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Examiners' report

LATIN

H443

For first teaching in 2016

H443/04 Summer 2024 series

Version 1

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Contents

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 4 series overview

H443/04 (Latin Verse Literature) is one of four examination components in GCE A Level Latin. This component focuses on comprehension and analysis of two set texts, taken from those prescribed in the specification in Groups 3 and 4 for 2023–24. Of the texts prescribed for Group 3, just over half of centres chose to study Virgil's *Aeneid* XII; the remaining centres studied a selection of Catullus's shorter poems. Of the texts set for Group 4, most centres chose to study the rest of Virgil's *Aeneid* XII or Ovid's *Heroides*; few centres studied Catullus's longer poems. All possible combinations of Group 3 and Group 4 texts were offered. Performance outcomes for all options were very similar.

To do well on this paper, candidates need to:

- understand, accurately translate and respond to passages from the Latin text
- understand the wider context of the text (social, historical and cultural)
- critically analyse the literary style, characterisation, argument and literary meaning of passages
- write at length on a given topic, drawing on knowledge of the texts prescribed for study in the original language as well as in translation.

Centres need to cover the whole of the specification content for this component, including the part of the prescription included in Group 4 to be studied in English.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• (short answer questions) understood the detail of the Latin text • (short answer questions) made sure that answers fully addressed the requirements of the question by extracting information from the text accurately, where necessary • (5 mark translation questions) provided an accurate translation faithful to the original Latin, without paraphrase • (15 mark questions) demonstrated their knowledge of the content of the Latin passages, quoting relevant phrases and sentences and then translating them accurately • (15 mark questions) picked out individual features of the text which enhanced the effect of the text, referring to the choice of words and to a range of stylistic features, where appropriate • (15 mark questions) discussed relevant features over the full length of the passage • (essays) demonstrated their knowledge of the text within its wider historical, literary and cultural context • (essays) demonstrated their knowledge of the full prescription (including material to be studied in English) • (essays) illustrated their points by reference to theme and detail of the text • (essays) included a good counter-argument.	• (short answer questions) were less secure in their knowledge of the Latin text • (short answer questions) OR translated the lines covered by the question without making sure this straight translation fully addressed the requirements of the question • (5 mark translation questions) created or replicated a free translation of the text which deviated too far from the original Latin • (15 mark questions) did not demonstrate their knowledge of the content of the Latin passage, either misquoting or quoting only individual words out of context or quoting longer sections of the text without translation or any close reference to the Latin • (15 mark questions) did not discuss **how** the content of the Latin contributed to creating the specified effect and/or identified only a narrow range of stylistic features (often *alliteration*, *hyperbaton*, etc.) • (15 mark questions) made excessive claims for what stylistic features (for example, alliteration) can 'convey' • (15 mark questions) left major gaps in their coverage of relevant content and features across the text • (essays) did not demonstrate knowledge of the full prescription (including material to be studied in English) • (essays) illustrated their points without sufficient, detailed reference to the text • (essays) included a weak counter-argument or no counter-argument at all.

Section A overview

Section A requires candidates:

- to translate a selected portion of a passage
- to demonstrate accurate comprehension
- to demonstrate good background knowledge
- to select relevant examples of content and style to respond to a given question

Outcomes for Questions 1 (Virgil) and 2 (Catullus) were roughly equal.

Assessment for learning: Comprehension questions

Is it enough to answer with a straight translation of the relevant text?

Many candidates answer comprehension questions with a straight translation of the relevant text into Latin. Whether this is sufficient or not to achieve full marks depends very much on the nature of the question asked. When a question asks simply for information from the text, a straight translation will usually be sufficient; 1(c) in this year's paper ('What request does Latinus make?') is a good example of this. On most other occasions, however, a candidate will need to extract the answer from the text by inference. Examples from this year's paper are given below:

