GCE

Classics: Latin

Advanced GCE **H439**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **H039**

OCR Report to Centres June 2014

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Advanced GCE Classics: Latin (H439)

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

F361 Latin Language

General Comments

Entry numbers were similar to those of last year and included a similar number of resit candidates. The overall standard was pleasingly high. Question 1 generally yielded high marks, with only a few sections proving too difficult for the average candidate. Question 2, as in most years, proved rather more taxing, with the result that few candidates achieved very high marks. Question 3 was mostly answered by candidates who had been thoroughly prepared for this option, and marks were consistently high.

There were few illegible scripts. The quality of English, although not targeted in the marking, was very variable. A noted feature of very many scripts was the inattention paid by so many candidates to the logic of the storyline. Question 2 was especially noteworthy in this respect. At this level it is expected that candidates will distinguish between more and less appropriate meanings of the words in the DVL, and for this the storyline is of paramount importance. Even very good candidates were guilty of throwing away marks because they did not pause to think about what was happening.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question No. 1

ubi Hannibal puer erat novem annorum,

This apparently simple start to the passage defeated half the candidates, who did not recognise the numeral. 'New of years' was at least as common as the correct version, while 'in his ninth year' was, in terms of marking, even worse.

pater eius in Hispaniam proficiscens Iovi sacrificium fecit.

About half the candidates knew the meaning of *proficiscor*. The weakest candidates transposed the verbs: 'travelled to Spain to make a sacrifice to Jupiter'. 'In Spain' was also frequent among weaker candidates.

simul Hannibalem rogavit num secum in castra ire vellet.

This was generally well handled. Common errors were the result of ignorance of vocabulary (*simul, num, secum*).

quod cum Hannibal libenter accepisset patrem orare coepit ne dubitaret se ducere.

This proved the most challenging sentence in the whole unseen. Fewer than half recognised or handled correctly the connecting relative: 'which when' does not work here, while 'because when' is worse. Most candidates thought *libenter* means 'freely', which it doesn't. *Patrem orare coepit* was usually translated correctly. Only a minority recognised the negative indirect command; most treated it as introducing a purpose clause. Of the two meanings listed in the DVL for *dubito*, 'hesitate' is the one needed here by the context; only a small minority chose this. The reflexive pronoun, required by the indirect command, defeated all but a few. The commonest translation was 'not to doubt him to lead', which offers very little sense.

ille 'id faciam,' inquit, 'si mihi fidem dederis quam postulo.'

Weaker candidates did not know what to do with *ille* and either made it a dative with *inquit* or an adverb. For *fidem* the great majority of candidates chose 'faith' or 'trust', neither of which gives any sense in the context; what was needed was 'loyalty', also listed in the DVL. A moment's thought here about the argument should have directed more candidates to the right choice. Only half the candidates saw that *quam* was a relative pronoun with its antecedent *fidem*. *Postulo* was often unknown.

tum pater filium ad aram duxit in qua sacrificium facere coeperat et,

This section was mostly handled well, but the pervasive lack of logical thinking was evident again with *in qua*, which the great majority of candidates translated as 'in which', as if the altar were a hollow receptacle. It never occurred to them to ask how one might make a sacrifice 'in' an altar. This, like the fairly common 'began' for *coeperat*, was treated as a minor error – usually the only ones made in this section, though a few omitted or displaced *et*.

omnibus militibus remotis, aram tenere iussit et iurare se numquam in amicitia cum Romanis fore.

This was probably the most accurately translated section in the unseen. Weaker candidates did not know, and were unable to guess, the meaning of *remotis* ('standing close by' was not uncommon). Very few candidates were troubled by the omission of *eum* with *iussit* (this was Nepos' original version). Nearly all candidates gained at least 4 marks here.

id iusiurandum Hannibal per totam vitam servavit.

This simple sentence defeated the great majority of candidates, who unthinkingly gave 'served' for *servavit*. Slightly better were 'saved' and 'protected'. It was disappointing to find so many of the best candidates falling into this error. How many of them, one wonders, paused to ask themselves how an oath can be 'served'.

ubi Antiochum, regem Asiae, visitabat, cognovit regem legatos Romanos accepisse.

This sentence was handled well by most candidates. Some weaker ones made *Antiochus* the subject. Half did not understand the usage of *cognoscere*, giving 'understood', 'knew' or 'recognised'. The indirect statement, with the perfect infinitive, by contrast, was generally translated correctly.

cum timeret ne Antiochus Romanis faveret, ad regem festinavit.

Nearly all candidates translated this sentence correctly.

'si,' inquit, 'auxilium Romanis offerre in animo habebis, noli mihi id dicere;

The phrase *in animo habere* was unknown to most candidates, though a literal 'you have in mind to...' was all that was needed. 'If you have help to offer the Romans in spirit' was the commonest translation. Equally unfamiliar to candidates was the use of *noli* to express a prohibition; most gave 'I do not want'.

si tamen bellum parabis, te oro ut me militibus praeficias.'

