

Report on the Units

January 2008

3818/7818/MS/R/08J

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All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the Report on the Examination.

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Advanced Subsidiary GCE Latin (3818)

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2471-2480 Latin Literature 1

General Comments

The examiners are confident that these papers set the candidates tasks of appropriate difficulty across the range of texts studied and that they produced a range of marks, though, as ever, with a good number of candidates achieving high scores as rewards for their learning.

A good number of candidates performed really well and were deservedly awarded high marks. The following areas of weakness were noted in some answers:-

Storylines were not recalled in sufficient detail when answering the 9 and 15 mark questions in particular.

There was a tendency to concentrate on content (and not always in sufficient detail) rather than style in the 30 mark questions. A small number of candidates concentrated on style rather than content.

It was noted that some candidates avoided risking showing their knowledge of the meaning of the Latin they referred to, or in some cases actually got it wrong.

Some candidates failed to quote the Latin to which they were referring in discussion, or in some cases failed to give enough detail. Avoiding the Latin tends to stymie the achievement of marks higher than Band 3 on 30 mark questions.

There were no rubric errors encountered, but there were signs that a number of candidates did not finish their answers.

The Quality of Written Communication was generally excellent, and most candidates rightly were awarded the full 6 marks for each question.

On a rather more mundane level, the examiners find it much harder to mark a cramped script than one which is clearly laid out. The examiners politely ask candidates to write clearly and leave the examiners sufficient space at the ends of answers to annotate scripts usefully. In particular where candidates are permitted to use word processing, double-spacing should be applied

The examiners, as ever, wish to offer their genuine thanks to all the Centres and candidates whose work they have assessed.

Question specific comments

Cicero

- 1)
 - a) Often well answered. One weakness was the frequent omission of Clodius' failure to turn people away from Milo as consul. Some candidates thought Clodius was to be consul rather than praetor.
 - b) This was usually well and fully answered.
 - c) This question provoked a number of good answers, though discussion of content (sometimes without real quotation from the Latin) limited some candidates' performance. One weakness here was limited spread of discussion across the lines required, with a little too much concentration on the travelling arrangements of the protagonists, especially Clodius' insalubrious usual travelling companions.
- 2) There were relatively few answers to this question.
 - a) Not all candidates elucidated the role of the gods fully here, especially heaven's stepping in to deal with Clodius after the state had failed to stop his madness.
 - b) Not all candidates made the point that without the death of Milo Clodius would have been unstoppable because he would have had the consuls he wanted. Candidates were clearer on his plans for freeing slaves.
 - c) Answers here were often good, full and well expressed. The effect of the rhetorical questions was not always fully brought out, it being more usual simply to mention them. But candidates were able to show their ability to discuss the fate of the Senate House and Cicero's rhetoric in discussing it, clearly and well.

Virgil

- 1)
 - a) There were some good and full answers to this question, but less strong candidates were prone to lose the balance between content and style discussion, or fail to show they understood the text's meaning. There were several answers which mentioned style features such as spondees or dactyls (not always the right way round) without really discussing them, as if their presence were in itself enough to merit mention. Not all candidates explicitly discussed Pallas' looking at the huge bulk of his enemy and hearing his orders as a sign of the tension between them. A few thought that Turnus made the first speech in the passage and by no means all candidates elucidated its tone.
The final simile of the lion and bull was mentioned but not always fully discussed, though it is a pretty good illustration of 'tension'.
Some scripts had potentially good discussion but only limited to a few lines of the passage set for discussion; this will always stymie the search for the highest marks.
 - b) Generally soundly answered, but not many candidates grasped the meaning of *si qua fors adiuvet* and/or *viribus imparibus* (and it was surely not Virgil's intention to show them as 'unequal men').
Some omitted to discuss the guest host relationship of Evander and Hercules, or thought that Turnus had been the host.
Hercules' reaction was well recalled.
 - c) Some candidates omitted what happened on earth, especially, the dismissive words of Turnus, and, perhaps curiously, the taking of Pallas' baldric.