- in 1(a), a straight translation is sufficient for the first mark, as given in the mark scheme, but not for the second. A straight translation of *o praestans animi iuvenis* reveals Latinus's opinion of *Turnus* and therefore does not in itself address '*how* these lines show *Latinus* to be a wise leader'; it is necessary to infer that Latinus intends to flatter or praise Turnus to encourage his compliance and that *this* is how he reveals his wisdom.
- 2(b) asks 'What does Catullus say to show the *extent* of Caesar's achievements?' Here a straight translation focuses on *Catullus*, on a fantasy trip that *he* might take in the company of Furius and Aurelius; it therefore stops short of explaining the connection between *Catullus's* fantasy and *Caesar's* achievements. For full marks, the answer needs to focus on Caesar and explain that the destinations mentioned in these lines honour the recent achievements of Caesar in crossing dangerous terrain and dangerous natural boundaries of the Roman empire, i.e. by travelling *across* the high Alps, *across* the Gallic Rhine and across the horrible sea to the most remote Britons.
- 5(b) asks 'what *point* is Penelope making here?'. Here a straight translation falls short of illustrating the 'point' of Penelope's words. It is necessary to infer (i) that Penelope is using Antilochus as an example of any Greek leader and (ii) that her fear concerned her husband experiencing the same or a similar fate.

Question 1 (a)

1 Read the following passages and answer the questions.

(a) *olli … expendere casus* (lines 1–4): how do these lines show Latinus to be a wise leader? **[3]**

See 'Assessment for Learning: Comprehension questions' above.

Question 1 (d)

(d) Translate *me natam … sumpsi* (lines 10–14). **[5]**

The 5 mark translation questions throughout the paper revealed a very encouraging uplift in the number of candidates gaining 5 out of 5 marks over previous years.

Generally speaking, translations are marked on the proportion of sense correctly reflecting the original Latin. For full marks here, however, translations must show no more than one 'slight' or minor error (for the categorisation of which see the mark scheme).

Common errors which prevented candidates from gaining full marks this year were:

1(d): omission of omnes (line 11); promissam as 'promise'

2(a): treatment of Furi et Aureli (line 1) as nominative subjects (with 'are' supplied) rather than vocatives

3(a): translating contra (line 1) as 'in response/reply', which makes no sense in the context

4(d): omission of fallaci (line 28)

5(d): translation of novata …est (line 20) and/or consuluit (line 23) as present tense OR translation of tepefecerat (line 19) and erat … iugulatus (line 21) as perfect tense ('slight' errors) in combination with another 'slight' error.

Assessment for learning: Development of points

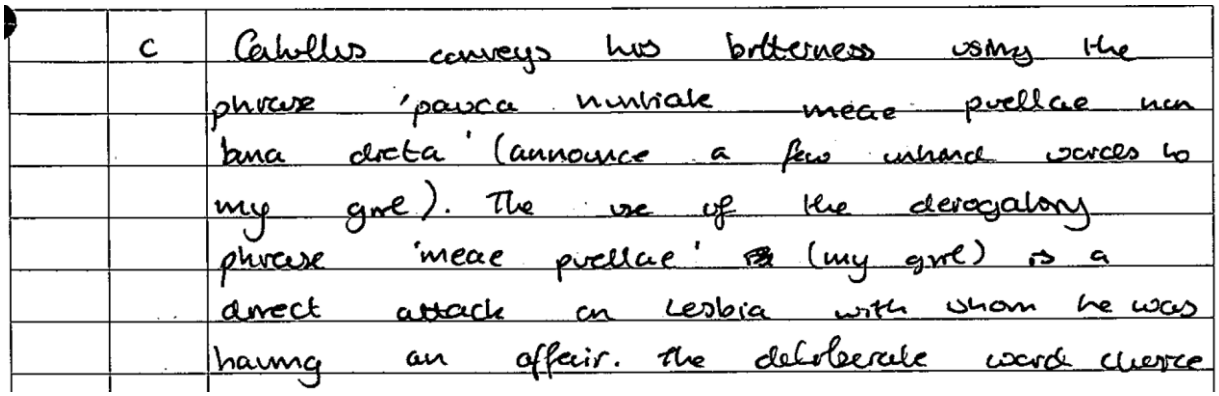
'Development of points' is a main feature of the assessment grid for marking 15 mark questions.