The first half of this was almost always correct; *te oro* was always correct; but few knew *praeficias*, leading to the misconstruing of *me* and *militibus*. 'I beg you to provide me with soldiers' was the commonest rendering.

his dictis rex erat tam cupidus belli gerendi

This was handled very well, with the gerund usually correctly construed.

ut statim arma ad Romam oppugnandam paraverit.

Virtually all recognised the result clause and the gerundive of purpose. The commonest errors were 'army' for *arma* and 'fight' for *oppugnandam.*

Although the above notes have highlighted frequent errors, most candidates were able to score at least 3 marks for each section, with only the weakest dipping below this. Even average candidates were able to achieve a fair number of 5s and 4s, bringing their overall mark up to a high level.

Question No. 2

nunc de Saturnini crimine dicemus. arguis occisum esse a C. Rabirio L. Saturninum.

Only a quarter of candidates recognised the future indicative in *dicemus*. 'About the crime of Saturninus' was almost universal for *de Saturnini crimine*. Only a handful of candidates stopped to think about the nature of this case, as described in the introduction, which clearly states that Saturninus was the victim of a murder by Rabirius. The last thing therefore that these three words could refer to is a crime committed by the dead man. Even though virtually all understood that it was Rabirius who killed Saturninus, they could not grasp the logic behind these words: 'the crime against Saturninus'. The second sentence in this section was handled very well. The result was that very few candidates scored more than 3 for this section.

libenter confiterer, si vere possem, C. Rabiri manu L. Saturninum occisum esse,

Here the two imperfect subjunctives escaped the notice of all but a small minority. *Libenter* was again usually 'freely'. *Vere* was rarely recognised as an adverb. The indirect statement was handled well, as in the first section. Again 3 out of 5 was the usual mark achieved for this section.

et id facinus pulcherrimum esse putarem;

Many thought that *putarem* was parallel to *occisum esse*; only the best recognised the imperfect subjunctive.

sed, quoniam id facere non possum, confitebor id quod ad laudem minus valebit, sed ad crimen magis.

Many did not know *quoniam*. Equally many did not recognise the future tenses. The combination *id quod* defeated three quarters of the candidates. The parallel nature of *minus* and *magis*, and so of *ad laudem* and *ad crimen* was spotted by the strongest candidates; the rest generally could make no sense at all of anything following *confitebor*, and scores of 2 and 1 were very frequent.

confiteor interficiendi Saturnini causa C. Rabirium arma cepisse.

About a quarter of candidates knew the idiom of *causa* following a genitive gerundive to express purpose; the rest rarely gave any connected sense at all. 'Saturninus was killed because of the weapon seized by Rabirius' was typical of the sort of translation that made no sense, most of which gained only 1 or 2 marks.

si arma iuste sumpta esse concedis, iuste interfectum esse concedere necesse est.

Few knew *sumpta esse*. 'The killing' was not adequate for *interfectum esse*, as it takes no account of the masculine ending. The balanced clauses here and the argument behind them defeated most candidates. Few scored more than 3 marks.

Candidates are strongly advised to give more weight to the introduction to the Cicero unseen, because it is generally essential that they understand the logic of his argument. The introductions are very carefully composed to give exactly the help needed to grasp this logic.

Question No. 3

In Q 3(a) those who used *moenia* for walls fell into the trap of thinking it a first declension noun. Nearly all handled the purpose clause successfully. The other common error was *viderent* instead of *spectarent*. Most scored at least 5 here.

In Q 3(b) there were rather more errors. Many who used *cum* followed it with the indicative. 'Very great' was poorly done, with only a minority giving *maximum*; *tantus* was frequent. Many knew *plurimi*. 'At home' was often *domum*. Those who tried to use the perfect of *manere* usually formed the perfect stem incorrectly.

In Q 3(c) those who used *impero* usually forgot the need for a dative. Many used *iubere* followed by *ut* and the subjunctive; this was allowed, as such a usage is known. Almost universal was the use of the accusative *hostes* after *resistere*.

In Q 3(d), although most avoided the present subjunctive, there were many who formed this part correctly for both verbs. The commonest alternative was the imperfect subjunctive (penalised only once). Some attempted to form a compound tense: e.g. *oppugnaturi essent* . These ingenious attempts were not penalised if the surrounding syntax was handled properly.

In Q 3(e) few knew the correct declension of *signum*; weaker candidates failed to make the participle agree. Only half knew the third principal part of *curro.*

The standard attained in this question was most impressive. Most candidates, by making no more than two or three errors in each sentence, were able to score at least 5 marks for each.

F362 Latin Verse and Prose Literature

General Comments

Examiners considered this unit a very fair assessment of candidates' understanding of the set text, with the test's rigorous content/style questions and mini essays proving to be good differentiators.