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- 2) a) Some candidates slowed themselves down by going back too far in their answers here, covering the death of Lausus in sometimes excessive detail and omitting the exchange of words between Mezentius and Aeneas.
- b) There was also omission of detail in some answers here; not all candidates showed they knew Aeneas stood firm while Mezentius rode round him, or that he kept the forest of spears in his shield until he tired of that effort.
A number of candidates slowed themselves down here by discussing style or emotion (remembering what they had discussed in class about the fall of Rhaebus perhaps). This is not really looked for in the 15 mark questions.
- c) This was quite often well answered, with the provisos mentioned in the general remarks above about the balance of content and style and the failure to demonstrate an accurate grasp of the meaning or even to discuss points in Latin rather than English,. Some candidates thought that Mezentius spoke lines 13-14, in a final bout of critical self-analysis before he died.
Not all candidates interpreted the tone of Mezentius' real last words fully though they vaguely recalled that we were to be sympathetic to Mezentius.
Some thought that Mezentius' son had not yet died.
The opportunities for discussing the effect of Virgil's choosing significant words at the time of Mezentius' death were by no means always taken.

Tacitus

- 1) a) Generally well answered, though some candidates omitted the point that Blaesus had revived the mutiny by imprisoning and flogging the ringleaders.
- b) The content/style balance was not weighed properly here by some candidates, who discussed one at the expense of the other, with content predominating. Not all the details of the content were always included though, with quite a common focus being to start at the appeal to Blaesus rather than the beginning of the lines set. This produced answers which had to be deemed 'limited in scope'.
- c) This was generally well and fully answered, being a familiar and exciting moment.
- 2) a) There was some omission or compression of detail here; the mutineers' fear that the concessions wrung from the authorities might be cancelled by the senate was often omitted.
- b) This was generally well answered, with the provisos already mentioned about the balance of content and style discussion and the limited scope of some answers. In this answer it was not unusual for style discussion to predominate over content, as there were numerous good examples of Tacitean style on offer. Candidates should note that even in this kind of style laden passage, content should not be ignored or underplayed.
- c) This was generally well answered, though the point that the soldiers saw the women in tears and asked why was sometimes taken for granted.

Ovid

- 1) a) Generally well answered, though the connection between elegiacs and love was not always fully grasped.
- b) Here candidates often failed to gauge the tone and intention of Ovid's rhetorical questions about the gods' exchanging roles and did not see that Ovid knew it was

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unreasonable, and clearly said so by the list of questions he posed. Some clearly thought that Cupid had posed the questions to Ovid rather than the other way round. This was a fault in a good number of otherwise very sound and promising answers.

- c) Generally well answered, though some omitted to say that Ovid was bidding farewell to war poetry and turning to that of love.
- 2)
- a) Generally well answered, with the occasional omission of the hardness of Ovid's bed and the reluctance of the bedclothes to stay on it.
 - b) Generally well and fully answered, though some concentrated on the details in the typical Ovidian list at the expense of the point that the list was illustrating.
 - c) Though many candidates quickly lost sight of the trigger word 'vivid' in their answers, most responded well to the chance to discuss the continuous imagery of the triumph. A few, surprisingly, saw Ovid, not Cupid as the *triumphator*, and some less sure-footed candidates limited their discussion to a few lines only, usually the first, perhaps as time sped away from them.

It is, though, important that if candidates are to be awarded the highest marks, they should show understanding of the meaning of trigger words such as 'vivid' in a more explicit way. Here it was quite straightforward to do so by beginning the discussion with noting that that whole passage paints a clear and detailed picture of the triumph procession, but with the 'real' details converted to Ovid's view of the power of Love, and then let detail of the content, and features of the style, be seen as servants of that image.

2491 Latin Literature 2

General Comments

The examiners feel that this Unit set the candidates appropriate tasks to invite response at the appropriate level.

The quality of performance on this unit varied from poor to excellent but was generally sound. It remains good to see that the examiners' previous advice on 'policing' the quality of translation within Centres continues to be followed. The examiners were pleased to note very few examples of whole centres offering shared inaccurate dictated or printed translations.

The errors encountered in translation, perhaps inevitably, remain much the same, in particular the omission of key words, especially conjunctions, or the 'telescoping' of translation of a section of the text, where detailed recall has proved more elusive.

