 it was felt that some candidates were reproducing an answer to a slightly different question that they may have done as practice in class. The question specifically asked about the 'importance' of the *paterfamilias*, but some candidates became so focused on describing his roles that they left it until the final page, or even final paragraph, before attempting to answer the question as set. Better answers looked at the role of the *paterfamilias* in Roman society, and not just the home – his importance to the status of the family when he appears in public at the baths, for example. Some candidates picked up that his appearance was a reflection of his own status, and that of his wife, too, as she had (theoretically at least) made his clothes.

To reach the higher levels across all three AO's the response was expected to provide a balanced argument between the importance of the paterfamilias and his wife and/or their children and/or slaves. The best organised responses were able to cover all these groups and also balance their relative importance. Interestingly the wife (the terms *uxor*, *matrona* and *materfamilias* were all used) quite often came out as the most important member of the household, as she not only managed the slaves but she was the producer of children. As usual in this paper there was no fixed way of responding, and we did not expect a particular conclusion, and credit was awarded for any well-supported and well-argued piece. Some responses recognised the difference between rich and poor (especially for the value of the matron), and it was felt that a lot of candidates underestimated or ignored the importance of educated slaves in rich households – slaves seemed to be viewed as largely domestic in their contribution, which was generally fine, but better answers recognised they could be key to the success of the richer families. Candidates who reached 'Thorough' in AO1 generally displayed a really pleasing knowledge of life in ancient Rome.

10. This was far and away the most popular of the two Rome essay titles. Thankfully 'Ben Hur' type chariots were rare this year. Candidates tended to focus on this question rather better than on Question 9 – their in-depth descriptions of the circus maximus with all its details and entertainments were generally quite neatly organised to provide an answer focused on the demands of the question. Gambling, socialising, seeing famous charioteers in the parade, admiring the items on the *spina* all made an appearance, and some stronger candidates even focused on the religious aspects of the venue which was, after all, dedicated to Neptune. Others mentioned the sheer scale of the event, or the *carceres*, or the tension of the sponsor dropping the *mappa*. Technical terms such as '*mappa*' are not demanded by the specification or the MS, but were surprisingly common, which is good to see. Candidates engaged well with the question of 'enjoyment', considering the whole cross section of Roman society – men, women, slaves, rich, poor, foreigners, merchants. Most candidates mentioned the four teams and the camaraderie of being linked to a colour, and the fact that the seating was informally arranged was often highlighted as a particular 'enjoyment' for singles. On a minor note, many candidates referred to the danger inherent in the small and 'flimsy' chariots – recent research has demonstrated that wet leather was used in their construction, and when this dried it would go extremely hard.

A352/01 Epic and Myth (Foundation Tier)

General Comments:

There was much evidence of excellent teaching and learning in this year's papers. Most candidates showed a good knowledge of the text they had studied and had clearly enjoyed it

Candidates generally had few problems over rubric infringements on the paper. If anything, candidates ticked too few options more often than too many in the multiple choice questions, and it was very rare to see a candidate attempt all three Section B questions of their chosen author.

Candidates found the Section A questions much more straightforward than Section B. Section B answers varied hugely in standard. Some candidates answered them very thoroughly. Weaker responses often just made one statement and filled a couple of lines. Candidates often showed reasonable knowledge, but this was not always used to answer the question that had been set

As has been the case in previous years, candidates found questions asking on literary style much more challenging than those on characterisation. In the literary style questions, candidates often picked out the key lines, but were unable to say much about them. Some were able to pick out techniques such as similes (which were regularly identified as metaphors), but analysis was very basic. The best answers were able to pick out two or more ideas and back them up with clear references. In (b) questions, knowledge did vary considerably across the questions. Questions which involved the recall of what a character said, rather than what a character did, proved a real challenge, with many seemingly guessing facts, especially in 9 (b) and 10 (b). However 11 (c) was generally quite well done. The order of events also caused problems with candidates often giving details from the wrong parts of stories in answers to question, especially in 10 (b). In (c) questions, the most successful answers were ones that used knowledge to answer the question set, rather than just retell events. This was a particular issue with 9 (c). Generalisations were also a common problem, especially in 11 (c).

Comments on Individual Questions:

1 Many candidates scored full marks on this question. The commonest errors were in the final part, with the Sirens often being muddled with the lotus eaters.

2 These questions were done very well on the whole. In (a), some candidates chosen option a, but the part that proved most challenging was (d) where options C and D attracted a good level of support.

3 This question proved a very good discriminator. Many did achieve full marks, but quite a large number gained 1 or 0 marks. Most knew how many men Scylla killed, but Circe and Aeolus were often given the wrong way round.

4 This question was handled well, but candidates had problems where the statements applied to Circe rather than Calypso. Hence it was often given that Calypso entertained the crew or told him how to avoid the Sirens.

5 This question was very well done by many candidates, with very few scoring less than 3 marks. In this question it was very rare for Circe and Calypso to be confused.

6 Most candidates did well on this question, but candidates found it harder to get full marks on this question than most others. A very common error was in thinking the gods gave Odysseus superhuman strength rather than attempting to kill him.

7 While a good number of candidates scored full marks, the majority lost at least one mark, and often more than this. All the wrong answers attracted a good level of support. The most common correct answer not recognised was that he carried a wand which sent people to sleep.

8 The vast majority of candidates achieved full marks, but some saw Odysseus as being loyal in the passage. Those who did not get full marks nearly always went on to struggle with part (a) questions in Section B.

9 (a) Most candidates were able to make at least two good points on the character of Nausicaa. Her kindness was often alluded to, with a pleasing level of knowledge of the concept of *xenia*. The idea of her being white-armed, and hence not having to work was also much in evidence. Many also referred to other areas such as her authority over her maids, and her willingness to do manual tasks. A very popular answer was her desire to marry Odysseus with weaker responses simply said saying it showed she fancied Odysseus, but better ones talking about her being judgemental or her willingness to do her expected duty and marry. Some candidates need to go beneath the surface and not simply repeat what is in the passage with little analysis.