Once again candidates appeared to be generally well trained in time management, which is crucial on this paper. Assuming that the Ovid essays were tackled last, some candidates did seem a little rushed, but they still produced enough of substance to be worthy of fair credit.

This year examiners did notice that the 6/8 mark questions were slightly less well tackled than usual, and centres are advised to read the individual question guidance carefully. Responses of the format "Cicero/Ovid says X, and this makes it vivid/emphatic etc" are likely to attract only one of the two marks available, since candidates must 'discuss' **how** the author achieves his effect, and not just repeat the wording of the question.

Nonetheless, candidates continue to handle these set texts, now in their third sitting, with great intelligence, and they appeared to have enjoyed their study. Examiners are grateful for the considerable amount of work teachers have shown in preparing candidates for this unit.

Some points of advice for candidates

Though this year's advice is similar to that from 2013, examiners nevertheless feel it will be useful to centres and candidates.

1   Note the requirements of the question: give Latin when asked and include at least one style point when required.

2   Try to carefully focus of quotations from the Latin in discussion of style points. Avoid just giving the start word, three dots and the end word if the style point relates to Latin within the ellipsis. The whole sentence is rarely needed, but do aim to give a decent piece of Latin. Even if your style point is primarily based on a single word, to earn the text mark you should show knowledge of the clause/phrase which contains that word. For the discussion mark you should explain relevant context and relate your answer to the question.

3   In translations omissions of words (including 'little words') will usually lose a mark, so be careful to learn complete translations. Examiners were concerned to see very loose translations being learnt for the Ovid in a few cases, and although examiners of course recognise the case for 'style' in verse, all the words which appear in the Latin still need to be conveyed in the translation. See 2a below.

4   Remember that the 10-marker questions test your understanding of the whole story, not just the printed passages, which may be thought of as a starting point. When you prepare for these questions, think of what the themes in the text might be, and trace them through. Essential for a top level mark are a wide range of detailed references across the text, coherent argument and tight focus on the question actually set.

Comments on individual questions

Section A Prose Literature

Question 1

(a)   There were some excellent thoughtful answers to this question, but examiners felt that many candidates did not do themselves justice. There was a great deal of over-reliance on Cicero's use of the superlative – some answers consisting of superlatives and nothing else – and even this was not always carefully explained. It was vital to point out that the superlatives described the places and people conquered. For example it was often claimed that *potentissimum* shows that Scipio was powerful. While that is true, the discussion had to make clear that it referred to Antiochus, and because **he** was very powerful, his conqueror Scipio must have been even more so.

(b)   Neither sub-question caused many difficulties.

(c)   Most translations were full and accurate.

    Errors tended to come mainly in the second section, which (understandably) a few found difficult to express fluently. Most candidates still had at least the gist of it though, scoring a minimum of 3 out of 5.

    The usual warning applies to the omission of 'little words': occasionally *at* in section 1; more commonly *iam*, *cuipiam, nimis, enim, tum* or even *omnes* or *eius modi* in section 2; *etiam* in section 3. Nearly all of these were considered serious errors and so automatically cost a mark (*eius modi* is in fact two serious errors, so a maximum of 3 for the section if that is omitted).

(d)   Candidates knew this passage well and were able to select relevant Latin to support their understanding of Philodamus' thoughtfulness. Some candidates misquoted the Latin, even having translated it correctly; it is important that the Latin and the English match. Others gave incomplete Latin, for instance Rubrius was allowed to invite whoever he wanted, but only *invitet* was cited from the text.

(e)   'i' was well answered, but a few candidates needed to take more care when reading the question, which asked for information from 'earlier in the speech' - in other words not from the passage printed. In 'ii', some candidates were not specific enough, saying that Philodamus wanted to abduct/rape "the girl".

(f)   Again, generally reasonably well answered but there was a lack of discussion at times. A common response seemed to be along the lines of "Cicero uses direct speech, which vividly shows what is happening". As a general rule, candidates need to demonstrate that they have actually studied the text, and not simply seen some speech marks. Stronger responses gave supporting explanation of **how** the direct speech was vivid, for example: "Cicero has Rubrius ask 'I wonder, Philodamus, why you do not order your daughter to be called in to us?' (*quaeso … iubes*) This use of direct speech drives home the shocking nature of the request, as it interrupts the flow of the narrative and enables us to imagine the tense atmosphere when it was asked."

(g)   Some excellent essays this year addressed the question directly and thoughtfully. Candidates seemed to have learnt from previous years that they should tackle both 'halves' of the text, although this year a few focused too much on Lampsacus, and the printed passages in particular. Many included some excellent discussion beyond the obvious examples of weeping ambassadors and the nobility of Philodamus and his family, commenting on the damage done to the Romans and their reputation, as well as

the Lampsacenes' orderly meeting before taking action, which transformed their normal peaceful and cooperative nature to that of a mob assaulting Verres' lodgings. Candidates should beware the temptation to 'learn' essays off by heart: a few seemed to write a generic essay on Verres' criminality. Losing sight of the question in this way means loss of marks.

