GCE

Classics: Latin

Advanced GCE **H439**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **H039**

OCR Report to Centres

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Advanced GCE Classics: Latin (H439)

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Overview

All four GCE papers were of appropriate difficulty, affording accessibility to the full range of candidates while stretching the most able. This summer a reduction in entry numbers for A2 was offset by a further increase in AS numbers.

Previous reports have indicated that, on the A2 units, some candidates came under severe time pressure. To help to ease this potential problem, the order of the sections was reversed this year, with the language questions appearing before the literature ones. Candidates are under no compulsion to adhere to this sequence, but it reflects the views of some examiners that many candidates are able to manage their time better if they tackle the language first.

Unseen translation at A2 continues to pose severe difficulties for many candidates. It is the hope and expectation of examiners that in the year between the two levels of examination candidates will have devoted considerable time to familiarising themselves with the subject matter, style and vocabulary of the specified authors. It was rare this year to find a candidate who had given careful thought to improving on the literal translation. Students are to be reminded that two marks are available in the relevant questions for this improvement. It would be very worthwhile if centres began to direct their students towards earning these marks by giving them practice at AS level. Although no style marks are available in F361, examiners much prefer to read idiomatic translations.

The handling of style questions in both AS and A2 units also appears to be a significant problem for a considerable number of candidates. Many, although they are clearly thoroughly familiar with the text, fail to gain high marks under Assessment Objective 2 (analysis, evaluation and response) because they do not address the question in the appropriate manner. Responses always need to be a balance of style and content, and it is this connection that is often lost. It is not enough to state that Virgil uses a chiasmus in a particular line; examiners need to be told what the purpose or effect of that chiasmus is within the context of the surrounding narrative.

If the question asks how Tacitus portrays Nero in a passage, a catalogue of isolated stylistic features with little mention of the character they help to reveal will not gain marks. Many candidates believe they are ticking all the boxes when they write 'Tacitus says that Nero stayed *Antii* (at Antium) and did not return *ad urbem* (to the city) until...'. Answers such as the above rarely extend beyond the purely narrative, giving minimal coverage to style. Candidates need to be far more selective in choosing Latin quotes, concentrating on phrases that are particularly important or effective.

The above observations should not be seen as a criticism of all candidates: many in fact gave examiners exactly what they hoped to see. Indeed it was rewarding for examiners to read so many confident, detailed and accurate responses.

F361 Latin Language

General Comments

The high standard set last year was maintained this year, with the first unseen posing few problems for most candidates. As previously, the Cicero unseen was more challenging, with only a few of the best responses achieving full marks. The great majority of those who attempted Question 3 knew what they were about, and scored highly.

Errors were designated as major or minor according to the same criteria as last year. It should be remembered that marks of 5 and 4 were awarded according to the number and designation of errors, whereas marks of 3 and below were awarded according to the proportion of sense.

One noticeable feature in the first two questions this year was the limited vocabulary knowledge of candidates. A number of Latin words appeared which are given several widely different meanings in the Defined Vocabulary List. Apart from the strongest candidates, there emerged a consistent pattern of poor selection of meaning for the particular context in which the words were used. Important examples of this weakness are *cum, legatus, imperium, certus, imperator, occupo, ingenium, quaero, peto* (Question 1); *causa, quaero, facinus, dico* (Question 2). Centres need to be aware that Examiners do not give full credit to a meaning that does not fit the context.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

legiones Romanae, cum imperatorem Neronem odissent, legatis suis persuadere conabantur ut imperium peterent.

This section often gained only 3 marks, even for good responses: 'had hated' (and occasionally 'had killed') for *odisset* and 'his' for *suis* were common errors; also regular was 'ambassadors' for *legatis*; the frequent 'ambassador' was even worse. *Cum* was frequently 'when'. Fortunately 'empire' was allowed full credit here as well as the more appropriate 'power' (the best translation was 'imperial power'); 'command', however, was not accepted. 'Make for' and 'ask for' were unacceptable for *peterent*.

inter quos erat Galba, qui, quamquam iam senex erat, tribus legionibus praefectus erat.

Quite a few good responses demonstrated an inability to see the force of *praefectus erat* ('had been put in command' and 'was in command' were equally acceptable, but not 'was put in command' or 'had been in command'). A few missed out *iam* or had Galba in charge of the third legion.

primo Galba nolebat imperium palam accipere, quod nesciebat quot milites senatoresque sibi faverent;

This section was handled well apart from the occasional omission of *palam* and a few errors over *quot* (often confused with *cur* or *quod*).

deinde, simulac de morte Neronis certior factus est, Romam profectus est ad imperium postulandum.