9 (b) Whilst this question was done quite well, many candidates suffered from not being specific enough. Whilst most knew that Odysseus was told to travel separately, candidates often said that Odysseus was told not to walk with Nausicaa at all, and to make his own way from the beach for fear of gossip. Both of these statements only refer to part of the journey, which was not broken down into its elements. There was little on the actual route that Nausicaa outlines for Odysseus, as well as details such as waiting in the poplar grove of Athena. Most knew that he was told to seek the rulers and supplicate, but a good number of candidates were either general in not referring to Arete specifically, or else wrongly mentioned as Alcinous as the one to whom to make the request.

9 (c) Many candidates did not venture far outside the passage and so answers often tended to repeat ideas given in (a) about the interest in seeing a possible relationship and seeing Nausicaa's hospitality. Whilst these are acceptable ideas, candidates should be aware that repeating ideas from earlier questions does not score highly. Better ideas mentioned the involvement of Athene in the meeting, getting information about the Phaeacians, and seeing Odysseus' skills as a speaker. A major problem was a tendency with many of the candidates to simply describe something about the meeting between the pair and label it as 'interesting' without any real attempt to evaluate where the interest lies.

10 (a) There were some good answers to this question, but for such a famous passage, many candidates struggled to do more than quote words and say that this was horrific or dramatic. The word "gruesome" featured in many answers to good effect, and the similes were reasonably handled, but analysis was often superficial. Some fairly obvious ideas, such as the eating of every bit of the men, received little attention, and there was scope for more discussion of the shock of the initial attack, the calmness of the ending and the appeal to Zeus by war-hardened soldiers. Candidates should reflect that question setters choose the start and opening of the printed passages very carefully so that ideas can be taken from the whole passage.

10 (b) There was more inaccurate information here than at any point on the paper. The vast majority wrongly thought that Odysseus revealed his name as nobody, forgetting the whole point was to get Polyphemus drunk before saying this. Others thought he proudly gave his name as Odysseus, revealed his homeland or offered him wine. Another very common error was to say that he told Polyphemus about his adventures on the sea, whereas in fact this is almost at the start of his journey home. Other answers were too vague, with statements such as "he told him about his journey" or "he said how he had lost his men". Many answers did refer to his request

for *xenia* and the fact that his boat had been wrecked. Some mentioned the roles of Zeus and Poseidon, and a small number mentioned the Trojan War and the command of Agamemnon. Overall, this was a very fine discriminator of candidates.

10 (c) Most candidates were able to discuss Polyphemus' caring nature as a farmer, with the best answers providing a lot of evidence for this. Weaker answers did not support their ideas nearly so much. His ability to make cheese was also praised by many, and some referred to his organisation skills, but this was not as common as was hoped. Occasionally references were made to his strength or respect for Poseidon. Some candidates seemed to have a strange idea of what being positive meant. The eating of only 2 men at a time when he could have eaten them all at once, or even preparing Odysseus for facing other giants later in the story were cited on more than one occasion. Some also wasted time in describing his negative traits.

11 (a) This question generally produced some very fine responses. Many candidates commented on Odysseus' qualities as a commander, with the obedience of his crew and the close relationship of the word "friends" regularly cited. His relationship with Circe was also well discussed: some mentioned her help adding to his heroism, while others commented upon his respectful way of referring to her. Some candidates also referred to his dishonesty in twisting Circe's final words. Several made the interesting idea that he was more open with his men about information, perhaps learning from his mistakes.

11 (b) Candidates showed a good level of knowledge of the advice of Circe. The most common instructions given were those around Scylla and Charybdis. Facts were generally accurate, and the best answers included minute detail such as calling on Scylla's mother, but some answers were vague or incorrect on how many men Scylla would kill. Many candidates only discussed this story, even if sometimes at great length. In recalling other stories, candidates reported that Circe tells Odysseus not to eat the Sun God's cattle, as opposed to not harming them. The best answers tended to have a range of stories discussed at reasonable length.

11 (c) There were many interesting responses to this question. Some candidates talked generally about the stories, suggesting that the soldiers were loyal and were desperate to get home. Whilst these ideas were clearly valid, candidates who looked at specific incidents did better. Many referred to the greed of the crew and their lack of knowledge causing them to open the bag of winds, and their tiredness and hunger causing them to stop on the Sun god's island and eat his cattle.

12-19 There were too few responses seen to these questions to give any comments.

20 (a) This question was not answered as well as had been anticipated, with many candidates missing ideas that examiners felt would be obvious. As the opening word in the passage was "change", and the theme of the book was change, this seemed a logical point to make, but it occurred relatively infrequently. The invocation to the gods was also overlooked by many who preferred to talk about the elements in the subsequent lines. As with other questions, the start of passages should not be overlooked. Most talked about the contrast of elements being effective, but answers often tended to be rather repetitive in this, with candidates quoting large parts without analysis. The poetic expressions of the passage were ignored by virtually all candidates.

20 (b) Candidates showed a very pleasing level of knowledge on the whole. Many referred to the idea of a single season, although a few wrongly identified this as summer. The rivers of milk, honey and nectar and natural fertility of the land were regularly mentioned, with the best candidates choosing to give examples of the fruits that were produced. Often candidates described the Golden Age from the perspective of the later ages – reporting on elements that it didn't have but which would come later. However there was usually enough correct information elsewhere to score good marks.

20 (c) Most knew how the two ages differed and made an attempt to explain how life in the Silver Age was harder. This often led to discussion about having to labour on the land, or the difficulties that extreme temperatures would cause. Weaker responses tended to list the differences, assuming it was obvious that life in the Silver Age was harder, but without explaining how this actually was the case. The key word in this question was the word “explain”.

21 (a) There were some fine answers to this question. Candidates tended to criticise Narcissus’ intelligence, with many referring to him as naïve. The most perceptive picked up on the fact that he seemed to know what was happening, but was powerless to act. Some felt he was melodramatic and in deep anguish in considering death. Many felt he was vain, which was seen as a valid response, but those candidates who were only able to suggest that he loved himself needed to go beyond this simplistic analysis.