Section B Verse Literature

Question 2

(a)   Generally accurate translations. Centres are advised to check published editions before handing them out to students, as some had clearly learned very loose versions by heart. As an example examiners saw one which omitted *praetor misit* entirely, costing the candidate two serious errors.

It was again common for some words to be omitted, e.g. *forte, iam, aequo* and *ipsi*. A frequent minor error was the rendering of *vincet* as a subjunctive ('let him win' rather than 'he will win'), again possibly the result of learning a loose published edition.

(b)   Plenty for candidates to say here, although the same guidance is given as for the Cicero. Quotation of, for example, *date* as a 'forceful' imperative meaning 'give', without any context or development, is unlikely to gain full credit. Some candidates could have made more of Ovid's frustration with the charioteer, and why it might be amusing, given what we know of his actual motives for being there.

(c)   Generally fine, with just occasional confusion over whose wishes were granted and whose were not.

(d)   Some candidates did very well on this question. The most successful tended to focus on the sensory impact of the scene, reminding us that Ovid does not simply create a picture to look at, but transports us there with the sights, sounds and atmosphere of the place. All these things to create a lush and idyllic image in the reader's mind. Good points included the mixed word order of the flowers with the grasses and the various examples of repeated vocabulary. Examiners were less convinced by some attempts at comments on alliteration, which at times seemed tenuous or forced. Context of quotes was not always clear. Superlatives were better handled than in 1a.

(e)   Confidently handled by the majority. As with 1(d), there was a need to ensure they quoted the correct Latin for the point they were making.

(f)   Some very strong essays showed real engagement with the question, as they seemed to offer a personal response. The best, as always, referred to specific episodes in all four poems, and it was good to see more of poem 5. Candidates tackled Ovid's skill and 'message' in this poem, along with the representations of the different characters. A few still referred exclusively to poem 2. Candidates seemed to balance their explanations of Augustus' legislation much better this year, with careful and relevant references rather than pre-learned paragraphs which were barely relevant to the question.

F363 Latin Verse

General Comments:

Examiners felt that this was a demanding paper but one which nevertheless produced a wide range of marks, with over 40 candidates of the entry of 1334 achieving marks in the 90s and barely a handful scoring fewer than 30. The average raw mark of 69 was very close to that of previous years.

While it was nice to have an Ovid passage containing an actual metamorphosis, the unfamiliar subject matter (not many seemed to be familiar with the night-time habits of bats, for example) perhaps added to the difficulty of the task.

On the set texts, candidates were almost always well-prepared, and the best of their responses were a pleasure to read. They had clearly been very well taught and had enjoyed what they had studied.

Those answering on Propertius, sadly fewer than 5% of the entry, tended to score slightly more highly than those who answered on the Virgil.

As reported in previous years, a significant minority who seemed to have a good grasp of the text lost marks by quoting or paraphrasing in English without citing Latin, or they quoted the Latin text without making it clear that they understood its meaning.

The time management of candidates was generally very good – it was not unusual for set-text essays to run to five pages and very rare for a candidate to finish mid-sentence.

The majority of scripts were perfectly legible but the handwriting on a small number made it difficult for examiners to decipher them in places. Centres should be aware that such answers on the set text part of the paper are likely to be awarded a lower mark in a band, according to the descriptors for Assessment Objective 2.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A

Q1(a) What was intended as a relatively straightforward first question proved quite the opposite in many cases, as the force of the gerundive *accipienda* was often missed and the genitive *dei* was taken as an ablative (e.g. 'she thought that the rites should not be received <u>by the god</u>').

Q1(b)(i) This was generally answered well, although 'foolish' was attached variously where it should not have been, and there were some confused responses that suggested that Jupiter was the son of Bacchus or that Jupiter denied that Bacchus was his son.

Q1(b)(ii) This was generally well answered. Occasionally candidates suggested that the sisters were very 'sociable' or 'friendly' – the point was that they shared in Alcithoe's impiety.

Q1(c)(i) Most candidates managed this well. The commonest mistake was to suggest that there should be a feast to celebrate something.

Q1(c)(ii) There was plenty of savage anger but the main problem here was *laesi*, which was often misinterpreted as something which harmed the women. Most scored at least one mark but it was rare for candidates to pick up the second mark by saying that the god would be angry if he was slighted (*laesi*).

Q1(d) There were some excellent responses here but many lost marks by misunderstanding *parent* and *reponunt.* The result was a lot of 'preparing' and misunderstanding about the women doing or offering things (threads and baskets) which they were in fact putting aside. Often candidates did not quite push home the point they were hinting at, or spoke vaguely of polysyndeton without identifying it clearly. Despite the glossary, not everyone realised that Bromius and Lyaeus were also titles of Bacchus.