In reaching the mark for such a question, examiners are required to judge whether development is 'very good' (Level 5), 'good' (Level 4), 'some' (Level 3), 'little' (Level 2) or non-existent.

Stronger candidates demonstrate 'very good' development, but many candidates show inconsistency in this area and less successful candidates struggle to develop their points adequately.

Common errors are illustrated in the exemplars, starting with underdevelopment.

Exemplar 1 - Underdevelopment

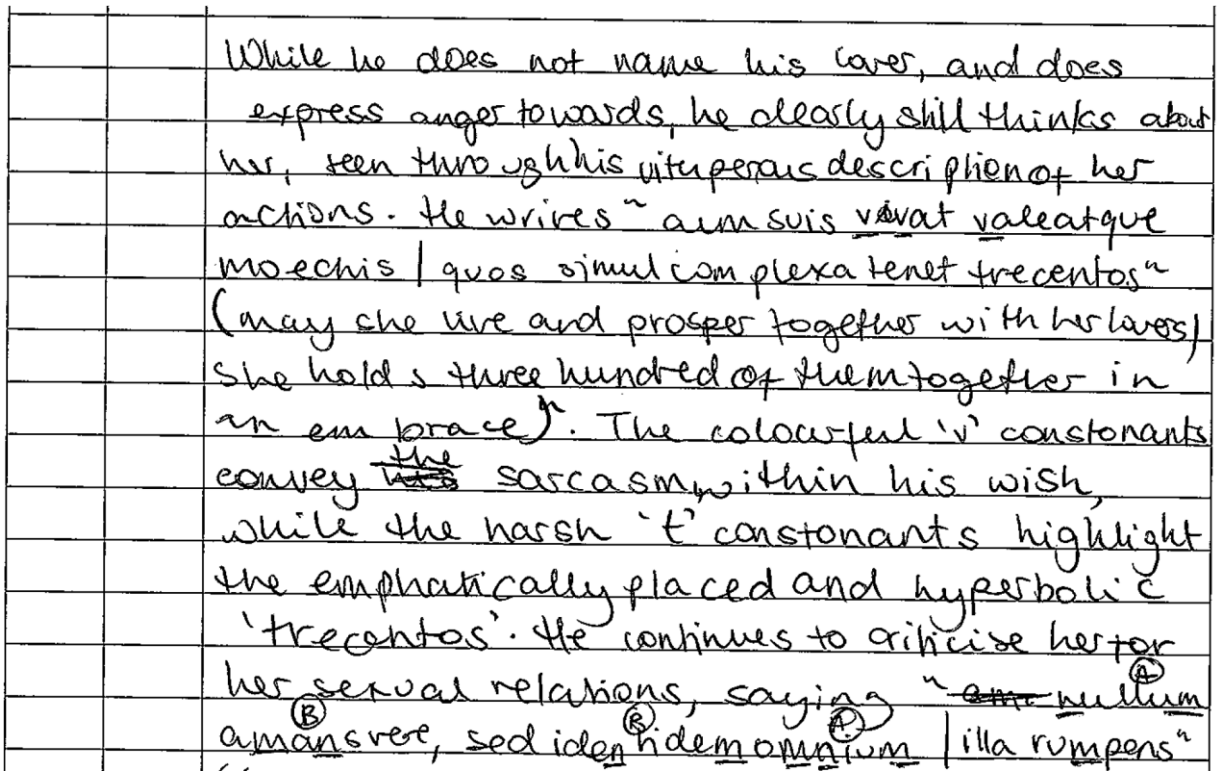


c Catullus conveys his bitterness using the phrase 'paucа nuntiate meae puellae non bona dicta' (announce a few unkind words to my girl). The use of the derogatory phrase 'meae puellae' (my girl) is a direct attack on Lesbia with whom he was having an affair. The deliberate word choice

Exemplar 1 (discussing 2(c)) illustrates a response which shows good knowledge of the text. The candidate picks out *meae puellae* from line 15 as an opportunity to demonstrate Catullus's 'bitterness and anger'. Although there is a good argument to be made here, the candidate does not develop the point adequately, as they do not explain how or why the phrase *meae puellae* is 'derogatory' or 'a direct attack on Lesbia'.