Many errors occurred in the average and weaker responses with *certior factus*, a common rendering was 'when Nero's death was made (more) certain'; some also completely misunderstood *ad imperium postulandum* and seemed unfamiliar with this construction. There was some carelessness with the meaning of *profectus est* ('travelled', 'progressed').

in urbe senatores magnopere gaudebant,

Virtually all translated this correctly.

quod credebant Galbam meliorem imperatorem fore quam Neronem.

This section too was handled well, with only *fore* being a problem (translated as present or as 'strong', 'by chance' or even 'in the forum').

cives tamen, quibus Nero ludos splendidos saepe dederat,

A few missed the dative in *quibus*, or gave the wrong tense for *dederat.*

veriti ne Galba minus liberalis esset, erant iratissimi.

A very common error here was the failure to handle the subordination correctly: 'were afraid that ..., were very angry' was not given full credit, because the section was meant to test candidates' ability to handle participles correctly.

ille vero, dum Romam progreditur, tot homines necari iussit,

ille and *vero* were often not recognised or tied in to the rest of the sentence. *Tot* was sometimes missed and led to confusion with the following result clause.

quos putavit inimicos sibi esse, ut maximus timor omnes occupaverit.

Many struggled with the second half of this section: very few improved on the literal meaning of *occupaverit* and there was some confusion over the nature of the *ut* clause. Also a large number missed the superlative.

pauci milites Othoni, viro summae nobilitatis sed ingenii pessimi, persuaserunt ut ipse imperium quaereret.

Most candidates wrote 'a few soldiers of Otho', despite the true genitive being available in the glossary. *viro* was often taken to go with *milites*: 'soldiers, men of...' . Many did not know the meaning of *ingenii* or *pessimi.* The frequent 'to ask for power' was not given full credit, as 'ask for' is not appropriate to the context.

praetoriani Othoni potius quam Galbae favebant,

With the exception of widespread ignorance of *potius*, this section was handled well.

quod ille multa praemia promiserat, hic nullum.

Some missed the pluperfect. The real challenge shown in the weaker responses, however, was the force of *hic nullum*; many were content to write 'here nothing' or 'here was nothing', which gave no sense. Most candidates though translated this correctly.

itaque pauci ex praetorianis Galbam in medio foro stantem occiderunt.

This was nearly always correctly translated.

Question 2

Throughout this passage the subjunctives were handled well only by the most able candidates. Once past the first section, average and weaker responses demonstrated little or no grasp of the underlying theme, scoring marks only for isolated phrases translated correctly.

Lucius Cassius, quem populus Romanus verissimum et sapientissimum iudicem esse putabat,

This was the least challenging section, with many average responses gaining full marks. There was a widespread reluctance to make *populus Romanus* the subject: very common was 'Lucius Cassius, who was thought to be the ... of the Roman people'.
Most recognised the superlatives but *verissimum* was occasionally 'very old'.

saepe in causis quaerere solebat, 'cui bono fuit?'

Only the best responses included the correct meaning of *causis*. 'Search for' was unacceptable in this context. The many who confused *solebat* with *solus* could make no sense of this section at all. Despite the help given in the glossary, only the most thoughtful had worked out the force of *cui bono fuit*; the most common response was 'who was of benefit', which unfortunately gave no sense to this section.

sic vita hominum est, ut facinus committere nemo conetur sine spe emolumenti.

Most failed to see that the first four words introduce a timeless generalisation; 'the life of the man' was the commonest rendering. The nature of the *ut* clause eluded many, with 'as' appearing frequently. The rest of this section was handled well.

ego facile me paterer Cassio ipso iudicante pro Roscio dicere.

This was the most challenging section, mainly because few recognised *paterer* ('I and my father' were quite common). *Ego ... me* regularly became 'I myself'. The ablative absolute proved surprisingly difficult. 'Say' for *dicere* (as in the frequent 'I myself would say') was unacceptable.

in hac enim causa cum videret illos plurimam pecuniam habere, hunc in summa egestate[3] esse,

Surprisingly, *videret* was rarely known, with 'they seemed' the most common rendering. Many who did give 'see' used the present tense, losing sight of the argument. Most grasped the contrast between *illos* and *hunc*.

crimen et suspicionem potius ad praedam adiungeret quam ad egestatem.

Usually *crimen et suspicionem* were made the subject here, with *adiungeret* turned into the passive with no agent (mainly because few realised the subject of *adiungeret* was Cassius). Many who did give the subject as 'he' then unfortunately ignored the subjunctive, probably for the same reason. *Potius* again caused confusion. Most however realised that a comparison was being made.

Question 3

(a)   This was very well done as long as candidates realised the need for an indirect command.

(b)   'By sailing' and 'quickly' caused problems for many (*navigante* and *celere* were common), but the main mistake was the omission of *ad* before *urbem*. Quite a number of responses did not demonstrate knowledge of the word *quinque* (turning to Spanish or Greek for inspiration) and used 'in' or accusative rather than ablative case for 'days'.