Again the examiners would want to emphasise how important it is in this Unit that **candidates should write translations on alternate lines**. It is absolutely vital for the useful annotation of this Unit that candidates would expect from the examiners, that they are given sufficient space to make the annotation clear.

While there were numerous examples of good and well thought-out essays which exhibited a detailed recall of the text (including both 'halves' where two authors had been studied), there were also a disappointingly significant number of essays which were essentially narrative in nature, with at best a randomly placed 'nod' to the question set, and some where not even the narrative of the text fully recalled. Centres will perhaps wish to remind candidates tempted merely to retell the storyline of the text, of the importance of analysis and confronting the question in order to be rewarded with the highest marks on offer.

There were no signs of rubric errors, most candidates except those who exhibited weakness of recall in the translations completed all the questions attempted, and many candidates achieved a well deserved full mark for the quality of their written communication, though some who did not express themselves clearly, or whose essay structure was weak, did lose a mark here.

As ever, the examiners wish to express their real thanks to Centres and candidates for the hard work of which they saw evidence in the scripts assessed, and their hope that candidates have achieved the results they wish or require.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A: Translation

Cicero

- (i) This was generally accurately translated, though the following weaknesses arose:
- omission of the force of the superlatives
 - omission of *omne* with *facinus*
 - omission or misplacement of *saepe*
 - mistranslation or omission of *agrestes*
 - failure to spot the pluperfect tenses in the last few verbs
- (ii) There were several sure translations of this passage, except for
- *vis* perhaps inevitably, appeared as 'you want' in a few scripts
 - *igitur* was often omitted
 - *felicitates* is really more than 'happiness', as some thought
 - the position of the *que* after *vinceretur* was not accurately judged by quite a number of candidates, leading to misunderstanding of the rest of that sentence in places
 - the tense of *habiturus* was not always accurately recalled
 - neither was the case of *cura*

Virgil

- (i) There was a range of achievement in this passage, many fully accurate versions, but a good number of misunderstandings, omissions and compressions in various sections, notably:-
- *orabat*, 'spoke' was not thought close enough a translation to be accepted
 - *cunctique* was often omitted
 - *vario* was not infrequently taken with *caelicolae*
 - *flamina* was sometimes translated 'flames' which led to considerable extra misunderstanding of the rest of that clause
 - *depressa fremunt*, one or other was frequently omitted
 - *prodentia*; 'warning' was not thought close enough
 - *alta* was often missed out
 - *premit* and *placida* were often compressed into one idea
 - *pontus*, perhaps inevitably, appeared as 'bridge' more often than the examiners would have liked
- (ii) Common errors in this otherwise accurate translation included the following:
- *forte* as 'brave' or 'strong'
 - omission of *celsi*, *crepidine* or both
 - confusion of the names *Clusinis* and *Osinius*; which was the place, which the king
 - some candidates thought he sailed to the shores rather than from
 - *trepida* and *fugientis* were sometimes applied to the wrong nouns
 - *vix* appeared as 'force' or 'you want' on occasions, and the connections between the verbs in that sentence were not always clearly elucidated
 - *avulsam* and *revoluta* were not made to agree with the correct nouns or one or other was omitted: adjective agreement in verse clearly needs some more thought in candidates' preparation and revision of the texts.

Tacitus

- (i) There were some very accurate translations here, despite the following mistakes:
- *nullis causis* was at times taken as singular
 - *licentiam turbarum*: the way these two words were linked, and so the meaning of *turbarum*, was not fully worked out in some candidates' work
 - *simul* was often omitted
 - the pluperfect was not accurately translated in *intermiserat*
 - the phrase *solita munia* puzzled some candidates, with the sun, solitude and city walls appearing here at times in interesting re-writings of Tacitus' ideas
 - *cuiusque* was frequently left out
 - *lascivire* was poorly translated, in a range of ways
- (ii) The relatively few examples of this translation were almost always well done, the only weak points being:-
- omission of *at*
 - misunderstanding of *concesso iure*
 - omission or misunderstanding of *mutuatur*
 - some candidates were not aware of the significance of the ' in M' Ennius

