



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Tuesday 13 May 2025 – Afternoon

A Level Classical Civilisation

H408/11 The World of the Hero

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes



You must have:

- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- This question paper has **three** sections:
Section A – Homer: Answer **either all** the questions on *Iliad* **or all** the questions on *Odyssey*.
Section B – Virgil: Answer **all** the questions.
Section C – Homer and Virgil: Answer Question 7 and **one** question from Questions 8, 9 and 10.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is **100**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- Quality of extended response will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document has **8** pages.

ADVICE

- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

Section A: Homer

Answer **all** the questions on the text you have studied.

Homer's *Iliad*

Choose **one** translation of the *Iliad* and answer the questions.

Passage A

Homer, *Iliad*, 22.300–333

'Evil death is no longer far away; it is staring me in the face and there is no escape. Zeus and his Archer son must long have been resolved on this, for all their earlier goodwill and help.

'So now my destiny confronts me. Let me at least sell my life dearly and not without glory, after some great deed for future generations to hear of.'

5

With these words Hector drew the sharp, long, heavy sword hanging down at his side. He gathered himself and swooped like a high-flying eagle that drops to earth through black clouds to pounce on a tender lamb or cowering hare. So Hector swooped, brandishing his sharp sword.

Achilles sprang to meet him, his heart filled with savage determination. He kept his chest covered with his fine, ornate shield; his glittering helmet with its four plates nodded, and above it danced the lovely plumes that Hephaestus had lavished on the crest. Like a star moving with others through the night, Hesperus, the loveliest star set in the skies - such was the gleam from his spear's sharp point as he weighed it in his right hand with murder in his heart for godlike Hector, searching that handsome body for its most vulnerable spot.

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Hector's body was completely covered by the fine bronze armour he had taken from great Patroclus when he killed him, except for the flesh that could be seen at the windpipe, where the collar bones hold the neck from the shoulders, the easiest place to kill a man. As Hector charged him, godlike Achilles drove at the spot with his spear, and the point went through Hector's soft neck, though the heavy bronze head did not cut his windpipe and left him still able to speak. Hector crashed in the dust, and godlike Achilles triumphed over him:

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'Hector, no doubt you imagined, as you stripped Patroclus, that you would be safe. You never thought of me.'

Translation: E.V. Rieu

OR

'An evil fate's upon me, Death is no longer far away, and him there is no escaping. Zeus, and his son, the Far-Striker, decided all this long ago, they who were once eager to defend me, and destiny now overtakes me. But let me not die without a fight, without true glory, without some deed that men unborn may hear.'

With this, he [Hector] drew the sharp blade at his side, a powerful long-sword, and gathering his limbs together swooped like a high-soaring eagle that falls to earth from the dark clouds to seize a sick lamb or a cowering hare. So Hector swooped, brandishing his keen blade. Achilles ran to meet him heart filled with savage power, covering his chest with his great, skilfully worked shield, while above his gleaming helm with its four ridges waved the golden plumes Hephaestus placed thickly at its crest. Bright as the Evening Star that floats among the midnight constellations, set there the loveliest jewel in the sky, gleamed the tip of Achilles' sharp spear brandished in his right hand, as he sought to work evil on noble Hector, searching for the likeliest place to land a blow on his fair flesh. 5 10

Now, the fine bronze armour he stripped from mighty Patroclus when he killed him covered all Hector's flesh except for one opening at the throat, where the collarbones knit neck and shoulders, and violent death may come most swiftly. There, as Hector charged at him, noble Achilles aimed his ash spear, and drove its heavy bronze blade clean through the tender neck, though without cutting the windpipe or robbing Hector of the power of speech. Hector fell in the dust and Achilles shouted out in triumph: 'While you were despoiling Patroclus, no doubt, in your folly, you thought yourself quite safe.' 15 20

Translation: A.S. Kline

- 1** Explain how far you think Achilles is shown to be admirable in **Passage A**.

Use references to the passage to support your answer.

[10]

- 2*** 'Evil death.' Evaluate whether you think this is a fair description of the way death is presented in the *Iliad*.

You may use **Passage A** as a starting point, and your knowledge of the *Iliad* in your answer. **[20]**

Homer's *Odyssey*

Choose **one** translation of the *Odyssey* and answer the questions.