Q1(e) This question proved difficult for many candidates who couldn't separate out two valid answers. Many acraped some marks with scattergun translations which just about managed to use the words 'day', 'light', 'boundaries' and 'doubtful', without giving any real indication of genuine understanding. Some wrongly took *subibat* as 'slipping away' rather than 'creeping up'; others unfortunately referred to *iamque dies exactus erat*, which was outside the words set in the question.

Q1(f) Scansion was generally well handled, with few candidates scoring less than three. Mistakes were generally in the first three feet, especially on the second line (where the second 'e' of *tenebras*' needed to be short).

Q1(g)(i) The main difficulties were how to translate *tecta* ('building' or 'buildings' worked best), how to take *quati* (an infinitive dependent on *videntur* rather than a main verb), and the meanings of *aedes* and the difficult *pingues.* Even so, an occasional candidate knew *pingues* or even saw that it meant that the lamps seemed to burn *brightly*.

Q1(g)(ii) Some candidates struggled here and too many tried to include *diversaeque* from the next line, in spite of the *-que* joining it to the next clause. *fumida* was not well known nor well guessed, and often taken as a noun. Those who realised that it was an adjective did not always take it as agreeing with *tecta.* As with *ignes* and *lumina* in the next line, some candidates forgot that *sorores* could be nominative as well as accusative, and the sisters were therefore wrongly taken as the object of *latitant.*

Q1(g)(iii) *vitant* was surprisingly not well known ('living' was common), and those who had met *lumina* elsewhere meaning 'eyes' tended to go off track here; but the *dumque* clause was usually handled well.

Q1(g)(iv) The difficulty here was not so much in the meaning of the Latin as in the sense of what was going on. It was also a stiff test of noun-adjective combinations, a consistent area of weakness at this level. Too many took *parvos* as qualifying *membrana,* and *tenues* with *bracchia.* Good candidates were flexible with the meaning of *per* (despite vocabulary lists, it does not always mean 'through'!) and wrote that a membrane was being stretched 'over', 'across' or 'between' their small limbs.

Q1(g)(v) The word-order and the meaning of *levavit* caused problems in the first part of the sentence, and many who took *sustinuere* as an infinitive rather than a perfect 3rd person plural had to add something like 'began to'. Examiners had hoped that candidates would get the idea of *perlucentibus*, but only the best took it as 'transparent' or 'translucent' ('through the light' was sadly more common).

Q1(g)(vi) Too many missed the superlative form of *minimam* and too few realised that 'noise' or 'sound' made more sense than 'voice' for *vocem.* It was a very rare candidate indeed who took *pro corpore* as 'in keeping with the size of their body' or similar. Most took it literally as 'before/in front of their body' and were still able to score full marks for the sentence. *querelas* was not well known – those who did know it often came up with a sensible translation of *peragunt* which fitted the context.

Q1(g)(vii) As *celebrare* had been used in an earlier question, *celebrant* here caused problems with its different meaning. This, and the fact that weaker candidates confused *volant* with *volunt,* unfortunately meant that a fair few candidates must have reached the end of the story without really having grasped what eventually happened to Alcithoe and her sisters.

Whilst the passage did not necessarily lend itself to improvements on the literal, many were able to gain at least one of the two marks allocated for 'style'.

Section B: Virgil

2(a) The commentary was generally answered very well, with most candidates working in a linear fashion through the text, though occasional thematic approaches (e.g. linked to sound, colour etc.) also worked well. The initial part was handled better than the Apollo simile, where some weaker candidates showed signs of misunderstanding, and even some stronger ones sometimes had less to say than on the horse, dogs and Massylian horsemen.

2(b) The passage to launch the essay was mostly used effectively, though more than one candidate, perhaps confused by the Insert, referred to the passage in 2(a) and ignored the Mercury passage. Good links were made between the extract and relevant passages elsewhere (e.g. the speeches of Iarbas and Jupiter) and a number of the candidates were aware of the cultural context (e.g. the relationship between Antony and Cleopatra). There were some surprising gaps in knowledge, however, with many essays skewed towards the early part of the book, as if the remainder to be read in English was deemed less important. Aeneas' apology, for example, and the speeches of Dido that frame it, were not always fully utilised. Most candidates wrote balanced answers, with very few being entirely pro- or anti-Aeneas. Some of the best answers showed awareness that an original Roman audience might have reacted differently to Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas than a modern one.

Section B: Propertius

3(a) This question was generally answered well. It had been expected that candidates might deal with each half of the passage separately, but many made a very good job of drawing out contrasts between the two halves as they went along. It had also been wondered whether the question might elicit 'content heavy' answers and it was true that occasionally a little more could have been said about the sound of the verse (e.g. alliteration, internal rhyme) However, many responses identified stylistic features confidently and discussed them without losing sight of the wording of the question.