21 (b) Many candidates started their answer by giving irrelevant information about Narcissus’ prophecy, with others also attributing the prayer to Nemesis as coming from Echo. There were two main strands that examiners were hoping for: Narcissus’ rejection of lovers and the subsequent punishment, and the reflection in the pool spotted during a break in hunting. Virtually all candidates recalled one strand, but many did not mention the other. Those that did mention both were also separated by the level of detail provided: information such as the naming of Nemesis or the reflection being seen in a break from hunting were only recalled in the best answers. The pool that Narcissus stared into was surprisingly missed by some who just mentioned he saw his reflection, or was even referred to as a puddle.

21 (c) This question was answered reasonably. Candidates chose the correct myths involving love and knew the details well, but often answers focused too much on retelling the myths, without saying why behaviour was foolish. Hence Apollo’s pursuit of Daphne was simply regarded as foolish, without focusing on the idea of the possible rape or the ridiculous pleas of Apollo. Equally, candidates retold that Meleager killed his uncles, but did not say why it might have been foolish to do so. Even if an explanation seems obvious, candidates must give it.

22 (a) This question was answered very well. Many candidates commented on the basic approach to levelling the table, the simplicity of the food and wine on offer, and the ordinariness of the materials. The best candidates talked about all of these areas. Some candidates did not realise a three-legged table was normal and talked about a missing leg.

22 (b) This question proved straightforward to most candidates. There were very few who did not know the story well, and most proceeded to give full accounts of what happened, with very few errors or unwarranted additional detail. Some candidates did miss out that their house was turned into a temple, whilst only the best answers correctly identified the types of trees that they became.

22 (c) Most candidates were able to spot the similarities between the two stories. The common themes of piety, a flood and the wiping out of those who were wicked were usually identified, but fewer were able to prove certain ideas, such as giving evidence for the love that both couples had for each other. There were also some errors, most commonly in believing that both couples were old.

A352/02 Epic and Myth (Higher Tier)

General Comments:

There were many outstanding scripts that were seen this year and the ideas that were given by candidates reflected a high standard of teaching. Most candidates showed a good knowledge and understanding of the text they had studied and had clearly enjoyed it.

As ever, there were considerably more responses for the Homer option than the Ovid. There was an even spread of candidates answering the optional questions, and the answers for each question gained very similar marks.

Virtually all candidates understood the rubric, with very few answering too many questions. There were very few sub-questions omitted in this section, a notable improvement on previous years.

Many candidates are still failing to indicate the use of extra pages at the end of an answer. Some who went on to write elsewhere did not use the extra page at the end of the booklet, but moved straight to an extra booklet, often for just a few extra words. Candidates should always use the space at the end of the booklet initially, and indicate clearly in the main answer where it later resumes. Some even continued comprehension answers at the start of the essay pages. A significant number of candidates continue to use the space below and in the margins, which causes difficulties for markers. Such answers are always marked, however.

There was another increase in the amount of typed answers seen, and as a result there were very few legibility issues in scripts. In some cases, candidates clearly found typing difficult to judge by the number of wrong letters pressed and did not check over their work. Many candidates typed extensive answers, but there were some who spent half a page on some of the questions worth 5 marks each, and ran out of time in essays. Candidates should be very wary of spending too long on the first half of the paper as the extra marks that might be gained in these questions very rarely make up for those lost in the essay section.

Candidates found the Section A questions more straightforward than Section B. In (a) questions, most candidates were able to focus on key areas of the passage and provide evidence for opinions. Weaker responses tended to be repetitive, especially in the questions 1(a), 2(a) and 7(a). Literary style questions again caused some candidates problems in both texts, with comments being often generalised and lacking in incisive comment. The (b) questions were often the best done of the three, but knowledge of speeches was very variable. The order of events also caused problems with candidates often ascribing to one part of the text something that was given in a different part. It is a shame when candidates know the text very well, but when the question demands completely different knowledge. In (c) questions, the most successful answers were ones that used knowledge to answer the question set, rather than just retell events. This was a particular problem with 6 (c).

Section B answers varied hugely in standard. Candidates generally struck a good balance between showing knowledge of the text and giving their opinions, but a good number are still spending the vast majority of the essay retelling the story and then giving opinions in a concluding paragraph. Many did give good two sided arguments, but were let down by the lack of a good conclusion. The conclusion is a key part to actually answering the question set, and candidates do need to devote enough time and care to it.

Comments on Individual Questions:

1 (a) Most candidates were able to make at least two good points on the character of Nausicaa. Her kindness was often alluded to, with a pleasing level of knowledge of the concept of xenia. The idea of her being white-armed, and hence not having to work was also much in evidence. Many also referred to other areas such as her authority over her maids, and her willingness to do manual tasks. A very popular answer was her desire to marry Odysseus with weaker responses simply said saying it showed she fancied Odysseus, but better ones talking about her being judgemental or her willingness to do her expected duty and marry. Some candidates need to go beneath the surface and not simply repeat what is in the passage with little analysis.

1 (b) Whilst this question was done quite well, many candidates suffered from not being specific enough. Whilst most knew that Odysseus was told to travel separately, candidates often said that Odysseus was told not to walk with Nausicaa at all, and to make his own way from the beach for fear of gossip. Both of these statements only refer to part of the journey, which was not broken down into its elements. There little on the actual route that Nausicaa outlines for Odysseus, as well as details such as waiting in the poplar grove of Athena. Most knew that he was told to seek the rulers and supplicate, but a good number of candidates were either general in not referring to Arete specifically, or else wrongly mentioned as Alcinous as the one to whom to make the request.

1 (c) Many candidates did not venture far outside the passage and so answers often tended to repeat ideas given in (a) about the interest in seeing a possible relationship and seeing Nausicaa's hospitality. Whilst these are acceptable ideas, candidates should be aware that repeating ideas from earlier questions does not score highly. Better ideas mentioned the involvement of Athene in the meeting, getting information about the Phaeacians, and seeing Odysseus' skills as a speaker. A major problem was a tendency with many of the candidates to simply describe something about the meeting between the pair and label it as 'interesting' without any real attempt to evaluate where the interest lies.