Passage B

Homer, *Odyssey*, 22.4–40

'The match that was to seal your fate is over,' he [Odysseus] called out to the Suitors. 'Now for another target which no man has yet hit – if I can hit it and Apollo grants my prayer.' And with that he levelled a deadly shaft straight at Antinous.

Antinous had just reached for his fine cup to take a draught of wine, and the golden, two-handled beaker was balanced in his hands. No thought of bloodshed entered his head. For who could guess, there in that festive company, that one man, however powerful he might be, would bring evil death and black doom on him against such odds? Odysseus took aim and shot him in the neck. The point passed clean through his tender throat. The cup dropped from his hand as he was hit and he lurched over to one side. His life-blood gushed from his nostrils in a turbid jet. His foot lashed out and kicked the table from him; his food was scattered on the ground, and bread and meat lay there in the dirt. 5 10

When the Suitors saw the man collapse, there was uproar in the hall. They sprang from their chairs and rushed in confusion about the room, searching the solid walls on every side. But not a shield or sturdy spear was there to lay hands on. They rounded in fury on Odysseus: 'Stranger, men make a dangerous target; you have played your last match. Now you shall surely die. You have killed the greatest nobleman in Ithaca: for that the vultures shall eat you.' Each of them laboured under the delusion that he had killed the man by accident. It had not dawned upon the fools that the fate of all of them was sealed. 15

The master-strategist Odysseus gave them a black look. 'You dogs!' he cried. 'You never thought to see me back from Troy. So you fleeced my household; you raped my maids; you courted my wife behind my back though I was alive – with no more fear of the gods in heaven than of the human vengeance that might come. One and all, your fate is sealed.' 20

Translation: E.V. Rieu

OR

'Here is a clear end to the contest. Now I'll see if I can hit another target no man has as yet, and may Apollo grant my prayer!'

So saying, he [Odysseus] aimed a deadly shaft at Antinous, who was handling a fine golden two-handled cup, about to raise it to his lips and sip the wine, his thoughts far from death. How should he guess among the feasting crowd, that one man however powerful he might be could dare to bring a vile death and a dark doom on him? But Odysseus took aim and shot him through the neck. The point passed clean through the tender throat, and Antinous sank to one side, the cup falling at that moment from his hand, while a thick jet of blood gushed from his nostrils. His foot kicked the table away, dashing the food to the floor, and the bread and meat were fouled.

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When the Suitors saw the man fall, there was uproar throughout the hall, and they leapt from their seats in fear, running to the walls to find a shield or a stout spear of which there were no sign. Then they turned on Odysseus angrily: 'Stranger you'll pay for choosing a man as your target: no more contests for you, your time is up. You have killed the best of Ithaca's young men, and now the vultures will have you.' They imagined in truth that he had killed Antinous by accident, not realising that the net of fate had been thrown over them all. Resourceful Odysseus, glowered at them, and answered: 'You dogs! You thought I'd never return from the land of Troy, so you laid waste my house, forced my maids, and wooed my wife in secret though I was still alive, without fearing the gods who rule the wide sky, or that mortal vengeance would find you. Now the net of fate is thrown over you all.'

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Translation: A.S. Kline

- 3** Explain how far you think Odysseus is shown to be admirable in **Passage B**.

Use references to the passage to support your answer.

[10]

- 4*** 'Revenge matters'. Explain why revenge is important in the *Odyssey* and evaluate how it adds to the success of the story.

You may use **Passage B** as a starting point, and your knowledge of the *Odyssey* in your answer.

[20]

[Section A Total: 30]

Section B: Virgil

Answer **all** the questions from this section.

Choose **one** translation of the *Aeneid* and answer the questions.

Passage C

Virgil, *Aeneid*, 12.908–944

Just as when we are asleep, when in the weariness of night rest lies heavy on our eyes, we dream we are trying desperately to run further and not succeeding, till we fall exhausted in the middle of our efforts; the tongue is useless; the strength we know we have fails our body; we have no voice, no words to obey our will – so it was with Turnus. Wherever his courage sought a way, the dread goddess barred his progress. During these moments, the thoughts whirled in his brain. He gazed at the Rutulians and the city. He faltered with fear. He began to tremble at the death that was upon him. He could see nowhere to run, no way to come at the enemy, no chariot anywhere, no sister to drive it.