(c) *multissimi* was a very common error here; the rest was usually correct, with some pleasing gerundives.

(d) This was very well translated. Some struggled to form the subjunctive correctly.

(e) *Nisi* was rarely known, with most using *si non*, which was given full credit unless the *non* was misplaced. The formation of *promisisset* produced a few difficulties either on the stem or the subjunctive ending but most dealt very well with the difficult 'necatus esset' and got it completely correct or nearly so. *Dona* was sometimes replaced by *praemia.* The most common error was *milites* instead of *militibus.*

Conclusion

Centres and their students are to be congratulated again for the high level of attainment.

F362 Latin Verse and Prose Literature

General Comments

The Examiners feel that this unit provides a suitably challenging assessment of candidates' knowledge and understanding of the set texts, and clearly most had a firm grasp of the text content. Marks were spread mainly in the content/style questions and in the 10-markers. Here students need not only to show that they know what is happening, but also to demonstrate their ability to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of the authors.

There was not too much evidence this year of candidates running out of time. Occasionally Ovid essays were written in bullet points and centres are reminded to offer candidates plenty of practice at working under timed conditions. Some candidates spent unnecessary time on purely comprehension questions by writing out Latin, which was not needed.

It was a pleasure to see the intelligence and maturity with which candidates handled these texts, both fine examples of ancient literature. Examiners could also tell that candidates had genuinely enjoyed their study, and we would like to thank teachers for the huge amount of work involved in preparing classes for this unit.

Some points of advice for candidates

This year's advice is similar to the advice from 2012. Examiners feel it will still be useful to centres and candidates.

1   Note whether a question requires reference to Latin. If the question asks for Latin, marks will be allocated for it; equally however it is not time-efficient to add Latin quotes when they are not required.

2   Note whether a question requires a style comment or not.

3   Try to focus 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 Latin chunk; even if your style point is primarily based on a single word, you should show knowledge of the clause/phrase which contains it for the text mark, and explain relevant context for the discussion mark. (See question 1c below for an example.)

4   Check your translations carefully for the omission of 'little words', as well as accuracy of singulars and plurals in the prose.

5   Remember that the 10-markers test your understanding of the whole story, not just the printed passages, which may be used as a starting point. When you prepare for these questions, think of what the themes in the text might be, and trace them through.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A Prose Literature

Question 1

(a)   Generally well answered. The most common error was the missing of the superlative *maximis*, which is of course quite crucial to Cicero's praise of Servilius.

(b)   Most translations were full and accurate.

Some attempts at *auctam et ornatam* were too loose, turning the pair into nouns or taking *omnibus rebus* only with *ornatam* but not *auctam*. *postea ... quam ...* also caused some confusion. *recens* was sometimes omitted, and Servilius was not infrequently the Roman emperor. Candidates are reminded that the texts must be translated in their context, and a word meaning on the F361 DVL may well be inappropriate in F362.

(c)   Many full marks were awarded and candidates were pleasingly switched on to the main thrust of this question, which was about the contrast of the actions of the two men. Most gave at least two points about the language for each of Verres and Servilius, and a number gave three or more. While this shows excellent engagement, candidates are reminded it may have an effect on time management across the whole paper.

The best answers give solid reference to the Latin and context. As an example: "Verres stole *ex fanis religiosissimis* (from very holy temples). Cicero emphasises his disgust at this by his use of the superlative of *religiosissimis*. The temples' great sanctity is contrasted with Verres' great impiety by taking things from them."

A less good answer might not explain the context of Verres' thieving: "Cicero uses the superlative *religiosissimis* (very holy), which stresses how outrageous Verres is."

This point is unfortunately not clear, as something being very holy does not make Verres' behaviour outrageous, unless it is explained what is holy and what that behaviour is.

Candidates picked up nicely on Cicero's use of pleonasm, although care should be taken to distinguish this from hendiadys.

(d)   Mostly well answered – successful candidates either referred to the thefts of works of art, or gave specific examples. However some suggested Cicero was referring to Verres' treatment of women, showing either that *hisce* had been misinterpreted, or that a more thorough knowledge of the order of events in the text was needed.

(e)   Responses were good, though not quite as thorough as in (c). A few candidates did not give Latin as required by the question. Some gave a line reference to rhetorical questions and stated that this made it a forceful attack; candidates must give actual Latin, along with its meaning and a discussion of it in context, in order to gain marks. A common mistake was to quote *quam* as meaning 'how many', thus losing the *quam multis* Latin mark. Another was to quote *istum ingenuis* as if the two words were a unit. Occasionally there was confusion over *cupiditates*, with some translating this as 'unbridled' or 'untamed'.

A handful also quoted Latin from lines 5–7, thus regrettably scoring nothing for their often intelligent point.