Ovid

- (i) There were a good number of quite accurate translations here; those who tripped up did so at the following places.
- 'everything is something' appeared enigmatically for *omina sunt aliquid* in line 1
 - *icta* and *restitit* were at times compressed into one expression
 - *cautius* was read as *caute* and the comparative force not understood
 - *referta* sometimes became 'referred to ...'
 - *flore* was sometimes missed out or the adjectives in the last couplet misplaced *vis a vis* their nouns; this aspect of verse expression is something on which some candidates need more revision or practice.
- (ii) Again there were many really accurate translations of this, except for the following:-
- Some candidates seem to have thought Ovid intended to write *miles omnis amat*
 - in lines 1 and 2
 - the relative pronouns in lines 3 and 5 were not always linked to the correct antecedents
 - *turpe* was often blandly translated as 'bad' or 'sad'
 - in a sense refreshingly, a few candidates thought that *forti* meant 'by chance'
 - some candidates translated *servit* (or *serviebat*) rather than *servat* in the final line

Section B: Essay

Cicero

A number of very good answers were seen. Those candidates who achieved the highest marks were those who did more than recall the text and drop in repeatedly (and in places almost randomly) 'and this shows that attack is the best form of defence', and began by approaching the notion of 'defence' and 'attack', looked for the grounds on which Cicero built his attack on Clodius -his lifestyle and political attitudes- and his defence of Milo -his patriotism and integrity- and followed that analytical approach with well identified points of evidence from the texts. Many noted that attack was here Cicero's only means of defence, as it was crystal-clear that 'Milo done it'. A good number of candidates used points from the translation passages before them on the paper: for some those were the only quarry available to hew evidence from, the better ones found some more, in addition.

Virgil

There were some full, detailed and well thought out answers presented here. The more differing points candidates could make about how we see the gods, the more marks they were liable to achieve, and some candidates kept their range of ideas quite narrow. Some did not go much beyond the evidence of the translation passages, and so suggested quite a restricted recall of the storyline of the text as a whole.

This was especially true for less strong candidates discussing Juno and Jupiter.

Sometimes discussion was lacking of the broader picture of the characters and motivations of Juno and Venus. The latter in particular had her words and actions taken simply at face value by some candidates, with her petulance and irony often ignored, and some had little knowledge of exactly *why* Juno made a phantom Aeneas for Turnus to chase, though passage 2 (ii) reminded them at least that she did so. The connection between Jupiter and Fate is indeed a tricky one, but a good number of candidates felt unable to tackle it at all.

Tacitus

Those candidates who scored the highest marks on this essay tackled 'head on' the definition of the 'trigger' word 'stimulating', and structured their essay around that definition. But many less good essays were mere retellings (sometimes not very fully recalled retellings) of the narrative, with 'and so Tacitus makes his narrative stimulating' slotted in where (and sometimes where not) appropriate. It would have been more rewarding for such candidates to have found a better focus on memorable moments of excitement and suspense, the interplay of characters, the changing moods of the mutineers and so on, and used those to suggest why a reader of Tacitus might feel stimulated enough to go on reading.

Ovid

There was a rewarding number of really promising and well-written answers to these questions. Those candidates who scored the highest marks looked for a **range** of strengths such as the ability to describe key moments well, Ovid's skill in observing such moments and sketching them in a few appropriate phrases (such as in the 'aestus erat' poem), his humour and self deprecation (which not all candidates seemed to grasp), and his conveying of a **range** of moods, feelings and emotions. Some less sure-footed candidates merely seemed to retell a few favourite poems and slipped in 'so this is a strength of Ovid as a love poet' without defining what 'strength' was really being described or discussed, or why it might have been considered a 'strength'. Others, slightly more confident of their thinking, simply took the bullet points and illustrated them, and that was a somewhat better foundation to build on, though some of those candidates had quite a narrow range of recalled material to discuss.

Grade Thresholds

Advanced GCE Latin 3818, 7818
January 2008 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
2471-80	Raw	120	92	81	70	59	48	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2491	Raw	90	68	60	53	46	39	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
3818	300	240	210	180	150	120	0
7818	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
3818	38.7	74.2	80.6	96.8	100	100	31
7818	0	100	100	100	100	100	2

33 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:

http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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