3(b) On the essay, some candidates tended to tie themselves up in knots with the terms 'pain' and 'gain', but most produced impressive analyses of the passage and the other prescribed poems and struck a good balance between 'gain' (often referring to the early poems) and 'pain' (generally the later ones).

F364 Latin Prose

General Comments

The various sections of the paper seemed to even out well in terms of difficulty, offering much that was accessible to the majority of candidates as well as plenty to challenge the strongest. For Section A approximately two thirds of the candidates selected the Unprepared Translation/Comprehension, and there was inevitably a much wider range of performance here than amongst the Prose Composition candidates. For Section B, as usual, Tacitus was much the more popular author, but Sallust attracted perhaps 25% of candidates – including a higher share of the strongest.

It was gratifying to see many polished performances, including a very few who achieved almost full marks, though in Section B Examiners often felt that candidates had the potential to have achieved more if only they had taken the opportunity to approach the task along more intuitive, less straitjacketed lines. It is hoped that the comments below may help to guide those engaged in training the next cohort of candidates.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A:

Q1: Unprepared Translation and Comprehension

Almost all candidates grasped the gist of this slightly recast and edited passage of Livy. Responses generally proceeded much more smoothly than in, for example, last year's paper, perhaps for the simple reason that the translation this time came at the beginning, thus obliging candidates to form a solid grasp of the storyline before they responded to comprehension questions, which look as if they do not entail such a thorough reading of the Latin (a misapprehension certainly in some candidates' minds).

Almost all got off to a good start with (a), and the beginning of the translation (b) caused few casualties – except those who failed to distinguish *oppugnare* from *pugnare*. In the second sentence, however, *subire* (not often recognised as anything like 'get close' - despite its appearance, by coincidence, a few days earlier in the comparable section of paper F363) was frequently not linked to the phrase *facile erat*. Few knew *ob*, and there was the further hurdle of *incidentia*, which often came out as 'incidental' or was associated with burning. The long middle sentence (*etiam ei ... traherentur*) contained several stiff challenges. The apposition between the three sets of pronouns (*ei qui ... alii ... in alios*) was rendered convincingly only by the strongest candidates; in the second and third clauses, nominative and accusative were often randomly transposed, with considerable damage to sense; the *ut* clause was often misunderstood as indicating purpose, usually entailing taking the following *ne* as 'so that not'; *lupi ferrei* was often rather improbably associated with *fero;* and, finally, there was the most troublesome phrase in the whole passage *furcis ad id ipsum factis* – slightly perplexing, admittedly, but something capable of a solution with a careful reading of the cases and agreements. *ubi animadvertit ... esse* gave those who had lost their way a good chance to find their feet. Most recognised *certamen*, though a few thought *aequum* was 'water'. The double *et ... et* was only rarely understood as linking a pair of reasons for the previous clause: those who missed this signpost then didn't know what to do with the phrase *et paucitate suorum.* Likewise, the not particularly difficult final sentence was often mangled through lack of attention to basic principles: for example, *cum* – often seized upon as 'when' (despite lack of following subjunctive), and *aggressus est* – given *prima (pars)* as subject (contrary to agreement). The passage offered several good chances for felicitous English turns of phrase, even if candidates' understanding of

other parts of the story was limited. Some examples which earned bonus marks were 'section' rather than just 'part'; 'even' in *etiam ei*; the idiomatic 'in danger of being dragged' for *in periculo .. ne traherentur;* and some really thoughtful approaches to *aequum*, such as 'a stalemate' or 'could go either way'.

Many responses to (c) were, as last year, disappointing, and teachers would be well advised to stress the importance of having the patience to read the paragraph properly, instead of merely stabbing random guesses at what might be important features, without any real idea of what is happening. Stray items, such as the alliteration of *praesidium Punicum*, acquired quite unwarranted significance; 'fear' was usually cited, but isolated from its consequences: i.e. *tantum pavoris ... ut cives moenia repente desererent* and *timor incessit cives ne ... caederentur*; likewise, *caederentur* – a vivid choice of vocabulary certainly, but so much more so if linked to its true context with *omnes sine discrimine.* The other pitfall here for many candidates is that they become so engrossed in the content of the passage ('what he says') that they fail to make any explicit reference to the style of the writing ('how he says it'). The best answers, in contrast, are often quite brief and focus on three aspects of style, together with their context That approach covers all bases.

Candidates generally appreciated the denouement in the closing lines of the passage, albeit rather vaguely at times. The crucial things here were to recognise, for (d)(i), the phrase *hostilis acies* – above all, *hostilis* –, and for (ii), the difference between *dolus* and *dolor*. Another important consideration was to make clear who couldn't see whom from a distance. Since the question was about 'the Romans' behaviour', answers which began 'they' seemed naturally to refer to the Romans, but answers containing two 'they's were so unclear that Examiners could hardly decide whether the candidate had got the two sides the right way round or not.