Assessment for learning: Development of points continued...

Exemplar 2 – focus on style over meaning of words



While he does not name his lover, and does express anger towards, he clearly still thinks about her, seen through his vituperous description of her actions. He writes "cum suis vivat valeatque moechis | quos simul complexa tenet trecentos" (may she live and prosper together with her lovers) She holds three hundred of them together in an embrace". The colourful 'v' constonants convey the sarcasm within his wish, while the harsh 't' constonants highlight the emphatically placed and hyperbolic 'trecentos'. He continues to criticise her for her sexual relations, saying "nullum (A) amans vere, sed idem (B) omnium (C) illa rumpens"

Exemplar 2 (discussing 2(c)) illustrates a response which overstates the ability of stylistic features to convey sense. The candidate again shows good knowledge of the text. However, the candidate does not explain how/why these words are perceived as sarcasm, as the point relies exclusively on alliteration, rather than the meaning. Stylistic features can enhance the meaning/tone of words, but rarely convey meaning *per se.*

Misconception: Understanding 'hyperbaton'

The term 'hyperbaton' is more often claimed than justified. Candidates claim hyperbaton where a noun is separated from its adjective by one word or more within a line. This is a very common feature of Latin poetry, as the language is one where the sense and structure of a sentence is determined by word endings rather than by word order.

Longinus describes hyperbaton as a device which intends to replicate emotional distress: 'It is a very real mark of urgent emotion. People who in real life feel anger, fear, or indignation, or are distracted by jealousy or some other emotion … often put one thing forward and then rush off to another, irrationally inserting some remark, and then hark back again to their first point. They seem to be blown this way and that by their excitement, as if by a veering wind… Thus hyperbaton is a means by which, in the best authors, imitation approaches the effect of nature' (*On Sublimity* 22.1, translated by D. A. Russell and M. Winterbottom (edd.), *Classical Literary Criticism*, Oxford, 1989).

A good example of hyperbaton in the passages included in this year's paper exists in the erratic word order, reflecting Turnus's distress, in 1(e) lines 2–4: *vidi oculos ante ipse meos me voce vocantem/ Murranum, quo non superat mihi carior alter,/ oppetere…*

Question 1 (e)*

(e)* How does Virgil create sympathy for Turnus in these lines?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage. **[15]**

Strong responses considered this passage in its wider context: Turnus is addressing his sister, Juturna, declaring that he had long since recognised her involvement, despite her disguise. Those candidates who recalled that he asks Juturna whether she was sent down from Olympus simply to be a spectator of his own death were able to justify more convincingly the conclusion (*nam*) underlying the opening rhetorical question (*quid ago?* (line 1)) that Turnus sees no way to escape death. Many candidates correctly understood that the second rhetorical question (*quae iam spondet Fortuna salutem?* (line 1)) demonstrates a fatalistic attitude, a recognition that Turnus himself is no longer capable of influencing events but is no more than a pawn of fate.

Most candidates commented on the personal losses suffered by Turnus, discussing well how the promotion of *vidi* and the accumulation of self-reference in *oculos … ipse meos me* (all line 2) suggest the trauma of being a witness to the scene. Here was an excellent opportunity to invoke the otherwise much overused term *hyperbaton* (see 'Misconception' above) in the erratic ordering of lines 2–4: *vidi oculos ante ipse meos me voce vocantem/ Murranum, quo non superat mihi carior alter,/ oppetere…* A few candidates made an alternative and very perceptive point that Aeneas killed Murranus at a time when Juturna, in the guise of the charioteer, Metiscus, was ensuring that Turnus could not come within fighting range of Aeneas. The wound which Turnus mentions as *ingenti,* moreover, does not accurately reflect the actual death he suffered at Aeneas's hands, being crushed by a rock and then trampled by his own horses and chariot. For both these reasons, these candidates argued, it is unlikely that Turnus actually was an eye-witness of Murranus's death; far from diminishing Turnus's trauma, however, these candidates argued that Turnus is haunted by his own visualisation of a *likely* scene playing over and over again in his mind.

