



**General Certificate of Education
June 2012**

Classical Civilisation 2020

CIV1F: The Life and Times of Cicero

Report on the Examination

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CIV1F The Life and Times of Cicero

Section One

Option A

The factual Questions 01 to 04 generally received answers that were sufficiently accurate to gain the marks, although in Question 03 knowledge about Tiro was sometimes insecure.

In Question 05, most students made some use of the passage to initiate comment on Cicero's boredom and/or snobbery. Better answers considered a wider range of issues, including Cicero's attitude towards using the province for financial gain, and drew on a wider range of knowledge to make explicit comparisons with other named Roman governors. Some of the best arguments also took into account the precise circumstances of the letter and explained why Cicero felt that this was an especially bad time to be away from Rome.

In Question 06, many students displayed accurate and relevant knowledge of Cicero's movements throughout the period. Although there were few meaningful references to his appointment to Dolabella's staff, this omission did not usually affect the quality of the overall argument. More significant was the frequent absence of any mention of the anecdote about his chagrin on returning to mainland Italy after his quaestorship in Sicily, which in better arguments was used explain, at least partially, his subsequent behaviour and attitude. Indeed, there was a tendency to outline instances when he left Italy without exploring his reasons for acting as he did, and in particular how and how far they changed over time. However, the best answers not only differentiated between general and particular reasons for Cicero's reluctance, but explained judgements with evidence, citing more generally the speed with which Cicero invariably returned or, in individual instances such as his response to Caesar's offers in 59 BC, giving precise details from his correspondence.

Option B

This option was attempted by far fewer students than Option A; the standard of the work in the evaluative questions was generally comparable.

Most students knew the answer to Question 07, but in the other factual Questions 08, 09 and 10 there was rather more error.

In Question 11, as in Question 05, the effective use of specific details to support the argument was the key to success. Almost every student knew that Cicero had been opposed to Caesar's life dictatorship, and therefore in general approved of the conspirators' actions. Many knew that Cicero was dismayed by the lack of planning and the sparing of Antony, some making apposite references to the letters to illustrate these points. Fewer alluded to Cicero's attitude towards his exclusion from the conspiracy or towards Brutus' speech.

Question 12 was very well answered by many students, who were able to demonstrate that they had made a very detailed study of Cicero's relations with the females of his family and their political role, and convincingly supported judgements with details from the prescribed letters. Most responses quite rightly focused mainly on Terentia and Tullia, and the often limited discussion of Pomponia did not usually affect the quality of the overall argument or bring down the marks. However, it was important to assess both parts of the question and to consider the

importance of these women to Cicero's political career as well as the closeness of his personal relationship to them.

Section Two

Option C

Question 13 inspired some outstanding essays, but many students regarded it as merely an invitation to recite Cicero's actions from 70 BC and did not analyse sufficiently closely what might be meant by the key phrase 'changes in Roman politics'. For example, although more perceptive students saw that the relevance to this question of Cicero's prosecution of Verres lay in his attempt to align himself with Pompey's dismantling of Sulla's arrangements, many simply explained Cicero's motives as opposition to corruption, hardly a novelty in politics either then or now. Again, in discussions of Cicero's consulship there was a tendency to describe Cicero's actions against Catiline without explaining what changes to Roman politics Catiline's antics represented, while more thoughtful responses considered not only how far these were real threats but also the significance of the Rullus bill and Cicero's response to it. However, more students recognised the changes signalled by Pompey's extraordinary commands and particularly by the coalition of individuals to form 'the first triumvirate'. In covering the period, many students seemed to think that Cicero's 'swallowing of the bitter pill' immediately followed his return from exile and they often gave insufficient attention both to the time between his exile and the conference at Luca and to the years 55 to 50 BC. More nuanced assessments of how 'wholehearted' Cicero was took these periods into account, but evaluation of this issue often became lost.

Option D

Question 14 was rather more popular than Question 13. Most answers gave some attention to analysing the danger to the Republic that Verres, Catiline and Antony posed, and in this respect tended to focus on some of the requirements of the question more than answers to Question 13 did. However, there was often less comprehensive, or at least less balanced, coverage of the topic, and essays often dealt with Cicero's response to the three men with increasing superficiality. Many students were unable to countenance the idea that Cicero might be concerned with both his reputation and the safety of the Republic simultaneously. Many, too, failed to distinguish between outcome and intent: that Cicero was named *parens patriae* for his conduct against Catiline does not show that Cicero was aiming at this accolade; that Cicero was murdered as a consequence of the *Philippics* does not demonstrate that he had no concern for his reputation when delivering them. However, there were some superb essays which thoroughly explored the issues with detailed supporting evidence, the very best of which sometimes pointed out that our main sources of evidence are the versions of the speeches that Cicero prepared for publication in order to establish unequivocally for posterity his reputation as defender of the Republic.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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