The grammar questions (e)-(i), turned out much better than has often been the case. The genitive was generally – though not by any means universally – recognised for (e), and translations in context, such as 'so much of fear', were accepted as equivalent to terminology such as 'partitive' or 'quantity'. Almost everyone spotted the Ablative Absolute in (g) – though some couldn't translate *patefacta* correctly – and in (f) it was heartening that so many were aware of the continued existence of the gerund, though the careless translation 'tired of fighting' was regrettably common. Predictably the test of subjunctive usages in (h) was little more than a lottery for some candidates, many answers to (i) opting for purpose rather than result, and in (ii) giving the introductory word *utrum* (with or without *an*) rather than any real explanation of the syntax. In (i), the majority associated *caesi* with the correct verb but too many still carelessly supplied *caedo* rather than the requested infinitive.

Q2: Prose Composition

The passage proved accessible to the majority of those who had practised for this option, but also contained one or two tricky phrases which challenged even the most expert. Most coped effectively with the wide range of constructions tested, and the best found opportunities for some idiomatic writing, without indulging in the exotic or engaging in wholesale rearrangement of sections. It is pleasing to be able to say that the gratuitous insertion of pre-packaged idioms (e.g. *quae cum ita essent*), whether they suit the context or not – an eccentricity observed in the past – seems to have gone out of fashion. The essential vocabulary seemed well within the compass of most candidates, the only disappointments being the infrequent addition of suitable connectives, (*enim*, *itaque*, etc) which are such a feature of polished Latin writing, and the failure by some to transcribe accurately the words supplied on the question paper.

Frequent syntactical problems included:

cases for time phrases ('for many years');

when, and when not, to use a preposition (*ad Lacedaemonios*, but **not** *ad Athenas*);

agreement of adjectives and nouns in apposition to one another (e.g. 'the richest part' and 'a lame poet (**not** feminine) called Tyrtaeus';

rather arbitrary choice of tenses in different subjunctive constructions (e.g. the imperfect is natural for 'they went to Delphi to consult' and for 'they sent ambassadors to ask', whereas the result clause 'they fought so much better that they brought ...' cries out for the perfect;

haziness regarding which constructions actually require the subjunctive in Latin: e.g. 'they were afraid that ...'; also after *cum* ('when he arrived there ...') and for the indirect question 'how they could win'. On the other hand, they thought that a man like that would give ...' was sometimes also given the subjunctive treatment.

The game-changer was always going to be how successfully candidates handled the clause 'but they had to obey the god'. Here examiners were happy to accept a variety of valid approaches, from the straightforward (e.g. using *debeo* or *necesse erat*) to the more complex but idiomatic impersonal gerundive: unfortunately the latter was sometimes let down by failure to supply the necessary dative for 'the god' and even by sheer carelessness, such as writing *est* rather than *erat*!

Mistakes on a smaller scale included confusing *doceo* with *disco* (though really *cognosco* was what was required here anyway), using *ibi* or *illic* rather than *illuc* in 'when he arrived there', and uncertainty about when to use a reflexive (e.g. 'could teach them') and when not (e.g.'with his help').

A pleasing number introduced some effective subordination between sentences (e.g. *veriti* in 'the Spartans were afraid ... but' and *progressi* in 'they went to Delphi ... and learned') or were confident enough to take the gerundive route for 'to consult the oracle' or 'to ask for an adviser'. In the final sentence, how to handle 'so much better' was beyond the knowledge of nearly all candidates, though the last phrase 'brought under their control' produced a good crop of pleasing idioms, such as *in potestatem suam cogere* or *sub iugum ducere*. All these richly deserved one of the 10 discretionary bonus marks, as did the larger number of candidates who introduced simple improvements such as moving the subject of the opening sentence (*Lacedaemonii*) to the front or putting *igitur* in its usual second place in the sentence (*pace* Tacitus).

Section B: general comments

Candidates generally seem to have prepared their chosen text reasonably well, but far too many let themselves down by the piecemeal method they use to construct a response. Once again Examiners had to exercise inordinate patience in the face of candidates' apparent obsession with laboriously spotting and then attaching dubious significance to minute features in the passage, often at the expense of ever relevantly addressing the question set.

As in previous years, for each author the paper posed a pair of questions, each with a different focus: one largely to do with overall impact and content, the other leaning more towards the author's approach and style. The most successful candidates are alert to the difference in focus between the two, and adapt their approach accordingly, selecting from the material to build up a response to the question, rather than allowing the passage itself to dictate the shape and length of the essay. Devoting a few minutes to prioritising the best material from anywhere in the

passage **to answer the question set** is time well spent! Candidates who work relentlessly through the passage line by line are all too often tempted to place great importance on minutiae in the first few lines of each passage which have very little relevance to the central issue of the question, resulting in them often writing at quite unnecessary length and losing all focus on the initial question.

