



**General Certificate of Education  
June 2011**

**Classical Civilisation 2020**

**CIV1E: Menander and Plautus**

***Report on the Examination***

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## CIV1E Menander and Plautus

### Section One

#### Option A

On this occasion both options were based on an extract from a play by Plautus and answers were fairly evenly divided between them, with a slight preference for *The Rope* in Option A over *Amphitryo* in Option B. The factual Questions 01, 02 and 03 were generally answered satisfactorily, although about a quarter of the candidates did not give sufficient accurate detail to gain the second mark in Questions 01 and 03 and a significant minority of candidates wrongly thought the priestess needed water for a sacrifice in Question 02.

Many answers to Question 04 showed a good understanding of the comic effect of the passage in performance, but some did not refer to a wide enough range of examples while others did not explain the humour with sufficient clarity.

In Question 05 most candidates showed a range of knowledge of the slaves in *The Rope*, but what distinguished the best answers was the ability to analyse rather than just list examples. Not all candidates were clear enough about the stereotypical characteristics and uses of slaves in Roman comedy to be able to assess convincingly how far the examples in this play were given individual features. The portrayal of Gripus in particular was often not treated with enough detailed attention.

#### Option B

The factual Questions 06 and 07 presented candidates with few difficulties. All of them gained at least 1 mark in Question 06 and 2 marks in Question 07, with a high proportion receiving full marks.

What was particularly pleasing about the answers to Question 08 was the very large proportion of candidates who achieved Level 4 by drawing examples of different types of humour from across the whole passage and coherently explaining their effectiveness in entertaining the audience, often with some perceptive insights into how Plautine comedy works on stage.

In Question 09, too, marks were generally higher than for the corresponding Question 05, with the best answers showing not only detailed knowledge of the play but also very good understanding of traditional values and the way Plautus sends them up in *Amphitryo*.

### Section Two

#### Option C

Although Question 10 was less popular than Question 11, it produced a larger percentage of very good answers. These avoided simple description and focused on argument supported by well-chosen details. It was pleasing that several candidates had the confidence to challenge the view expressed in the quotation, and in arguing how far either playwright could be said to be harsh in his treatment of human stupidity showed some good insight into the nature of comedy and the causes of laughter.

### **Option D**

A few candidates conducted their discussion on a very serious note, as if the treatment of real people were under consideration, but most entered into the comic spirit and made judgements accordingly. For many the near-tragedy inflicted on Amphitryo and Alcmena by Jupiter's amoral philandering was the closest the plays come to serious harm, but what marked out the best answers was not the particular point of view but the quality of the argument, covering all three aspects of potential hurt given in the quotation and supported with appropriate details from all four plays.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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