(f)   **(i)**   Generally well answered. A few missed the essential superlatives of *certissima* and *clarissima*; as in (a) these are crucial to Cicero's point that he will not bother dealing even with charges that are utterly certain and obvious.

(ii)   Mostly fine, though a few candidates thought that Cicero was going to travel to Sicily.

(g)   Cicero essays were very good this year, and showed an excellent grasp of the relentlessness of Cicero's attack on Verres. It was pleasing that – following the report last year that there was little mention of some of the details of the Lampsacus episode – candidate responses seemed to make more of the second half of the text. There were quite a few references to Rubrius doing Verres' dirty work, the upset caused to both Janitor and Philodamus through Verres' manipulation, the boiling water being thrown over

Philodamus and Verres trying to flee at the end, having caused the death of a lictor and made rioters out of a once peaceful and dutiful people.

It must be stressed that coverage of both 'halves' of the set text is crucial. A substantial minority of candidates still discussed only the thefts, comparisons to other generals and the keeping of accounts in the mini-essay, but left out the entire Lampsacus episode or glossed over it very briefly, and this inevitably limited their mark.

Candidates are also advised that, while Latin reference and literary devices are extremely welcome, they must be used to supplement discussion of the impression of Verres created and what actually happened.

Section B Verse Literature

Question 2

(a) Mainly well translated, although a few omissions such as *misero, sed, tamen* and *sola* were noted. *nostra censura* sometimes became "I..." rather than "my/our criticism", thus immediately costing the candidate a major plus a minor error.

(b) Some sound discussion, especially of *quis furor est?* as a powerful and highly indignant opening to the passage. As with 1 (c), some candidates needed to give a more solid Latin reference along with greater awareness of the context, i.e. what was making him indignant, and how the language therefore conveyed this.

(c) Candidates were fortunate to have six possible answers in the mark scheme, so full marks was very common. Examiners noted that *coram* was often omitted, and felt that it was essential to Ovid's request that his girl should speak modestly while in public (or in his presence).

(d) This question was usually well answered. Effectively the answer was that Ovid's girl must behave differently in private (in the bedroom) and in public (as soon as she leaves the bedroom), with one suggestion about her behaviour for each place to stress the contrast.

(e) Candidates approached this question with commendable maturity. Discussion of the use of imagery, both physical and visual, was sensible and intelligent, and focused on Ovid's brilliance with word play to convey his enthusiasm. Much was rightly made of the polyptoton of *femur* and the alliteration of *lingua labellis*, although candidates do need to be certain they are quoting and translating precisely.

Once again some candidates needed to give fuller reference or discussion. For example it is not enough to notice that *illic* is repeated and links the clauses together, since one does not need to be a Latinist to observe repetition of a word. To earn marks on that point candidates needed to translate 'there', show they knew where 'there' actually was (i.e. the bed/bedroom), and demonstrate how this repetition therefore made clear Ovid's enthusiasm.

(f) Mostly this question was well answered. *errem* was occasionally translated as 'wander around', and *da verba* required a sense of deception, not simply of speaking, since clearly Ovid is asking his girl once again to fool him and the people into thinking she is chaste.

(g) Ovid essays were solid, but still not quite as impressive as Cicero. Some candidates gave generic summaries of what each poem was about, or over-relied on Augustan marriage laws, especially in relation to poem 4. Some reference to this legislation is of course perfectly valid, but not at the expense of rigorous handling of the text.

The best essays always gave detailed examples from the poems and tackled the question directly. They appreciated the different personas being presented, focusing on Ovid rather than the women he was chasing. Poem 2 is rich in possibilities, with his 'kindness' towards the girl clearly having ulterior motives, but also showing his wit and education through the references he makes.

Candidates found poem 5 the hardest to include, but there were some perceptive responses suggesting his insecurity and anxiety about being abandoned, perhaps contrasting with his confident – some might say arrogant – approach in the other poems. As noted in the 2012 report, poem 5 also comments on the slightly complacent attitude of Ovid's bull, which is in need of relighting the fire of the relationship.

F363 Latin Verse

General Comments

The examining team felt that the paper was of an appropriate level of difficulty with the scope for stretch and challenge at the top end while remaining accessible to the full ability range, being challenging but fair. Candidates appeared to have no significant timing issues and balanced the answers well in terms of length and detail. The performance of candidates was generally good, with some scores in the 90s and few scoring lower than 40.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

The change in the layout of the paper seems to have had little noticeable impact on the quality of answers and for the most part if a candidate applied grammar rules and understood how Ovid wrote, they were suitably rewarded by the mark scheme. Opportunities for improvement were however at a premium this year and only some found it possible to achieve 2 marks for this element.

