CLASSICAL STUDIES

> **Paper 8283/01**
>
> **Greek Civilisation**

General comments

There was an increase of nearly 10% in the entry this year. Centres from four new countries sat the papers for the first time and this may account for changes in the popularity of the various sections this year. There was also evidence of a substantial number of candidates opting for the mini-essays and full essays. For many candidates, this proved to be a good decision, although more detailed knowledge of the various topics and a more evaluative approach would have produced more successful and higher scoring answers.

Handwriting and presentation was often poor with many questions not being clearly identified and labelled. This was especially a problem with the long essays – because it was difficult sometimes to work out which option had been chosen. In the gobbet questions some candidates ran their answers together. Would teachers please instruct their candidates carefully in labelling in the margin each question answered (i.e. in obeying the rubric).

Candidates who answered with an essay from one section and did the passage questions from another seemed to have issues with timing – they tended to produce decent essays followed by incomplete gobbet questions.

Examiners feel that it is a waste of a candidate's time to write out questions, particularly the gobbet questions, before beginning to answer them; in one case it definitely proved to disadvantage the candidate.

The mean mark rose slightly for the first time in three years (to 31.31) but, overall, performance was weaker both at the top and at the bottom of the mark range.

Section 1: Alexander the Great

This section was not as popular this year. All the questions were attempted with a few surprises: the gobbet questions demonstrated a lack of precise knowledge while the mini-essays were very popular and generally well-answered.

Descriptions of Philip's death were general, lacking exact details. Likewise, many candidates did not know about the Peloponnese (answers ranged from Germany to somewhere west of India), the assembly at Corinth, and comments about the Spartans dealt with their past history, not dealings with the Macedonians. Candidates were also uncertain about Alexander's movements.

Alexander's divine ancestry was only sketchily known. Apart from Alexander's father, few other details in Question (b) were known. This question was not as popular or as successfully answered as the other two questions. Many candidates were confused about the actual battle. Even those who knew of it were not sure of the details.

The most popular of the mini-essays was 2(a). This question was competently answered by those who attempted it. Not all details of the battle of Issus were remembered, and there were some general comments about Alexander's military leadership and a tendency to describe rather than evaluate the material.

2(b) was generally answered well, with most candidates deploying relevant knowledge about the events at Troy and discussing the links with Achilles and the propaganda elements.

Whilst there were some successful answers to 2(c), some candidates tried to twist the answer into a more general discussion of Alexander's greatness, rather than focussing on his political aspirations and skills. Some discussions were limited to Alexander's policy of fusion.
More evidence would have benefited many answers.

3(a) was a fairly popular choice, most candidates were aware of Alexander's childhood and education, with comments on the relationship with Phillip, and Aristotle's influence. The Bucephalus incident was mentioned in most answers. The relationship and influence of Olympias tended to be neglected.

There were a few more examples of 3(b). Alexander's leadership skills were generally seen in a positive light. Various examples of successful leadership were discussed, but many candidates neglected to mention the various mutinies which forced Alexander to abandon his further plans of conquest.

Section 2: Socrates

Section Two regained its status as the most popular on the Greek paper.

The passage on *Euthyphro* produced a small set of very mixed answers to 1(a). Candidates knew where the dialogue took place, but were unable to fully explain the mythological references. Definitions of holiness caused confusion to some candidates. Few candidates identified the poet, but discussions of fear and shame, and the Socratic method, were generally good.

The passage from *Apology* produced some good answers to 1(b). The prosecutors and the jury were known by many candidates, as was Anaxagoras and his theories. The specific use of the orchestra in this case was often not known. Most candidates identified the charge as being impiety and discussed Socrates' defence well. The evaluative element of some questions eluded several candidates.

As the most attempted question on the paper, 1(c) was also the most successfully answered of the gobbet questions on Socrates. Candidates knew where the dialogue was taking place, but details of the Delian ship ranged from very detailed to almost non-existent. Crito's points to persuade Socrates to escape were known by most candidates, and the answers contained good analyses of Socrates' point and the analogy.

Very few answers to 2(a) were seen, but they were generally well-informed about the ideas contained in *Phaedo*.

Discussions of Socrates' defence against the charge of impiety were generally sound in 2(b), with candidates showing at least a fair knowledge of how Socrates conducted his defence, and giving a good range of personal responses.

Discussion in 2(c) of whether Socrates was the wisest man alive varied, with *Apology* being the most popular choice. Candidates seemed more interested in describing Socrates' cleverness than referring to the dialogues closely.

Those candidates who attempted 3(a) on *Euthyphro* tended to simply narrate the course of the dialogue, listing the definitions of holiness, rather than actually analysing the different elements of the Socratic method contained in the dialogue.

The discussion of Socrates' attitude made 3(b) one of the most popular questions on the paper with over 50 candidates attempting it. It produced a good range of answers, with better responses not only discussing the attitude towards his defence and offer of escape, but also including how Socrates viewed death itself as being a contributory factor to his death. Many answers would have been improved with a greater range of detailed reference.

Section 3: Aristophanes

More candidates offered answers to these questions than in previous years, and there were some very pleasing and high scoring responses – particularly in 1(a), 1(b) and 3(b).

