



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

Classical Civilisation 2020

CIV1F: The Life and Times of Cicero

Report on the Examination

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CIV1F The Life and Times of Cicero

Section One

Option A

The questions based on the trial of Verres in Option A were attempted by many more candidates than those in Option B covering the years 44 and 43 BC. Questions 01, 02 and 03 were generally well answered. However, some candidates did not read Question 03 with sufficient care and repeated Verres' crimes as governor of Sicily from Question 02. This lack of attention was even more evident in answers to Question 04, in which a considerable number of candidates gave a reason related to the trial – for example, interest in the competition between Cicero and Hortensius – despite the clear wording of the question.

Question 05 was answered well, in some cases extremely well, by the candidates who noted that the focus of the question was the techniques employed by Cicero in the passage printed on the paper, not his approach to the trial as a whole, and who sustained their analysis throughout their answer without drifting into mere paraphrase. Technical expressions such as *praeteritio* or *captatio benevolentiae* were not required, but were used effectively by some candidates to sharpen their argument, and misunderstood by others.

In Question 06, most candidates were able to demonstrate a sound general grasp of the significance of Verres' trial for Cicero, but they sometimes had difficulty explaining the connections between the various strands suggested in the bullet points and so in producing a fully coherent argument. To give an example, Cicero's victory over Hortensius needed more discussion than simply the assertion that Cicero was now 'top' lawyer; the significance lay in what Hortensius represented (the corrupt oligarchy) and what opportunities Cicero now had to increase his clients, wealth and, crucially, votes through successful high-profile lawsuits. More precision was sometimes needed in the use of detail. For example, the subsequent passing of the *lex Aurelia* enabled Cicero to claim his prosecution of Verres was instrumental in changing the composition of the juries, but this was not actually the case since the law, though not yet passed, was already publicly known. Nor did Cicero's victory enable him to be elected aedile, as was frequently asserted: the elections had already taken place.

Option B

Question 08 was generally better answered than Question 07. In the latter, most candidates focused on Caesar's dictatorship (often wrongly at this stage said to be '*perpetuus*') but did not fully explain its irregularity.

Answers to Question 09 were generally good, and in some cases excellent, by supporting a balanced argument with details from the passages and from other prescribed letters.

Question 10, though answered by a much smaller number of candidates than the corresponding Question 06, produced work of a very similar range. Very pleasingly, some candidates made good use of their detailed knowledge of the relevant letters (and in some cases of the *Philippics*). However, there was a general tendency to ignore the period down to the beginning of September 44 BC when Cicero was away from Rome and the senate, and in the months after that not to be sufficiently critical in assessing how far Cicero really was at the centre of the power struggle.

Section Two

Option C

Question 11 on Cicero's political relationship with Pompey was attempted by over four times as many candidates as Question 12 on Cicero's personal relationships. Most candidates made some attempt to avoid slipping into narrative, but they did not always think clearly enough about what 'always very unstable' in the quotation meant. For example, there was a tendency to declare simplistically that the relationship was stable when one worked in the interest of the other (Cicero's support for Pompey's command against Mithridates in 66, Pompey's support for Cicero's recall in 57) and unstable when they did not (Cicero's failure to support the *lex Gabinia* in 67, Pompey's failure to prevent Cicero's exile in 58), whereas the relatively rapid changes themselves reflect an underlying instability, the reasons for which needed to be explained. Prompted by the bullet points, candidates usually made appropriate reference to Cicero's correspondence, but they frequently omitted the significant period between Cicero's recall from exile and the conference at Luca or ended before giving a full exploration of Cicero's behaviour and motives in 49 BC.

Option D

Question 12 produced a slightly larger percentage of essays with very high marks than Question 11. Weaker answers tended to be uneven in their coverage, usually showing some detailed knowledge of Cicero's relationship with Atticus and Tullia, but only glimpses into his relationship with his wives, and little about his son and brother. However, the best were both very well informed, particularly with details from the prescribed letters, and well judged.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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