One or two of the examiners expressed concern about candidates understanding the basic premise that Pentheus was the boar and thus being disadvantaged. When candidates did struggle however, it was usually because of confusion of vocabulary (e.g. fere = to bring, coeunt = begin; minus = threats; saucius = more …ly)) and an insufficient grasp of grammar (connecting oculis…profanis; in nostris agris = into..; mater as subject of videt)
There was a tendency for there to be one significant piece of grammar or vocabulary in most sections which was missed or misunderstood by candidates making the award of 3 marks rather than 4 more likely.

Translation

1(a) (i)   *fere* was quite often misunderstood and translated as "carrying" or "wild" or omitted. *campus* sometimes translated as "camp" and frequently assumed not to be the subject from its position in the sentence. *spectabilis* was variously translated as a noun ("spectacles/spectators") or with a more active sense ("able to see"/"seeing").

1(a) (ii)   *videt was* often assumed to be "he sees" and therefore *cernentem* often mistranslated or omitted, and frequently not identified as agreeing with *illum*. Only responses demonstrating more *proficiency* identified that *mater* from section 3 was operating in both clauses as the subject. *sacra* often treated as an adjective and/or made to agree with *prima*. The hyperbaton of *oculis...profanis* was lost on many candidates who failed to understand that these words agree.

1(a) (iii)   *concita…est*: only the most able responses showed that candidates had identified the tense and the verb this form was from. *insano* was sometimes translated as a noun ("insanity"). *cursu* was *often* translated as a "curse", "chant" or similar and the meaning of the phrase as a whole caused difficulties. A number of candidates did not accurately link *geminae…sorores* in their translation.

1(a) (iv)   Surprisingly high numbers of candidates preferred to render *ille* as "this" or as "there is". Candidates often *rendered in nostris* as "into" and *errat* was sometimes confused with *erat*. *maximus* was frequently treated as agreeing with *agris* rather than *aper* and a significant percentage of candidates struggled with the gerundive phrase on several levels. Mainly the vocabulary was confused with *fero*, so

translations of "must be brought" were frequent. Additionally the agent dative *mihi* was usually translated "to me" and only a minority of candidates scored a style mark by rephrasing "I must". Some more adventurous candidates ventured creative renderings of *maximus* ("enormous", "huge" etc) scoring a style mark.

1(a) (v) The main element missed by candidates in this section was *in unum* which was often taken to be *adverbial* or adjectival and translated variously as "as one", "together" "in one crowd" etc. Only the best responses identified the meanings of *in* ("against"/"at"/"towards") and *illum* ("him" i.e. Pentheus). *cunctae* caused problems, being confused with the verbs *cunctari* and rarely *conari*. *coeunt* also proved difficult as seen in some weaker responses: it was often confused with *coepi* and even *coire* in a military sense. *sequuntur,* often translated as a passive or treated as third person singular with an imagined subject inserted ("he was followed"), was rather common in lower quartile candidates).

1(a) (vi) *minus* was often confused with *minae* or *minari*. Only the more aware candidates ensured the examiner knew that it was Pentheus who was *trepidum* rather than the crowd or even Agave.

1(a) (vii) *saucius* was often erroneously taken to be a comparative adverb or more rarely a random noun or *adjective*. Many candidates rendered *opem* as "work". Only the more able candidates identified that *moveant* was a jussive subjunctive, with many treating it as an indicative present tense. Many candidates treated "*umbrae*" as genitive singular but did not put Actaeoon with the *umbrae* rather than the *animos*.

Comprehension

1(b) (i) This question was generally well answered

1(b) (ii) Candidates performance on this question was mixed. The best responses demonstrated that *both* sisters were involved with tearing off each arm individually rather than giving blurred and vague versions referring to seizing and taking of arms generally.

1(c) Most candidates identified the point about him being *infelix* and gave its meaning to gain the mark whereas *they* found it more challenging to express clearly that he was no longer able to hold out his arms to his mother. References to *matri* were only credited if the irony of her attacking when she should be caring was clearly shown.

1(d) Generally this question was very well answered and most candidates had been prepared for the process of quotation and explanation very well.

1(e) A number of candidates missed the importance of *nostra* in this answer.

1(f) Many candidates copied out the first line incorrectly: *non citus* instead of *non citius* was surprisingly common and candidates should be encouraged to copy out the correct lines since failure to do so leads to a mark of 0 for that line. A number of candidates treated *iam* as two syllables rather than one, causing problems, and the elision of *male haerentes* was problematic for a large number of candidates, However candidates could achieve the last 3 feet of line two even if they erred on feet 2 and 3. Surprisingly large numbers of candidates did not mark the final syllable of each line as anceps or x, instead marking – or u. In most cases (mainly *ventus* in the second line) this resulted in a very avoidable error.

1(g) (i) Getting both marks for 1gi was rare. Most candidates identified the involvement of wind for one mark but identifying the forceful "tearing off" of leaves proved more difficult to correctly express for many candidates.