2 (a) There were some good answers to this question, but for such a famous passage, many candidates struggled to do more than quote words and say that this was horrific or dramatic. The word "gruesome" featured in many answers to good effect, and the similes were reasonably handled, but analysis was often superficial. Some fairly obvious ideas, such as the eating of every bit of the men, received little attention, and there was scope for more discussion of the shock of the initial attack, the calmness of the ending and the appeal to Zeus by war-hardened soldiers. Candidates should reflect that question setters choose the start and opening of the printed passages very carefully so that ideas can be taken from the whole passage.

2 (b) There was more inaccurate information here than at any point on the paper. The vast majority wrongly thought that Odysseus revealed his name as nobody, forgetting the whole point was to get Polyphemus drunk before saying this. Others thought he proudly gave his name as Odysseus, revealed his homeland or offered him wine. Another very common error was to say that he told Polyphemus about his adventures on the sea, whereas in fact this is almost at the start of his journey home. Other answers were too vague, with statements such as "he told him about his journey" or "he said how he had lost his men". Many answers did refer to his request for xenia and the fact that his boat had been wrecked. Some mentioned the roles of Zeus and Poseidon, and a small number mentioned the Trojan War and the command of Agamemnon. Overall, this was a very fine discriminator of candidates.

2 (c) Most candidates were able to discuss Polyphemus' caring nature as a farmer, with the best answers providing a lot of evidence for this. Weaker answers did not support their ideas nearly so much. His ability to make cheese was also praised by many, and some referred to his organisation skills, but this was not as common as was hoped. Occasionally references were made to his strength or respect for Poseidon. Some candidates seemed to have a strange idea of what being positive meant. The eating of only two men at a time when he could have eaten

them all at once, or even preparing Odysseus for facing other giants later in the story were cited on more than one occasion. Some also wasted time in describing his negative traits.

3 (a) This question generally produced some very fine responses. Many candidates commented on Odysseus' qualities as a commander, with the obedience of his crew and the close relationship of the word "friends" regularly cited. His relationship with Circe was also well discussed: some mentioned her help adding to his heroism, while others commented upon his respectful way of referring to her. Some candidates also referred to his dishonesty in twisting Circe's final words. Several made the interesting idea that he was more open with his men about information, perhaps learning from his mistakes.

3 (b) Candidates showed a good level of knowledge of the advice of Circe. The most common instructions given were those around Scylla and Charybdis. Facts were generally accurate, and the best answers included minute detail such as calling on Scylla's mother, but some answers were vague or incorrect on how many men Scylla would kill. Many candidates only discussed this story, even if sometimes at great length. In recalling other stories, candidates reported that Circe tells Odysseus not to eat the Sun God's cattle, as opposed to not harming them. The best answers tended to have a range of stories discussed at reasonable length.

3 (c) There were many interesting responses to this question. Some candidates talked generally about the stories, suggesting that the soldiers were loyal and were desperate to get home. Whilst these ideas were clearly valid, candidates who looked at specific incidents did better. Many referred to the greed of the crew and their lack of knowledge causing them to open the bag of winds, and their tiredness and hunger causing them to stop on the Sun god's island and eat his cattle.

4 Candidates seem to have been well prepared for this essay and showed a strong factual knowledge of Circe and Calypso. Common ideas revolved around their help to Odysseus and their feelings for him, and their threats to his successful return to Ithaca. However, in giving facts, many candidates assumed Calypso and Circe did the same things, such as keep Odysseus against his will, offer immortality, and have help from maids. Candidates need to be more careful in what they ascribe to each character and treat each separately.

Some candidates focused too heavily on the sexual/romantic relationship with Odysseus meaning that other markers of mortality/immortality were often underdeveloped or left out, such as weaving or independence.

It was very interesting to see what candidates felt was mortal and immortal. Use of magic was always seen as an immortal quality, and love was felt to be a mortal quality, but there were many other ideas, although a lot of candidates did not say the women did mortal tasks such as weaving and singing. Particularly perceptive answers mentioned that no mortal would have stood up to Zeus initially like Calypso did, or that the independence that the women showed was something no Greek woman would have had. Many discussed other mortal feelings the women had. There were numerous other lucid ideas, and the regularity of these was usually what separated the best answers from those that were quite good.

Some candidates failed to bring in examples of other women in the Odyssey, thereby making evaluation much harder, although there was some good knowledge of the lives of women later in Greece. However this was an essay that generally showed a good level of evaluation.

5 There were some very fine responses to this essay. Most responses showed a good knowledge of the text, but some only provided the briefest outlines or listed the events, thereby being unable to show a thorough knowledge. Others wrote extensively on one set of the books but were too brief on the others.

The commonest ideas, which were usually well made, were that the later books were more exciting as they had more action and interesting characters. Candidates found the pace of the earlier books slow and uneventful at times. The best answers stated that the lack of violence in the earlier books was compensated for by other notable features, such as seeing Odysseus fend for himself and his eloquence.

As with the other Homer essay, candidates often tried to say that something was the case in one half that was not so in the other half. Similes and the involvement of gods were mentioned as making the first half better, but candidates need to acknowledge that the second half has both these elements. Few chose to say why they preferred a certain simile, but this would have been a very valid response.

Many candidates who scored highly on AO1 failed to reach the higher marks in AO2 and AO3 due to a tendency to just narrate episodes from the text and describe them as ‘interesting’ without any attempt at analysis or contextualisation. As the vast majority of candidates found the latter group of books more interesting, the focus tended to be on them, leaving some essays very unbalanced with little attempt to directly compare the two sets of books. The reasoning behind the candidates’ preferences were often underdeveloped and focused on ‘excitement’ and ‘suspense’ as the key determinants for interest and restricted to describing Odysseus’ meeting with various monsters

Evaluation between the two halves was often given in a final concluding paragraph. Evaluation is always best given throughout the essay, but many approached the essay in simply saying what they enjoyed about the books, without distinguishing the two sections at the same time. Such essays usually struggled to get above the “some” category for AO3.

6 (a) This question was not answered as well as had been anticipated, with many candidates missing ideas that examiners felt would be obvious. As the opening word in the passage was “change”, and the theme of the book was change, this seemed a logical point to make, but it occurred relatively infrequently. The invocation to the gods was also overlooked by many who preferred to talk about the elements in the subsequent lines. As with other questions, the start of passages should not be overlooked. Most talked about the contrast of elements being effective, but answers often tended to be rather repetitive in this, with candidates quoting large parts without analysis. The poetic expressions of the passage were ignored by virtually all candidates.