Candidates knew the contextual details of 1(a) in some depth, and were able to discuss both the references to the slaves, and the humour. Xanthias' role was less well analysed.

1(b) was the most popular question in this section, the contextual details were well known, and the discussion of both the sexual references and role reversal was detailed and accurate.

There were remarkably few attempts at 1(c) and they were usually rather weak in terms of the knowledge required of the mythological and poetical references.

Those candidates who attempted 2(a) on the origins of Attic Comedy generally had a sound knowledge of the *komos* and other factors which led to the development of the structure of comedy.

The Choruses in *Frogs* were discussed with knowledge and understanding for 2(b), although not enough was made of their role in expressing the opinions of the poet.

2(c) on Procleon proved popular, and most candidates were able to discuss the changes in his character, although the "why" aspect was dealt with less well.

Both full essays were popular. Those candidates who discussed humour in 3(a) were able to list a variety of techniques employed by Aristophanes, although some provided limited detail from the plays. Though there was much personal response offered, many were unable to explain fully why they found these techniques amusing.

3(b) on the background to Aristophanes' plays was slightly more popular and, on the whole, was better answered. Candidates were able to discuss both the political aspects of the plays, and the jury system. Better answers also mentioned the social background, such as slavery and prominent people, which provides much of the humour.

Section 4: Greek Vase Painting

As always the Plate questions proved to be very popular. There was also some evidence of a few candidates being willing to tackle the essay topics, both mini and full essays.

Plate 1, depicting the Exekias kylix, was the most popular of the Plate questions, and the candidates generally knew most of the details required. Discussion of the interior of the pot was often not successful, as there were few references to the actual problems of decorating the shape. Candidates were able to list features they liked, and give reasons as to why they found them artistically pleasing. Those who were able to point to specific features of the decoration scored more highly than those who commented on general aspects of the design.

Plate 2, depicting the Kleophrades Painter's pointed amphora, was also a popular choice, though the details of the pot were not as well known as with Plate 1. The precise name of the shape and use of the pot often eluded many candidates. Most were able to identify the central figure as Dionysus and pick out pieces of iconography such as the kantharos, ivy leaf crown and his companions.

Plate 3 was the least popular of the three Plate questions. The painter was often identified as Niobid (without Painter) and the shape as a krater (without kalyx). Very few candidates knew about the influence of wall painters on vase painting, even though it is mentioned in the set text book.

There were two attempts 2(a) on the Medias Painter's hydria. In both cases the comments were too general and the answers displayed little knowledge of the content of the design beyond the storyline.

For 2(b), knowledge of pottery decorated in the white-ground technique continues to be very weak.

The candidates who attempted 2(c) on kraters seemed unable to distinguish between the shape of a krater and an amphora, so that large parts of the answers were irrelevant to the question.

There were very few attempts at the essays and none of these was of a high standard. Details of Kleitias' work were not well known in 3(a). Neither were answer to 3(b) able to give a reasonable range of painters, or reasons for their inclusion.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

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General comments

Please see the Introduction to the Report on Paper 1 for general comments that apply across the syllabus.

The mean mark fell again for the third year running (to 29.94) and, with some notable exceptions, the quality of performance was generally weak across the mark range.

Section 1: Augustus

Question 1

(a)   Candidates need to pay heed to question wording. Several used the word 'exactly' and required more precise detail than candidates seemed able to provide. General information was often provided but few achieved very high marks because there were too many omissions.

(b)   As with the previous question, there was scant knowledge of the exact details of Agrippa's funeral and will, and the importance of tribunician power. Answers on why Agrippa's death was such a problem for Augustus were surprisingly very detailed.

(c)   Again the answers were too general and there was much important information missing, especially concerning Livia and Tiberius, the legacies left in Augustus's will and the Vestal Virgins. There was much lurid detail, however, about Julia's antics.

Question 2

(a)   Whilst candidates could give a good account of the battles Augustus fought between 43 BC and 36 BC, few went on to analyse why these battles were important.

(b)   Candidates provided good detail about the events of 27 BC but were either too vague about why the year was so significant or ignored this aspect of the question.

(c)   Answers tended to offer fine detail on Agrippa, but often barely touched on Tiberius.

Question 3

(a)   This was the most popular full essay on the paper (45 responses). The essays fell into categories: one set with a wealth of detail and a balanced argument and the other set which failed to see that he was a calculating dictator and thought that his actions were always for the greater good of the country and that he was completely selfless and offered only good things to Rome.

(b)   Over 20 candidates tackled the question. It was very well answered.

Section 2: Virgil

This was the most popular section on either papers, especially the gobbets (attracting c.270 candidates).

Question 1

(a)   Most gave details about how and why the storm was caused, but few knew about how Juno bribed Aeolus. Very few could recall Aeneas' words about how lucky the heroes who had died at Troy were. Often it was thought to refer to the motivational speech he gave to his men after the storm.

As with other literary type questions, most candidates were able to pick out relevant details from the passage, but they need to discuss it or expand on their discussion in greater depth to achieve maximum marks. Candidates should be encouraged to develop their personal response. In (vii), there was much confusion with at the bottom of the sea or Hades, a popular response. In (viii), few got both gods and most opted for Juno and Venus.