Most candidates cited the death of Ufens as a further illustration of the personal losses that Turnus suffered. A few perceptively observed the contrast between the description of Ufens here as *infelix* (line 5) with his earlier introduction into the epic (VII, 745) as *insignem fama et felicibus armis*, signalling how far the fortune of Ufens (and by extension Turnus's army) has fallen. Many good responses noted how the suggestion that Ufens chose to die in order not to witness the disgrace of Turnus and his army evokes sympathy for Turnus's overwhelming sense of shame and guilt. Few, if any, candidates, however, noticed the inconsistency between Turnus's account of Ufens' death and Virgil's (XII, 460): here it is Gyas who kills Ufens in the confusion accompanying the initial breaking of the treaty; Turnus need not in fact bear the responsibility for Ufens' death or attribute it to his desire not to witness or experience disgrace. Turnus's strong sense of responsibility for his people is starting to produce a guilt complex and for that it is easy to feel sympathy. Most candidates went on to perceive further shame or guilt in Turnus's comment that the Trojans possess Ufens' body and weapons. Many candidates, however, did not develop this point by explaining why this fact would have evoked shame in an ancient warrior.

It was in the central section of the passage that the danger of not considering the wider context was most apparent. Weaker responses which did not bear the wider context in mind often interpreted the first three rhetorical questions (*exscindine … terra videbit?* lines 7–9) as evidence of Turnus's confusion or conflicting feelings of fear and duty.

Stronger responses, on the other hand, recognised that Turnus poses these rhetorical questions to Juturna and more convincingly interpreted them as evidence of his determination, a determination to stop his sister from keeping him at the edges of the battlefield and to face up to his moral duty as the Rutulian leader: when he asks 'shall I endure the destruction of our homes?', he expects Juturna to understand that the answer is 'no'; when he asks whether he 'shall not refute the words of Drances', he expects the answer 'of course you shall'; when he asks 'shall I flee…', he wants Juturna to understand that no self-respecting leader would do this. Many candidates understood and explained the reference to Drances, but an equal number either omitted to or were unable to do this.

The final section of this passage (lines 10–end) was generally translated and analysed well.

Question 2 (a)

2 Read the following passages and answer the questions.

(a) Translate *Furi et Aureli … Nilus* (lines 1–8). **[5]**

See 1(d).

Question 2 (b)

(b) *sive trans altas … Britannos* (lines 9–12): what does Catullus say to show the extent of Caesar's achievements? **[3]**

See 'Assessment for Learning: Comprehension questions' above.

Question 2 (c)*

(c)* *omnia haec … aratro est* (lines 13–24): how does Catullus convey his bitterness and anger in this passage?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage. **[15]**

Many candidates ignored the opening two lines of this passage. More successful candidates, however, noted the stark contrast between the heights of loyalty that Furius and Aurelius promise Catullus (*omnia haec … temptare simul parati* (lines 13–15)) and the depths of disloyalty which motivate the message to be sent to Catullus's former girlfriend; his exaggeration of this contrast emphasises his disappointment and bitterness greatly. Some candidates alternatively noticed the contrast between the volume and grandeur in the opening 12 lines and the short, prosaic phrase *pauca … dicta* (lines 15–6) to indicate the curt message to be given to Lesbia; they interpreted this contrast to signify how he wishes to present a dismissive attitude to 'his girl' in his bitterness. Some candidates then developed this point to argue that his anger gets the better of him and these 'few words' quickly multiply to match in number (if not in tone) those with which he describes the loyalty of Furius and Aurelius.

In the second stanza, many candidates showed good knowledge by noting the intratextual allusion to the opening of Catullus 5: *vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus*. Less successful candidates, however, did not make use of this knowledge to show how it contributes to our understanding of Poem 11. More successful candidates, on the other hand, went on to discuss how the differences within the similarity of the two lines stress Catullus's bitterness and anger: the first person plural verbs and *mea* of Catullus 5 presenting them as a twosome have now become third person, presenting Lesbia as an independent agent, driving a wedge between them both; the tone of Poem 5 is heartfelt and joyful sincerity, whereas underlying Poem 11 there is bitter sarcasm, culminating in the delayed revelation that her new company is multiple *moechis* (line 17). Catullus categorically does not wish Lesbia well, but wishes to blacken her character as a serial adulterer and, as many candidates observed, a women obsessed with using men for sexual pleasure with no reciprocation of true love. Many candidates noted how Catullus stresses his own former love for her and its passing by isolating the word *amorem* after *ut ante* at the end of line 21.