6 (b) Candidates showed a very pleasing level of knowledge on the whole. Many referred to the idea of a single season, although a few wrongly identified this as summer. The rivers of milk, honey and nectar and natural fertility of the land were regularly mentioned, with the best candidates choosing to give examples of the fruits that were produced. Often candidates described the Golden Age from the perspective of the later ages – reporting on elements that it didn’t have but which would come later. However there was usually enough correct information elsewhere to score good marks.

6 (c) Most knew how the two ages differed and made an attempt to explain how life in the Silver Age was harder. This often led to discussion about having to labour on the land, or the difficulties that extreme temperatures would cause. Weaker responses tended to list the differences, assuming it was obvious that life the Silver Age was harder, but without explaining how this actually was the case. The key word in this question was the word “explain”.

7 (a) There were some fine answers to this question. Candidates tended criticise Narcissus’ intelligence, with many referring to him as naïve. The most perceptive picked up on the fact that he seemed to know what was happening, but was powerless to act. Some felt he was melodramatic and in deep anguish in considering death. Many felt he was vain, which was seen as a valid response, but those candidates who were only able to suggest that he loved himself needed to go beyond this simplistic analysis.

7 (b) Many candidates started their answer by giving irrelevant, information about Narcissus' prophecy, with others also attributed the prayer to Nemesis as coming from echo. There were two main strands that examiners were hoping for: Narcissus' rejection of lovers and the subsequent punishment, and the reflection in the pool spotted during a break in hunting. Virtually all candidates recalled one strand, but many did not mention the other. Those that did mention both were also separated by the level of detail provided: information such as the naming of Nemesis or the reflection being seen in a break from hunting were only recalled in the best answers. The pool that Narcissus stared into was surprisingly missed by some who just mentioned he saw his reflection, or was even referred to as a puddle.

7 (c) This question was answered reasonably. Candidates chose the correct myths involving love and knew the details well, but often answers focused too much on retelling the myths, without saying why behaviour was foolish. Hence Apollo's pursuit of Daphne was simply regarded as foolish, without focusing on the idea of the possible rape or the ridiculous pleas of Apollo. Equally, candidates retold that Meleager killed his uncles, but did not say why it might have been foolish to do so. Even if an explanation seems obvious, candidates must give it.

8 (a) This question was answered very well. Many candidates commented on the basic approach to levelling the table, the simplicity of the food and wine on offer, and the ordinariness of the materials. The best candidates talked about all of these areas. Some candidates did not realise a three legged table was normal and talked about a missing leg.

8 (b) This question proved straightforward to most candidates. There were very few who did not know the story well, and most proceeded to give full accounts of what happened, with very few errors or unwarranted additional detail. Some candidates did miss out that their house was turned into a temple, whilst only the best answers correctly identified the types of trees that they became.

8 (c) Most candidates were able to spot the similarities between the two stories. The common themes of piety, a flood and the wiping out of those who were wicked were usually identified, but fewer were able to prove certain ideas, such as giving evidence for the love that both couples had for each other. There were also some errors, most commonly in believing that both couples were old.

9 This essay produced some very fine knowledge and understanding of what constituted good and bad behaviour. Most candidates picked out examples of characters who were good, bad and something in the middle. Common figures discussed were Lycaon, Pentheus, Deucalion, Philemon and Daedalus. In discussing good men, some candidates struggled to go beyond Deucalion and Philemon, about whom a question had been asked earlier. Several seemed unsure as to who was male and who was female in the married couples. Better answers used a greater range of good characters. The best answers usually discussed some of the less obvious characters like Theseus or Acoetes. Some attempted to use such characters, but could not recall their names accurately.

At times, essays did read like a list of unconnected mini character sketches. If this was the case, the characters did need connecting and there to be a strong conclusion, but this regularly did not happen. For some, it became a question of counting the number of each type and then coming to a conclusion. Some answers did not have three sections based on the quality of characters, but looked at common themes, such as respect that men had for the gods, and although Deucalion and Philemon were mentioned, Erysichthon, Pentheus and Lycaon, together with all the flood victims, outweighed the good characters. By mentioning the good and bad in the same section, the comparisons and evaluation became much clearer. This was the less common approach, but it would be good to see more candidates writing this way in future.

10 This essay provided some interesting ideas. Lots of different changes were discussed, with stories such as Lycaon and Daphne featuring regularly. Most found such changes interesting,

but they did not always explain why the change itself was interesting. Better essays would discuss the individual elements of the changes, such as which bits of Daphne became which parts of the tree, allowing us to see the full picture of the change.

Some candidates noted that the physical changes themselves were often very minor parts of the myth, or barely there at all. Others noted the aetiological changes would be very interesting to readers of the time. Such ideas were always well received.

Many took the idea of change beyond the physical. Change of character was discussed, and often done well, although some spent too long on this, and it felt like they were writing a previously set question. However it was in discussing things other than physical change where some essays struggled. There was some over narration, with occasional references as to what was interesting. A better approach was to make a point at the start of a paragraph, such as the links between consecutive stories, and to discuss examples as to how Ovid achieves this. This usually avoided the problem of over narration.

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

General Comments:

In this unit candidates had the opportunity to display their knowledge and understanding of the unit at a level appropriate to their ability. There was little evidence of candidates being unable to complete the paper within the allotted time and the majority had clearly practised well for the examination, with almost all following the rubric correctly. There were few examples of candidates ticking the wrong number of responses on the multiple choice questions.

Very few candidates wrote answers outside the designated area and many made good use of the extra pages at the back of the booklet, however, a significant number of candidates used the extra pages but failed to indicate this in the main answer space, which would have been helpful to examiners.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Option 1 – Sparta

Section A

Tasks were, on the whole, completed well and caused few difficulties for candidates who had revised thoroughly

Task 1 was usually done well, although a common mistake was to include Leonidas as one of the Greeks who advised the Persians.

For Task 2 quite a few candidates mistakenly ticked the answer that the Spartan government was re-elected every ten years.