1(g) (ii) This was generally well answered provided candidates had worked out the meaning of the Latin.

Section B

Virgil was the predominant choice for the set text as expected this year, but some centres did attempt the poems of Propertius and these were for the most part rewarded for their endeavours by producing well-prepared candidates who obviously enjoyed their work on this author.

Candidates appeared to be well-prepared on the two passages chosen for the commentary questions.

The best responses shared the following:

- accurate and thorough knowledge of all the text and its implications (the reason for Anna's references to children, the gods and the enemies of Dido; the absurdities of Postumus wanting to die as opposed to staying safe with Galla)
- the use of quotation to show that the candidate knew what the text meant
- accurate use of technical terms and explanation of their purpose (e.g. where rhetorical questions, tricolon or polysyndeton is mentioned there is awareness of the cumulative effect of them on the argument)
- an appreciation of the sound of the Latin and its purpose (alliteration etc)
- an appreciation of why words were chosen and their significant positioning (e.g. *solane*..promoted to emphasise her loneliness)

Answers on the essay questions tended to be marginally less strong, with the best answers able to refer to the given passage and the 1 – 299 lines and the rest of the book in Virgil or to show the full range of Propertius's skills in a large range of the set poems.

It is encouraging that examples of the candidates adopting a pre-prepared answer to fit the questions did result in some good responses but some essays were less adept at referring in detail to the Latin passage given and in considering the rest of the book, giving vague summaries rather than specific examples.

Virgil Passage

Candidates generally profited from knowing the Latin. There was a lot of material in the passage selected and the best responses really showed differentiation in both AO1 and AO2 metrics. There was a lot of focus on the rhetorical questions at the start, the tricolon of "dangers around Carthage" and the tricolon of imperatives prefaced by *modo* making Dido's task sound simple. Very often the *germani minas* point about Pygmalion in a short line was missed, as was the final repeated *dum* clauses. A larger than expected number of candidates also failed to mention or adequately appraise Sychaeus' ashes and the rhetorical question in that line. Many candidates dwelled on the initial rhetorical questions too much. A number of candidates scored in band 5 for both AO1 and AO2. Many candidates were band 4 with only some candidates performing less well, by only referring to some of the text and giving answers lacking in technical reference or explanation.

Virgil General Essay

This was another very nice question for candidates who knew the book well. Most candidates paid adequate attention to the passage given: the real differentiator was how many specific examples from Book 4 candidates included and evaluated to the requisite level. Many candidates dwelled on the deer simile and the divine machinery leading up to the cave scene. The best responses recalled a range of incidents both from lines 1–299 and also from 300–705, each of which was carefully selected to show Dido in a specific light. Fewer than expected candidates demonstrated sufficient knowledge of Dido's death and the obviously sympathetic way Juno sends Iris to release her soul from her body. Some candidates were unsure of the ways in which Dido is portrayed unsympathetically.

Propertius Passage

Candidates often demonstrated excellent knowledge of the text and in general found a variety of impressive ways to answer both parts of the question. Many of the responses were placed in band 5 for both AO1 and AO2 with the alliterative aspects of the poem and the rhetorical questions posed to Postumus a clear area for focus. The superior answers also made appropriate reference to mythological allusions at the end of the poem, without straying from the question asked. However weaker responses were also found, marked out by confused understanding and incorrect references in the text which led to inadequate conclusions.

Propertius General Essay

Questions were answered well in most cases. Candidates found a wide range of ways to argue how Propertius is worth reading and many demonstrated good knowledge of the prescription in supporting their personal opinions. Very good responses demonstrated the full range of reference possibilities and for the most part showed an ability to quantify the success of Propertius's writings with many answers gaining high marks in both AO1 and AO2.

Summary

Examiners continue to find that even candidates achieving high marks increasingly seem to ignore or do not choose to apply basic grammar and vocabulary knowledge in order to cope with an Ovid unseen and that this was a source of frustration and unnecessary loss of marks. However, many candidates are showing an encouraging mix of adherence to the Latin as well as attempting improvement which is testament to good teaching practice.

Any frustrations in the language are outweighed by the thorough and scholarly approach to the set texts where more candidates showed an ability to answer the question set and use the text in a constructive and thoughtful manner to show their understanding of and engagement with the texts studied.

Candidates and their teachers are therefore to be congratulated for their efforts.

F364 Latin Prose

General Comments

Once again Tacitus was much the more popular prose text, but Sallust attracted around 25% of candidates – including a higher share of the strongest responses. For Section A, approximately two-thirds of candidates selected the Comprehension/Unseen Translation, and there was as usual a much wider range of performance here than amongst the Prose Composition candidates. The paper, though apparently very much in line with those of previous years, in practice seemed to stretch candidates of all abilities, in both the language and the literature sections.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A:

Question 1: Unprepared Translation and Comprehension

This lightly edited passage seemed to examiners to be both of a suitable standard for this level and very typical of Livy's work. The presumption behind announcing the author from whose work the passage will be taken is that candidates will come to it having had significant exposure to characteristic subject-matter, vocabulary and literary style. Regrettably, for many candidates this did not appear to be the case and this, combined with a wide range of errors over fairly elementary items of grammar, led to some relatively weak performances for this level.