Most candidates showed good knowledge by observing intertexuality within the final stanza. Again, however, weaker responses did not explain how this knowledge contributes to our understanding of Catullus's poetry. Stronger responses, on the other hand, noted the gender role reversal within the allusion to Sappho's poetry: in Sappho's poetry, the flower typically represents the female role, whereas in Poem 11, the flower is a symbol of Catullus himself, exaggerating the sense of his fragility and vulnerability; the plough, therefore, symbolises Lesbia and bestows on her the harsh and unfeeling brutality of a metal tool designed to tear open new ground.

Section B overview

Section B also requires candidates:

- to translate a selected portion of a passage
- to demonstrate accurate comprehension
- to demonstrate good background knowledge
- to select relevant examples of content and style to respond to a given question.

Candidates who attempted Questions 3, 4 and 5 performed with equal success.

Question 3 (a)

3 Read the following passage and answer the questions.

(a) Translate *Aeneas instat … comminus armis* (lines 1–4). **[5]**

See 1(d) above.

Question 3 (e)*

(e)* *sed neque currentem … sororem* (lines 17–32): what makes this such a powerful portrayal of Turnus' helplessness?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage. **[15]**

This passage caused problems for some candidates whose knowledge of the details of the text was inadequate. A number misinterpreted se nec cognoscit as 'he did not know that he was (running etc.)'; many believed that Turnus never managed to lift the rock, despite being able to translate line 20 as evidence that the rock flew through the air. Some translated genua labant (line 19) as 'his knees slipped/slid' or similar (from labor, labi, lapsus sum rather than labo, labare 'totter', 'sink', 'give way'). Others translated quacumque viam virtute petivit (line 27) as 'whatever path he sought with courage', as though quacumque were an accusative in agreement with viam.

Some candidates fell into error by analysing the English of their translations rather than the original Latin: many constructed points relying on the translation of 'immovable' for immane; others argued that there were three words denoting 'coldness' in gelidus concrevit frigore sanguis (line 19) because of their translation 'froze' for concrevit.

Commentary continues on next page...

Stronger responses recognised the 'out of body' feeling that Turnus experienced in the opening of the passage and how Virgil uses the four present participles to prolong this sensation of helplessness by laboriously breaking down all the four individual actions from which Turnus felt removed and which he therefore felt unable to control. Some candidates referred to the ponderous, predominantly spondaic rhythm of these lines, but few illustrated this by scanning them. Many weaker responses interpreted the

coldness mentioned in line 19 as evidence of Turnus's fear (see below on line 27); stronger responses noted the contrast between this description of coldness and the previously normal description of Turnus as *ardens,* signalling how Turnus has now been stripped of his normal attributes of both strength and fiery personality. The strongest responses recognised that both this coldness and the stiffness (as indicated by *concrevit*) recall the coldness and *rigor mortis* of a corpse, thus foreshadowing Turnus's imminent death. Perceptive points were also made by a few candidates that lines 20–21 deny Turnus the credit for the distance the rock actually moves at all, as it is the *lapis ipse* 'stone itself' that is credited with making its way through the empty void; in these lines Turnus is the owner of the stone, not its thrower.

Many candidates noted that Turnus's helplessness is accentuated in this passage by a simile which we can all relate to, based on the common experience we have in dreams that we want to do something but fail in mid-attempt. Good responses often noted the emphatically positioned active verb *pressit,* suggesting that *languida … quies* takes over control of our bodies at night; they concluded from this that, by analogy, Turnus too is now governed by a power he cannot control. Many candidates noted that the parts of the body mentioned in lines 25–26 include actions which we take for granted and which involve no physical strength; even these are denied us in our dreams and so too they are denied to Turnus in the narrative by analogy.