Section B

7a) Many candidates were able to identify some of the main changes attributed to Lykourgos. More confident answers mentioned laws, government, *agoge*, full-time army, currency reform and equal shares of land.

b) Some candidates were able to show an understanding of the importance of the kings with one commanding the army and the other remaining in Sparta. Their importance as religious leaders and figureheads was often alluded to as well as taking care of orphaned heiresses and road maintenance.

c) Many candidates were able to evaluate importance of the kings compared to other parts of the government. Many candidates discussed the power of the *Ephors* and how they checked up on the king and could depose him but *Ephors* were only in power for one year. Thorough responses tended to discuss the *Gerousia* and the king's role within it.

8a) Candidates were able to show understanding by eliciting from the drawing the Spartiate's beard with no moustache and well groomed hair being Spartan mores as well as well developed muscles from military training. Some referred to the simple robe and unadorned couch and bowl.

b) The most successful answers covered the different members of the family: men at the *syssitia*, women at home, girls at home, boys before they were seven at home then at the *agoge* after they were seven or fending for themselves.

c) Thorough evaluations included reference to the Spartiates having no time to make art as they were busy training for war or fighting; also Spartiates lacked the requisite skills, having never been taught them; art was not valued in Sparta and Spartiates were not encouraged to make it; *perioikoi* were the craftsmen.

9a) Many answers referred to the use of the shields for fighting in a *phalanx*, covering half of the man at the side, as well as the use of the long spears for thrusting rather than throwing and the short swords for fighting at close quarters.

b) Explanations usually focused on the Spartan ethos and ‘with it or on it’ as well as the idea that a Spartan would have to be dead to let go of his shield and because of their successful use of the *phalanx* the Spartans were often successful in battle so the enemy would not be in a position to capture a shield.

c) Evaluation of the reasons for the success of Spartan fighting methods often included the soldiers being trained since childhood and having good camaraderie built up by the *syssitia*; musical signals were referred to as well as feigned retreat. Lack of success was usually attributed to being outnumbered.

Option 2 – Pompeii

Section A

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

In Task 10 many candidates selected ‘cellar’ as a part of the *thermopolium* of Asellina instead of ‘stove’.

In Task 13c a common error was to tick ‘to please the emperor.’

Section B

16 a) Candidates were able to demonstrate thorough understanding by detailing that the exercising took place in the *palaestra*, massage and hair plucking could take place in the *tepidarium* or *caldarium* although all reasonable suggestions were accepted, plunging in the pool could take place in the swimming pool or *frigidarium*, drink and snack selling in the shops or colonnade.

b) Answers giving thorough detail on how the Pompeians got clean at the baths included: *apodyterium*, rubbing on of oil, *palaestra*, *tepidarium*, *caldarium*, strigiling, *frigidarium*.

c) Many candidates were able to evaluate this question well with most referring to the comparative size of the women’s and men’s facilities, the back way in to the women’s suite and the lack of a *palaestra*, swimming pool and *frigidarium* for the women.

17a) More efficiently evaluated answers focused on what happened to Pompeii as opposed to what happened to Pliny the Elder. Many referred to Pliny as an eye witness and the falling ash/pumice burying houses and collapsing roofs as well as tremors making buildings fall down.

b) Candidates were often able to identify the earthquake in AD 62, tremors, wells and springs drying up, dogs howling and birds being silent. Many answers referred to the cloud over Mount Vesuvius.

c) The majority of candidates were able to show understanding of people dying from being hit by falling rocks and being crushed by collapsing buildings in addition to suffocation or thermal shock caused by the pyroclastic flows.

18a) Many successful answers made reference to the clever slave, old man, young man, unsuitable girl or prostitute and arrogant soldier, with a few adding the sponger and cook.

b) Answers often showed good understanding with most candidates detailing the raised stage being easily visible and the back drop usually being a street with three doors. Some answers discussed the whole theatre rather than just the scenery and stage which did not gain credit.

c) Many responses alluded to the stone seats and use of cushions and the allocation of 40cm of space. The awning to create shade from the sun was often evaluated as well as the sprinkling of scented water.

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

General Comments:

This unit offered candidates the opportunity to display their knowledge and understanding of a chosen topic at a level apposite to their ability level and differentiated well. There were some examples of candidates constructing superb answers which went significantly beyond the level expected for GCSE and were a pleasure to read. Some candidates displayed in-depth knowledge of the House of the Faun and the House of the Vettii in Pompeii while others analysed in discriminating detail the Spartan system and the extent to which it created a perfect army. In the main, examination technique was competent and in general, it was evident that the candidates had been well prepared for the examination.

In Section A most candidates answered two questions in accordance with the instructions. In Section B there were very few instances of candidates running out of time and some wrote extensively in response to the essay titles. Many candidates in need of extra space made good use of the additional pages at the back of the answer book, although some candidates wrote in the white space between the questions and in the margins and writing in these areas is very hard for examiners to read.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Option 1 – Sparta

Section A

1a) Well answered with most candidates being able to identify the main changes attributed to Lykourgos. Knowledgeable answers mentioned laws, government, *agoge*, full-time army, currency reform and equal shares of land.

b) The majority of candidates showed understanding of the importance of the kings with one commanding the army and the other remaining in Sparta. Their importance as religious leaders and figureheads was often alluded to as well as taking care of orphaned heiresses and road maintenance.

c) Many candidates were able to evaluate importance of the kings compared to other parts of the government. Many candidates discussed the power of the *Ephors* and how they checked up on the king and could depose him but *Ephors* were only in power for one year. Thorough responses tended to discuss the *Gerousia* and the king's role within it.

2a) Candidates were able to show understanding by eliciting from the drawing the Spartiate's beard with no moustache and well groomed hair being Spartan mores as well as well developed muscles from military training. Some referred to the simple robe and unadorned couch and bowl.

b) Successful answers covered the different members of the family: men at the *syssitia*, women at home, girls at home, boys before they were seven at home then at the *agoge* after they were seven or fending for themselves.

c). Thorough evaluations included reference to the Spartiates having no time to make art as they were busy training for war or fighting; also Spartiates lacked the requisite skills, having never been taught them; art was not valued in Sparta and Spartiates were not encouraged to make it; *perioikoi* were the craftsmen.