In (a), while most grasped the first part easily enough, few recognised *seditio* or could substitute anything else likely to have been done by the townspeople. Responses to (b) were amongst the weakest in this entire section unfortunately, as few candidates appeared to have read the paragraph properly; instead candidates picked out what they guessed might be important features without having first formed a clear idea of what was happening. Such items as the alliteration of *primo praefectus* acquired quite unwarranted significance; *prima luce* was taken out of its context; *tuba* often became plural or remained a 'tuba'; and the obviously artful phrase *aut quis aut quibus* was often quoted with no attention to the case of the two pronouns. By the end, the Romans (accusative) were often looking at Greek (nominative) bodies strewn on the ground, despite the fact that this takes no account of the information supplied in the heading and glossary.

Nevertheless it was pleasing that many who had struggled with the first paragraph suddenly found solid ground in (c), where they were compelled to address the Latin thoroughly. The first half of the paragraph often came out quite well, despite the occasional lack of vocabulary knowledge, e.g. *superfuerunt* (confused with *superare*), *cedentes* ('hiding'), or *paulatim* ('a little'). As the passage proceeded, however, grammatical problems became more of an issue, e.g. *convocari* (active rather than passive), the deponent verbs (*persecuti* and *adlocutus*), and the future active infinitives (*iussurum* and *habiturum esse*). Many did not know what to make of *quis* or who was denoted by the various other pronouns in the last three sentences, and frequently *habiturum* came out as 'live' as often as 'have' or (better) 'consider'. The passage did not perhaps offer many chances for felicitous English turns of phrase, but some nice instances which earned bonus marks were 'brighter' for *certior*, 'began to quieten down' for *conticescebat*, and 'overbearing tyranny' or 'rule' for *superbam dominationem*.

Provided candidates had made a good shot at the translation of (c), (d) often turned out well too. The grammar questions (e)-(h), however, proved to be problematic – the ablative absolute in (g) being the only certainty for many. Awareness of the standard subjunctive usages tested in (f) was patchy, with many supplying unconvincing explanations such as conveyance of doubt or

uncertainty. Only around 50% associated *cognita* with the correct verb, and of these many supplied *cognosco* rather than the requested infinitive. In (g)(ii) many were too easily fooled by the *cum* in front of *titulis* – oblivious of the following subjunctive verb – and in (h)(i), though many could translate the phrase effectively, many spoilt their explanation of the grammar by referring to either a Gerund or a Gerundive of Obligation. Understanding of the impersonal passive in (h)(ii) was very rare, and many of those who did explain it could not unpack the meaning of the compound *discursum* – 'discuss' or 'leave' being almost the norm.

Question 2: Prose Composition

The passage was mostly very accessible, with just a few sections requiring more expert manipulation. Most candidates sensibly this year opted for clarity and correctness, rather than wholesale rearrangement of sections, and good responses easily achieved high scores. Examiners were pleased to note that the insertion of pre-packaged idioms (e.g. *his rebus confectis*) whether they suit the context or not, hardly appeared at all this year. It was refreshing too to find a wide palette of 'everyday' vocabulary in use without candidates feeling the urge to incorporate elaborate vocabulary which is no improvement on the normal word in that context.

The syntax of hoping, trying and ordering caused a few problems. Many failed to use the Indirect Statement with 'hoping'; most handled 'trying' well but the differing requirements of *iubeo* and *impero* were blurred by some. The ablative absolute was incorporated to good effect, (e.g. 'with Antony's men approaching' and 'with all hope of sailing abandoned'). Common noun-adjective agreement problems surfaced with 'those hands' and 'hostile words'. Many candidates were unaware of the formation of the present passive infinitive in the 3rd conjugation (e.g. *deponi, ostendi*) or the future tense of *morior*, often leading to an unintended delay. *caput* was frequently given a spurious accusative, *capitem*. The finale 'he had the head put on display' offered an excellent choice of routes between incorporating it in the earlier indirect command and a chance for some to show their mettle with *curare* + Gerundive. Candidates are generally adept at rearranging the first sentence to start with the subject, but they need to ensure that this connects correctly with what follows beyond the intervening subordinate clause. A pleasing number were familiar with less common vocabulary such as *crudelitas* and *infesta* and idiomatic phrases such as *navem conscendere*, *navem solvere*, and *aequo animo*, all examples of the kind of stylish composition for which examiners are looking to award up to 10 additional marks.