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As he faltered the deadly spear of Aeneas flashed. His eyes had picked their spot and he threw from long range with all his weight behind the throw. Stones hurled by siege artillery never roar like this. The crash of the bursting thunderbolt is not so loud. Like a dark whirlwind it flew carrying death and destruction with it. Piercing the outer rings of the sevenfold shield and laying open the lower rim of the breastplate, it went whistling through the middle of the thigh. When the blow struck, down went great Turnus, bending his knee to the ground. The Rutulians rose with a groan which echoed round the whole mountain, and far and wide the high forests sent back the sound of their voices. He lowered his eyes and stretched out his right hand to beg as a suppliant. ‘I have brought this upon myself,’ he said, ‘and for myself I ask nothing. Make use of what Fortune has given you, but if any thought of my unhappy father can touch you, I beg of you – and you too had such a father in Anchises – take pity on the old age of Daunus, and give me back to my people, or if you prefer it, give them back my dead body. You have defeated me, and the men of Ausonia have seen me defeated and stretching out my hands to you. Lavinia is yours. Do not carry your hatred any further.’

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There stood Aeneas, deadly in his armour, rolling his eyes, but he checked his hand, hesitating more and more as the words of Turnus began to move him, when suddenly his eyes caught the fatal baldrick of the boy Pallas high on Turnus’ shoulder with the glittering studs he knew so well.

25

Translation: D. West

OR

As in dreams when languid sleep weighs down our eyes at night, we seem to try in vain to follow our eager path, and collapse helpless in the midst of our efforts, the tongue won't work, the usual strength is lacking from our limbs, and neither word nor voice will come:	5
so the dread goddess denied Turnus success, however courageously he sought to find a way. Then shifting visions whirled through his brain: he gazed at the Rutulians, and at the city, faltered in fear, and shuddered at the death that neared, he saw no way to escape, no power to attack his enemy, nor sign of his chariot, nor his sister, his charioteer.	10
As he wavered, Aeneas shook his fateful spear, seeing a favourable chance, and hurled it from the distance with all his might. Stone shot from a siege engine never roared so loud, such mighty thunder never burst from a lightning bolt. Like a black hurricane the spear flew on bearing dire destruction, and pierced the outer circle of the seven-fold shield, the breastplate's lower rim, and, hissing, passed through the centre of the thigh.	15
Great Turnus sank, his knee bent beneath him, under the blow. The Rutulians rose up, and groaned, and all the hills around re-echoed, and, far and wide, the woods returned the sound. He lowered his eyes in submission and stretched out his right hand: 'I have earned this, I ask no mercy' he said,	20
'seize your chance. If any concern for a parent's grief can touch you (you too had such a father, in Anchises) I beg you to pity Daunus's old age and return me, or if you prefer it my body robbed of life, to my people.	25
You are the victor, and the Ausonians have seen me stretch out my hands in defeat: Lavinia is your wife, don't extend your hatred further.' Aeneas stood, fierce in his armour, his eyes flickered, and he held back his hand: and even now, as he paused, the words began to move him more deeply, when high on Turnus's shoulder young Pallas's luckless sword-belt met his gaze, the strap glinting with its familiar decorations.	30
	35

Translation: A.S. Kline

- 5** Explain how Turnus is presented in a sympathetic way in **Passage C**.

Use references to the passage to support your answer and consider both what happens and the way it is written. **[10]**

- 6*** 'The bond between a father and a son is the most powerful family relationship in the *Aeneid*.' Evaluate how far you agree with this statement.

You may use **Passage C** as a starting point, and your knowledge of the *Aeneid* in your answer. **[20]**

[Section B Total: 30]

Section C: Homer and Virgil

Use the passages in **Sections A** and **B** to answer Question 7.

- 7 Assess which passage you consider to be the more dramatic.

You should refer to the passage from the *Aeneid* **and** the passage from the work of Homer you have read. [10]

Answer **one** question from Questions 8, 9 and 10.

Use classical sources, and secondary sources, scholars and/or academic works to support your argument. You should also consider possible interpretations of sources by different audiences.

Either

Homer's *Iliad*

- 8* 'Men need women just as much as women need men.'

Evaluate how far you agree with this statement about the relationships between mortal men and mortal women in the *Iliad*. [30]

Or

Homer's *Odyssey*

- 9* 'Athene is more important to Odysseus than she is to Penelope.'

Evaluate how far you agree with this statement. [30]

Or

Virgil's *Aeneid*

- 10* 'Aeneas: always dutiful, always dull.'

Evaluate how far you agree with this statement. [30]

[Section C Total: 40]

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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