3a) Many answers referred to the use of the shields for fighting in a *phalanx*, covering half of the man at the side, as well as the use of the long spears for thrusting rather than throwing and the short swords for fighting at close quarters.

b) Explanations usually focused on the Spartan ethos and ‘with it or on it’ as well as the idea that a Spartan would have to be dead to let go of his shield and because of their successful use of the *phalanx* the Spartans were often successful in battle so the enemy would not be in a position to capture a shield.

c) Evaluation of the reasons for the success of Spartan fighting methods often included the soldiers being trained since childhood and having good camaraderie built up by the *syssitia*; musical signals were referred to as well as feigned retreat. Lack of success was usually attributed to being outnumbered.

Section B

4) For thorough AO1 marks, answers identified the main aspects of Spartan women’s contribution to Spartan society including giving birth, raising boys until age seven, bringing up girls to be fit and strong, managing the farm and *helots*, and upholding the ethos; thorough answers also identified important jobs done by other members of society: Spartiates, the government, *perioikoi*, *helots* and many candidates were able to do this successfully. Understanding of the benefits to Sparta of the different tasks for AO2 was displayed with varying levels of accomplishment; successful answers described how the women supplied soldiers for the army, kept everyone supplied with food, ensured loyalty to the Spartan ethos etc. For a thorough AO3 mark, candidates evaluated whether each of the jobs carried out by women was or was not more important than those carried out by other members of society.

5) Thorough AO1 marks were attained by describing in detail the different aspects of the Spartan system and army such as exposure of ‘weak’ babies, harsh treatment in early childhood, *agoge*, *krypteia*, *syssitia*, ethos etc. Candidates were often able to describe the Spartan system in thorough detail and with great enthusiasm. AO2 marks were gained successfully by showing understanding of the effect of the features of the system and how they contributed to the success of the Spartan army. Evaluation of the extent to which the system and the army it was creating could be considered perfect was necessary for a thorough band mark in AO3.

Option 2 – Pompeii

Section A

6a) Thorough understanding was demonstrated by detailing that the exercising took place in the *palaestra*, massage and hair plucking could take place in the *tepidarium* or *caldarium* although all reasonable suggestions were accepted, plunging in the pool could take place in the swimming pool or *frigidarium*, drink and snack selling in the shops or *collonade*.

b) Answers giving thorough detail on how the Pompeians got clean at the baths included: *apodyterium*, rubbing on of oil, *palaestra*, *tepidarium*, *caldarium*, strigiling, *frigidarium*.

c) Many candidates were able to evaluate this question well with most referring to the comparative size of the women's and men's facilities, the back way in to the women's suite and the lack of a *palaestra*, swimming pool and *frigidarium* for the women.

7a) Efficiently evaluated answers focused on what happened to Pompeii as opposed to what happened to Pliny the Elder. Many referred to Pliny as an eye witness and the falling ash/pumice burying houses and collapsing roofs as well as tremors making buildings fall down.

b) Candidates were often able to identify the earthquake in AD 62, tremors, wells and springs drying up, dogs howling and birds being silent. Many answers referred to the cloud over Mount Vesuvius.

c) The majority of candidates were able to show understanding of people dying from being hit by falling rocks and being crushed by collapsing buildings in addition to suffocation or thermal shock caused by the pyroclastic flows.

8a) Many successful answers made reference to the clever slave, old man, young man, unsuitable girl or prostitute and arrogant soldier, with a few adding the sponger and cook.

b) Answers often showed good understanding with most candidates detailing the raised stage being easily visible and the back drop usually being a street with three doors. Some answers discussed the whole theatre rather than just the scenery and stage which did not gain credit.

c) Many responses alluded to the stone seats and use of cushions and the allocation of 40cm of space. The awning to create shade from the sun was often evaluated as well as the sprinkling of scented water.

Section B

9) For AO1 many candidates showed thorough knowledge about inns and *thermopolia* as well as other places to socialise in Pompeii. Factual knowledge was frequently very good with many candidates detailing snacking, drinking gambling and prostitution among the activities in the inns / *thermopolia* and bringing in the baths, forum, houses, theatre and amphitheatre as other places to socialise. AO2 marks were gained by showing understanding of how people could socialise in the different venues and who would do so. For a successful AO3 score, candidates discussed the comparative importance of each of the social venues to different classes of people with the most astute answers recognising that different classes of society would socialise differently.

10) For AO1, many candidates showed superb knowledge of both the House of the Faun and the House of the Vettii, including details such as the Alexander mosaic, tetrastyle atrium and bath suite in the House of the Faun and Priapus, the chests and the cupids fresco in the House of the Vettii. AO2 marks were gained by showing understanding of how the features might impress visitors. For AO3, candidates discussed the comparative impact of the features of the houses on visitors. The most insightful responses discussed old money versus new money and the different sorts of visitors to the houses.

A354 Culture and Society in the Classical World

General Comments:

It is clear that the vast majority of centres which take this GCSE course are now well experienced in the running of the Controlled Assessment unit. The moderator team has been impressed, once again, by the high standard of candidates' work, and the efficiency of the centres.

Candidates demonstrated enthusiasm and skill in their studies of the Classical world and each option had been approached in a logical way. It was good to see that some candidates had access to a wide range of resources, and there was sensible use made of internet sources, too. Once again there was evidence from most centres that candidates had been well-taught in preparation for their Controlled assessment task, and that they had a good contextual knowledge in place before they started their independent research. However, as in past years, it appeared as if some candidates answering the Olympic Games questions were less well prepared for the topic than some of the others, perhaps this was because the topic had not been taught in class.

As in previous years the Olympic Games option was the most popular, with the Sophocles option coming second. Also, some centres allowed their candidates a choice of either question from their chosen option, which is good for seeing independent research. However this sometimes led to slightly inconsistent marking, meaning problems with patterns/rank order. Perhaps these centres might consider sticking to one question for all the candidates in future.