Perceptive comments noted the tautology of *vox aut verba* emphasising our incapacity to speak; perhaps this point could have been extended to note the dual nature of the incapacity, both physical, affecting the motor movement of the mouth (*vox*), and mental, affecting the capacity of the brain to articulate sense (*verba*).

Many less successful candidates attributed Turnus's physical weakness earlier in the passage (lines 17–19) to fear. *quacumque viam virtute petivit* in line 27 refutes this notion, portraying a man who is still actively seeking a way forward courageously. Most candidates focused on line 28 as evidence that a malign agency has taken over control and denied him success. Perceptive points were made by some candidates that line 30, *cunctatur metu letumque instare tremescit*, marks a significant moment in the development of Turnus's characterisation: not only does *cunctatur metu* contrast so strongly with his normal fearless and rash impetuosity but also the inceptive element *-sc-* in the verb *tremescit* denotes the first moment when Turnus begins to fear. There were some candidates who struggled to translate line 31; others argued convincingly that the final two lines show Turnus deprived of any way to save himself by his own means or to be saved by anyone else, significantly by the one person he has been able to rely on up to now, his sister.

Question 4 (c)*

(c)* *sicine me … curant* (lines 9–25): how does Catullus convey Ariadne's anger and disappointment in these lines?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage. **[15]**

Few centres chose to study Catullus for their Group 4 text. Knowledge of the text of this passage was very variable. Candidates who did know the text well identified many convincing points, as demonstrated by the wide range of such points listed on the mark scheme.

Question 4 (d)

(d) Translate *certe ego … terra* (lines 26–30). **[5]**

See 1(d) above.

Question 5 (a)*

5 Read the following passage and answer the questions.

(a)* *haec tua … semper eram* (lines 1–14): how does Penelope express her frustration and concern at Ulysses' absence in these lines?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage. **[15]**

Most candidates found this a very accessible question. Many knew the text well and made a wide variety of points in line with those indicated in the mark scheme. Less successful candidates often ignored lines 5–6 expressing Penelope's wish that Paris had been drowned on his way to Sparta; perhaps they did not fully understand how frustrated Penelope feels at the consequences of him reaching his destination, where his actions led to the war being initiated in the first place. Some candidates noted that Penelope's frustration with Paris reveals itself in her refusal to refer to him by name. Few, if any, candidates, however, observed how the use of adulterer to refer to Paris symbolises her contempt for adultery itself, for the moral transgression which created so much fear, loneliness and hatred of Troy, not only for herself but also for so many other Danais … puellis (line 3).

A few stronger candidates then went on to note the number of references in this passage which contrast the moral transgression of Paris with her own chastity, again to emphasise her frustration: *tua Penelope* (line 1, later repeated) signals how true she is to her husband; *deserto … frigida lecto* (line 7) implies not only the coldness and loneliness Penelope has suffered over the years, but the purity of her chastity, that no one else has ever taken Ulysses' place in this place so symbolic of their union; the reference to Penelope *quaerenti spatiosam fallere noctem* (line 9) serves to remind us of the efforts to which she went to remain Ulysses' wife and not to be married off to one of the many suitors. Many candidates argued well that *tardos … dies* (line 8) and *spatiosam … noctem* (line 9) demonstrate Penelope's frustration that the pain of Ulysses' absence never left her for one single moment of every day and every night. The strongest candidates noted that the rhetorical question *quando ego non timui graviora pericula veris?* (line 11) expresses a similar point, that the concern which she felt for Ulysses has been a constant, never-ceasing burden, as the answer left 'hanging in the air' by the question is 'never'. Strong responses noted how Penelope applied this burden particularly to herself, rather than the other Greek wives, by using the otherwise-superfluous *ego*.

Many candidates noted how Penelope generalises from her own experience to a statement of universal truth (a *sententia*): so intense has her own experience of fearful love been that she now confidently declares love and fear to be inseparable from each other. Many candidates argued well that her fear was so great that it led to a physical reaction; less successful candidates, however, struggled to explain that her pallor (*pallida*, line 14) was caused by her fear that her husband might meet in battle the most formidable of all the Trojan opponents, namely Hector.

