



General Certificate of Education

Classical Civilisation

CIV1F The Life and Times of Cicero

Report on the Examination

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CIV1F The Life and Times of Cicero

Most candidates demonstrated reasonable knowledge of Cicero's successes and failures in achieving his aims and some understanding of the difficulties he faced. However, there was a tendency to express these in somewhat simplistic generalisations rather than analyse specific aims and particular problems at any given point in his career.

Some candidates included a paragraph on source criticism in their answers. In principle this was very laudable, but to gain credit it needed both to be accurate and to be explicitly linked to the arguments being presented, not a series of rote-learned sentences bolted on mechanically just before the end of an answer.

Question 1

Despite some confusion with Cilicia, answers to part (a)(i) were usually more accurate than those to part (ii), in which the length of Verres' governorship was variously given as one, five or ten years rather than three. In part (iii), virtually all candidates showed some general awareness of Verres' alleged corruption, but they were often vague in giving some of the specific details which Cicero supplies.

In part (b), many candidates had a good knowledge of the rhetorical techniques which Cicero deploys in *Against Verres 1*. However, careless reading of the question often led to consideration of the wrong material, Verres' alleged crimes in Sicily rather than his and his supporter's machinations in the build-up to the trial.

In part (c), the general difficulties Cicero faced as a result of his background were usually understood, but further details relevant to the significance of Verres' trial were often missing or imprecise. Quite often too much attention was given to the narrative of Roscius' trial, too little to the immediate context of Verres' prosecution. Cicero's aim for *concordia ordinum* was frequently mentioned, but rarely was there a convincing explanation of how Cicero's performance in the trial of Verres might promote this. Most candidates supported the view that Cicero's conduct in the case considerably raised his profile and enhanced his career, but it should be noted that, contrary to the belief of many candidates, Cicero himself did not change the composition of the jury courts.

Question 2

In part (a), candidates' knowledge of the context of the letter in parts (i) and (ii) was generally sound, but recall of Metellus Nepos' behaviour in part (iii) was far less secure. In part (b), the best answers used both the letter and wider knowledge to build up an argument that characterised the relationship as one based on need, but some responses lacked scope and balance and dealt with only the letter or the earlier relationship.

Answers to part (c) generally included a range of relevant knowledge, although discussion of the circumstances of Cicero's election were sometimes omitted or given too little attention. However, there was a tendency to include too much narrative at the expense of analysis, with the consequence that there was often insufficient reasoned argument why an action should, or should not, have received congratulation. Some candidates did not realise that judgements were to be made from the perspective of Pompey and other Romans (whose opinions may have differed from Pompey's), not from the candidates' own viewpoint.

Question 3

Of Cicero's activities during the relevant period, his governorship of Cilicia was often particularly well known. However, where details of his behaviour earlier in the decade were either missing or imprecise, answers sometimes lacked balance. Chronology was frequently weak in discussing the events of 57 to 55 BC, explanations often lacked sharpness, and irrelevance sometimes intruded with the inclusion of material from outside the specified dates. Therefore, although most candidates attempted to make evaluative judgements at some level, these judgements were not always effective, especially where an overview of the period, spanning as it does the formation and collapse of the first triumvirate, was not provided.

Question 4

The standard was generally higher than for Question 3. Most answers provided a generally adequate survey of the period and some attempt at a balanced viewpoint, but they often glossed over key elements of the question, such as the period between Pharsalus and Caesar's assassination, and lacked knowledge of sufficient significant detail to support an informed judgement. However, the best showed a good level of insight, supported by well chosen information that included relevant references to Cicero's correspondence.