(b) Most knew Hector and explained the information he gave to Aeneas. In dealing with questions about similes, candidates need to make explicit the comparison between aspects of the simile and the scene it is supposed to refer to and comment on the effectiveness. Although a good deal of knowledge about Sinon was revealed, few could provide a full range of relevant details.

(c) Whilst all candidates were able to identify the Sibyl as the speaker in the passage, the second part of the question was completed in general terms and few made specific reference to what she did. The significance of the golden bough was usually known. Misenus was often confused with Palinurus. In answer to (vii) a whole array of mortals was mentioned. Some would have been creditworthy had there not been the prompt, 'Charon later says', in the question.

Question 2

(a) Candidates were able to detail the help offered by Venus to Aeneas but experienced more difficulty in providing sufficient depth on the second half of the question.

(b) Only three tackled this mini-essay, but knowledge was evident and there was some sound comment on what they bring to the narrative and what they reveal about the heroes.

(c) There were several responses to this question. Candidates did not read the question carefully enough and still insisted on discussing Dido. Others failed to get beyond Creusa. Only one answer mentioned Anna and Helen.

Question 3

(a) There were around 20 essays on the political propaganda aspect of the *Aeneid.* Some were well done, making good reference to parts of Book 1 and Book 6, and showing a useful understanding of the contemporary Augustan background. Further, a handful balanced their argument.

(b) The answers on 'Aeneas the True' were, on the whole, disappointing. There were too many regurgitated, pre-prepared Aeneas essays which failed to address the question by exploring the concept of 'the True' and how it applies to Aeneas.

Section 3: Juvenal

This was the least popular section on the paper with fewer than 50 candidates offering this topic.

Question 1

(a) Candidates usually provided appropriate details. In (iii) not all candidates offered details from *Satire 1* as demanded by the question. Examiners were pleased with the how candidates used the passage and explained their examples in response to question (vii).

(b) Candidates' knowledge of *Satire 4* was much weaker than their knowledge of *Satire 3*, but some were able to deal with the question about Crispinus successfully.

(c) Most answers were poor. Only two knew married women were referred to in the passage. There was a worrying lack of background knowledge concerning the references to either tragic or historical figures (all mentioned in the Penguin notes). Q(vii) was better done, with candidates able to explain the effects carefully.

Question 2

(a) (b) (c) The mini-essays were all of equal popularity with around 8 answers to each. They were reasonable, but detailed reference to the specified Satires was needed to support the argument rather than general comment. The question on Juvenal's satiric devices was better answered than the other two questions, especially discussion of the effect of the devices.

Question 3

(a) This was the most popular question on Juvenal. Candidates discussed an array of ideas with good knowledge of the *Satires*. Better answers were those which compared the different things he hated and came to a reasoned conclusion as to what he hated the most.

(b) Of those few who attempted this question, the majority were superb. Candidates managed to maintain their focus on the *Satires* but there were also many direct comparisons with modern day life. The essays were informative and Examiners enjoyed reading about the 'leaky roof syndrome' in New Zealand and the comparison with Satire 3.

Section 4: Roman Art and Architecture

Question 1

(a) A well-attempted question with over 60 candidates offering a set of answers which generally scored good marks. Candidates identified the monument as the Ara Pacis Augustae and most knew that Aeneas was the subject of the scene (though some identified the main figure as Romulus). There were a number of good discussions concerning why the sculptor chose to depict the scene.

(b) The question on the theatre attracted over 70 responses, most of which scored highly, with candidates showing excellent knowledge and offering a range of appropriate detail.

(c) Although the larger complex was correctly identified as Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, many of the other details required often eluded the few candidates who attempted this question. Few could select and discuss more than two features which made the building impressive.

Question 2

(a) This was the most popular of the questions in this section, with more than 90 responses. The details of the Commodus bust were known in some depth but candidates sometimes forgot to analyse the composition and discuss the image projected of the emperor.

(b) Of the 65 candidates who chose the question on the Arch of Titus, many were able to provide full details of the decoration. Fewer were able to apply it correctly to the quotation in the question. Some were distracted by tangential issues, such as comparing it to the Arch of Constantine.

(c) Although the least popular, more than 30 candidates answered this question. It was a common failing of many answers that both parts of the question were not tackled. Many preferred to discuss perspective and shading and ignored the techniques used to construct mosaics.

Question 3
Both full essays were equally popular, with around 20 candidates attempting one.

(a) The key to a good answer was to discuss at least two temples in detail, whilst making direct comparisons, before coming to an evaluative conclusion. Only the best answers were willing to leave the security of the fence and state which temple would have made the 'greatest impact'. Many simply said a temple was impressive, giving a reason, and then said that a second temple was impressive, with some evidence, but made no attempt to compare or come to a conclusion.

(b) This essay was competently handled, but only the best answers managed to include a broad enough range of examples to achieve high marks. Often, candidates only discussed the Colosseum and one other building. This might have been sufficient had the material been discussed with adequate care, but it never was.