Question 5 (b)

(b) *sive quis … timoris erat* (lines 15–16): what point is Penelope making here? **[2]**

See Assessment for Learning: Comprehension questions above.

Question 5 (c)

(c) *sive Menoetiaden … dolos* (lines 17–18): explain the reference to *falsis … sub armis*. **[2]**

Most candidates recognised this allusion as a reference to Patroclus donning the armour of Achilles. In the context of what Penelope is saying about trickery, most then understood that the purpose of this action was to deceive the Trojans into believing that Achilles was back in the field. Examiners did not accept suggestions that Patroclus wore the armour to encourage the Greek army as this does not fit Penelope's point about the dangers of trickery.

Question 5 (d)

(d) Translate *sanguine … aequus amori* (lines 19–23). **[5]**

See 1(d) above.

Section C overview

Section C requires candidates to write an extended analysis on a specific topic of the chosen set text, including that portion of the prescription to be studied in English.

Question 6*

6* 'The main themes of *Aeneid* Book 12 are misery and death.'

To what extent do you agree? **[20]**

Most candidates found this a very accessible essay title, which gave the opportunity to analyse misery and death in Book 12 against the backdrop of other significant themes. Stronger responses provided a broad sweep of pertinent detail from the text to illustrate each theme identified; weaker responses generally provided more superficial reference to the text; occasionally individual incidents in the narrative were cited in such responses and claimed (unsuccessfully) as 'themes'. There was a significant uplift this year in the number of candidates, from across the marks range, making full use of the parts of the prescription to be studied in English.

The strongest responses focused equally on argument ('misery and death') and counter-argument (other identified themes); weaker responses were often more unbalanced, with little focus on one or the other. Stronger responses identified as other important themes divine intervention, fate, hope in the foundation of the future Rome, furor and pietas; weaker responses often struggled to identify other significant themes, often resorting to 'love' or 'anger'; a few candidates confused 'themes' with 'narrative devices', such as 'delay'. Weaker responses often did no more than list the narrative evidence for the existence of themes; the strongest responses, by contrast, considered the reception of themes from the point of view of Virgil's contemporary Roman audience or discussed the interplay of the different themes with each other.

Question 7*

7* 'Catullus shows very little interest in the gods in his poetry.'

How far do you agree with this statement? **[20]**

Candidates seemed to find this an accessible title. Stronger candidates demonstrated their knowledge by detailed reference to the text; less strong candidates tended to provide rather superficial reference. There was a significant uplift in the number of candidates who focused their essay on Group 4 rather than Group 3 texts. The weakest responses often focused simply on the existence of gods in the various poems prescribed; stronger responses, by contrast, analysed Catullus' interest in the gods against the backdrop of his neoteric interests, particularly in human emotion.

Question 8*

8* 'In the *Heroides*, Ovid's male characters are all portrayed negatively.'

Is this a fair assessment? **[20]**

Candidates seemed to find this an accessible title. Most responses focused equally on all three poems. Stronger candidates demonstrated their knowledge by detailed reference to the text, whereas for lower performing candidates reference to the text was often rather superficial. Stronger responses maintained their focus on the male characters, whereas weaker responses often focused more on the character and behaviour of women than the men. A strength of many responses was to analyse the portrayal of minor male characters in addition to Ulysses, Achilles and Aeneas.

Stronger candidates recognised how important the word 'portrayed' is in the title; these responses considered the female writer's perspective and agenda and how these influenced the portrayal of the men. Weaker responses often strayed into the irrelevant topic of whether the depiction of male characters was justifiable or not. Most candidates argued that each of the three major heroes must have positive qualities to have caused the women to love them so much in the first place; this was most easily identified in the portrayal of Ulysses. Some candidates identified as a stronger counter-argument the positive portrayal of minor characters such as Telemachus, Nestor, Patroclus and Sychaeus. The strongest responses considered the reception of the portrayals within Ovid's social and cultural context and how this would impact on the credibility of the women's portrayal of their lovers.

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