The administration of the Controlled Assessment was very good overall, but some centres are still not checking that their candidates have included an accurate word-count. Sources and quotes etc. are not included in the word count, so it is up to the candidates to work out an accurate total of their own words. The word limit of 2,000 words was closely adhered to by most candidates, but it was apparent that some candidates might have been instructed that they were allowed to go over or under the word limit without it impacting on their marks. Answers over or under the 2,000 word limit risk impacting their mark in AO1. Most markers were aware of this but others needed reminding by the moderator in their report. Many centres send in word processed work, which is to be commended, but some of these pieces did not have word counts, which is an extraordinary omission considering how easy it is to produce a word count on a computer.

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

The moderators are unanimous in stressing the advantages of producing work on computers, including word counts, adding illustrations, legibility and editing.

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

The standard of marking was generally very high, and it was pleasing to see how many centres fully understood the mark scheme, and how carefully it was applied. It is particularly helpful when the comments on the cover sheet (CCS 336) are clear and detailed, and explain why the marks have been awarded. Some centres ensure that they proofread and check all their marks, which is good practice that can cut out a range of bureaucratic errors. Likewise, annotations

throughout the scripts indicated AO1, AO2 and AO3 are most helpful in enabling us to ensure consistency of standard. Centres use a range of systems for this: some use different colour 'ticks' to show where credit is awarded for each AO, others write "AO1" etc next to the relevant section of candidates' work, and so on. A few centres sent in work with little (or no) annotation and this makes moderating the work much more demanding. Some centres have been reminded of the importance of clearly stating where credit is awarded on scripts in their reports.

The CCS 336 is a statement by the centre that they have conducted the Controlled Assessment according to the OCR guidelines. These conditions should be applied rigorously. In the vast majority of centres in A354 this was clearly the case. Other cover sheets are redundant and should not be used. The old system of getting the candidates to sign individual cover sheets is not applicable to this specification.

Most scripts came to the moderators held together with staples or treasury tags – thank you. Some still arrive in individual plastic or cardboard wallets. These slow down the moderating process and should not be sent.

There seemed to be a trend, as noticed before, for making answers to previous years' questions fit, rather than focusing on the ones set for the current year. AO3 therefore often seems to be the most problematic category, as this can make it difficult for the students to answer the questions directly and to keep the material relevant.

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

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

Comments on Individual Questions:

Option 1: Sophocles *Antigone*

1. Candidates generally demonstrated a clear understanding of the text in context when answering this question. An interesting range of responses was seen, with some candidates showing sympathy for Antigone, others for Cleon, while others argued strongly that she brought about her own fate quite deservedly. Some answers were a comparison of the perspective of ancient and modern audiences which, although an interesting interpretation of the question, was not exactly what was asked.

2. This question allowed candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the text and set it in context of a performance. Most centres opted for the 'ancient' performance and then linked the themes of the play to Athenian life – usually very effectively. A small number of centres chose an example using a modern production. One centre used a recent production of *Antigone* starring Juliette Binoche. The answers covered all aspects of the production – staging, costumes and etc. Two of the more interesting things they discussed were the age of Juliette Binoche and the Chorus; this production dispensed with a traditional chorus and instead the main cast members acted as the chorus and switched to their main roles as needed.

Option 2: Aristophanes *Lysistrata*

The Aristophanes section provided a nice challenge for the candidates and there were some thoughtful and perceptive responses at the upper end of the range while it was clear that less academic candidates had also been able to engage with and enjoy the subject.

3. This question was answered effectively and candidates generally were aware of the importance of demonstrating their contextual knowledge of daily life in Athens.

4. Very few examples of this question were seen. We were impressed by the range of productions referred to including a contemporary production by Syrian refugees recently reported in the media, which helped candidates explore the idea of the female voice in Athenian culture.

Option 3: The Olympic Games

There was a fairly even split between questions. Often with Q5 there was not much attempt to consider anything other than the religious aspects and so the arguments often lacked balance, whereas the wording of Q6 lent itself to offering a more balanced discussion. These tended to be the questions where sources' provenances were most evidently discussed.

5. This question lent itself to a two-sided debate centred on various aspects of the Olympics, and candidates responded well to it. There was generally good use of a range of evidence, particularly pictures of the site as well as reconstructions of temples and statues etc. There was some good analysis based on the extant remains from the site linked to reconstructions and texts such as Swaddling. Some centres focused on the religious aspects and almost ignored the sporting and political sides. One centre's candidates used a timeline to show how things changed over time.

6. The question on the experience of spectators offered rather different challenges and was not, on the whole, as well answered as Q5. There was a tendency for candidates to concentrate too much on a narrative account, or the experience of modern spectators, or both, rather than focusing fully on the comparison of the two based on evidence. Q6 often led to students making a general comparison between the ancient and modern Olympics, which was not always relevant to the spectators' relative experiences.

Option 4: Virgil *The Aeneid*

7. In the main this was answered very well. Candidates' responses were very individual in their choice of quotes and which side they came down on. As might be expected the lower ability students tended to lose a bit of focus on the actual question and some ended up as a character analysis until the last paragraph when they tried to answer the question. However, there was a certain amount of confusion about the "second half" part of this question, since the students often seemed to think that Turnus was in the first half of the epic, and sometimes confused his character with that of Aeneas in their responses.

8. This was chosen by only a few centres but was generally pretty well done.

Option 5: Pliny *Letters*

9. Only a few centres chose this, and there was a tendency to rely heavily on the textbook.

10. These were mature and balanced responses on the whole, covering a range of letters and mostly answering the question directly. It would have been nice to have seen some more knowledge of Pliny the man and the wider political context that he was in. We generally found that candidates' knowledge of him was all drawn from deductions from the various letters they had looked at in class. This was not a problem in itself, but there was more that could have been discussed.

Option 6: Roman Britain

11. We were delighted to see an increase in the number of centres opting for Roman Britain. Most of the responses to this question were both very pleasing. Generally there was a good understanding shown of the army, the development of *colonia*, Hadrian's Wall, Boudicca, religion and towns, and there was lots of evidence of good research.

12. There was a tendency to focus rather more on Roman literary sources than the archaeological ones, and this, of course, was problematic as Latin authors provide little evidence concerning Roman towns in Britain, let alone the impact on the countryside. Some centres focused individual aspects (eg villas, roads) sometimes at the expense of mentioning anything else.

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