As mentioned repeatedly in previous years' reports on this unit, there is a tendency for candidates to pick on isolated scraps of Latin, rather than to give quotations in full which properly match the comments being made about them. Simply appending the occasional Latin word or sentence in a bracket is not the same thing as choosing a quotation out of which an observation or comment is then developed. Making reference to the text by quoting first and last words or by using line numbers is an acceptable method if the section quoted is lengthy, but full quotation of the Latin is generally preferable - and is really essential if the candidate is trying to discuss details of an author's style.

'Style' itself is often interpreted on too small a scale and for many candidates seems to amount to a rather mechanical trawl, line by line, through a checklist of technical terms. Too many seem to feel they have dealt satisfactorily with 'style' by collecting individual literary items (e.g. hendiadys or polyptoton) like coins or stamps – an approach which by itself says nothing about how these features contribute to the overall argument of the passage. Examiners would be relieved to hear less about tmesis or polysyndeton and see greater awareness by candidates of the balance and contrast, for example, between adjacent clauses and sentences.

Q3: Tacitus

(a)   *What picture does Tacitus give, in this passage, of Nero and his followers?*

Candidates generally knew the passage well and were able to analyse Nero's behaviour in clear terms, suggesting diagnoses such as madness, self-delusion, arrogance and preference for things Greek over things Roman. Most covered in (often excessive) detail his obsession with self-display, the collapse of the theatre and his tasteless reaction to it, and Tacitus' magnificent character assassination of Vatinius; though only the more perceptive made much use of his striking comment in the last two lines regarding the nature and extent of Vatinius' influence. Latin references were generally apposite, though less convincing when they were either too long or too short to match the point being made. Some based unfortunate modern interpretations on the words *promiscas* and *transgressus* and, though almost everyone selected Tacitus' choice of *vulgus* as implying Nero's hobnobbing with the hoi polloi, fewer appreciated the sneers in *oppidanorum* or *contractum* or the menace implied by the presence of soldiers.

(b)   *How does Tacitus, in this passage, give a negative impression of Nero's response to the fire?*

Again, most candidates were very much at home with this famous passage, which contains plenty to illustrate the cruelty and insensitivity of an insecure ruler looking for a quick way to appease his public. Weaker candidates, however, became too drawn into the gory detail - forgetting the wider focus of the question, to the extent sometimes of having little time left to appraise properly the remaining two thirds of the passage, especially the two 'nasties' at the end, of similar ilk to Vatinius in Q3a. The wording of the question – 'how?' as opposed to the 'what?' of Q3a – should have been a signal to candidates that the story was only half the issue here: the best made a conscious attempt to integrate points about style and content, while others scarcely moved beyond a laborious summary of the narrative. Tacitus' acerbic tone and highly selective presentation of the facts were rarely highlighted in the scramble to catalogue figures of speech – tricolon, chiasmus, polyptoton, and the like. The **effect** of these phenomena, however, was rarely given any consideration. Sound effects were detected in the most unlikely places – e.g. *Asiam atque Achaiam*, where saying the words (which would also be elided in normal speech) should have told candidates that there is actually no euphony between them, and the names of

two provinces could hardly be the author's choice anyway! Here too references to the Latin were not always quite as dependable as they ought to be at this level (e.g. *miseratio oriebatur*, 'pity was aroused', and general ignorance of the true explanation for certain cities in Asia being demarcated *liberae*).

Q4: Sallust

(a)   *What picture does Sallust give, in this passage, of Catiline and his supporters?*

Candidates generally showed sound knowledge of what Catiline was up to and provided a good range of ideas about his character, all suitably damning. Some answers were obsessed with *inconcinnitas* or with faithfully cataloguing every instance of asyndeton, but these were mercifully few. A greater mistake was to omit key information, such as the debt problem or the absence from Italy of any military defence or Catiline's political agenda. The best fully explored Catiline's opportunistic nature – one perceptive candidate calling Catiline 'not much of a revolutionary' if he was still seeking the consulship.

(b)   *How does Sallust make this a fast-moving and dramatic passage?*

Problems here were generally not to do with understanding the text, which was regularly achieved without difficulty. Where AO1 marks were low, it was because of a lack of specifics. As with the Tacitus passages, however, a number became so engrossed in the first half of the passage that they didn't get around to saying much about the last few lines. Many fell into paraphrasing the dramatic narrative of the passage without commenting on how the organisation of events, the attribution of feelings and the exaggeration of danger might communicate a sense of drama or urgency in this passage. As one examiner put it, referring to that fact that one closed door was all that was needed to stop the conspirators in their tracks, 'it would have been good to see the word 'anti-climax' more often'. There are strong indications that many candidates have no experience of this kind of broad literary appreciation during their course and instead become habituated to treating the text as a quarry for small-scale technical features. The smaller things need to be integrated with the wider content – for example, 'the string of infinitives give the impression of a flurry of activity, and the asyndeton helps too'. Often a simple observation in non-technical language works best – e.g. *'festinare*: Catiline does not walk, according to Sallust; he hurries.'

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