Section B: general comments

Candidates generally seemed to have prepared their chosen text reasonably well but too often let themselves down by the piecemeal method they used to construct a response. This year more than ever examiners commented on candidates' focus on listing and attaching sometimes dubious significance to minute features in the passage, at the expense of addressing the specific question set.

As in previous years, for each author the paper posed a pair of questions with a slightly differing focus – one largely to do with overall impact and content, the other leaning more towards the author's approach and style (though candidates who focused on style for both questions were fully rewarded). The most successful candidates were those who sensed the difference in focus between the two and adapted their approach accordingly, selecting from the material to build up a response to the question, rather than allowing the material itself to dictate the shape and length of the response. Devoting a few minutes to prioritising the best material from all over the passage to answer the question set is time well spent. Although a sequential approach is perfectly acceptable in principle, there is a danger that working relentlessly through the passage in sequence could lead to placing great importance on *minutiae* in the first few lines of each passage which have very little relevance to the central issue of the question – the result of which is often quite unnecessary length.

As mentioned 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 features 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 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) but saying nothing about how these features contribute to the overall argument of the passage. In addition to the usual range of stylistic devices, examiners would be delighted to see more attention paid to the balance and contrast between adjacent clauses and sentences.

Question 3: Tacitus

(a) *How does this passage present Thrasea Paetus' views forcefully?*

Few candidates demonstrated a convincing grasp of this passage. This is admittedly a difficult passage of Latin and perhaps lacking in immediate appeal but, as part of the text specified for study, it still deserved close attention. Struggling candidates unfortunately took refuge in listing technical terms and rhetorical devices without attempting to interpret their effectiveness. Words and short phrases need to be appreciated in their context. Here, as elsewhere, many made too much of tiny details of little relevance to the question and claimed to find alliteration and assonance in the most unlikely places. Some built enormous significance out of a small range of the most easily recognised words (e.g. *ergo*, *olim*, *at nunc*). Many failed to see the point of the parallel with electioneering made in line 12, or the balance of arguments in lines 8 and 9. While many duly noted *decernitur* and *decernatur* as an example of polyptoton or anaphora, few appreciated the ringing effect of the change from indicative to subjunctive.

(b) *What impression of Nero does Tacitus give in this passage?*

The subject matter of the second passage seemed to offer more obvious opportunities, with a narrative passage and a broad question, though here too basic familiarity with the Latin was sometimes lacking. Some candidates neglected to draw generalisations about Nero's characteristics and behaviour traits from the mass of detailed description, or didn't venture beyond a simplistic level of description (e.g. selfish, kind). Others made questionable inferences from what are almost certainly no more than statements of fact (e.g. that the knocking down of temples indicates that Nero was challenging the gods). Most drew attention to the surprising degree of balance in Tacitus' initial account and sensed how he quickly turns the scales against Nero by the tacit acceptance of unattributed rumour. As in Q3(a), there were those who tried to find significance in every word and phrase, showing no selectivity of the main points but dwelling instead at great length on peripherals. Some skimped on the central criticism of Nero for putting stage performance before fire-fighting, and only the most perceptive responses made any comment about his (alleged) absurdly tactless choice of song.

Question 4: Sallust

The small proportion of candidates who answered on Sallust generally produced answers of a good to high standard.

(a) *In lines 1–6 and 11–19, how does Sallust present Catiline as inspiring and persuasive?*

Both Sallust passages offered plenty of material, and many candidates took their chances well, though here too there were some who identified devices without offering an explanation of their effectiveness. (Asyndetic) lists are used in several places, but only the better responses actually demonstrated how their use suggests limitless opportunities or widespread grievances. It would be encouraging to read more of 'buzzwords' (*libertas / gloria* etc), the constant irony in Catiline's message, or the tone of voice and gestures one might imagine the speaker using. Many showed appropriate scorn for Catiline's posing as the men's comrade in arms (e.g. 'use me as either your commander or an ordinary soldier' and sharing a special word with each individual in his audience), and a few realised the vacuity of the reassurance he offered by mentioning Piso and Antonius. The description of Antonius, however, as *omnibus necessitudinibus circumventum,* was frequently misunderstood to mean that he was well equipped with useful talents or supplies, rather than implying that he was just as much a down-and-out as the rest of Catiline's entourage. Nor unfortunately did many candidates make capital out of Sallust's cynical reminder at the end of the passage that what many of the audience were really interested in was, not liberty or fraternity, but more loot like Sulla had given them.

(b) *How does Sallust, in this passage, present a vivid picture of the women who supported Catiline?*

Candidates generally found the second passage familiar territory. They identified sexual excess and other varieties of depravity, and many appropriately saw Sempronia – a lady with every advantage in life, but who had gone to the bad – as the female counterpart to Catiline himself. The gist of this passage was often conveyed thoroughly enough, however the question invited attention to the author's approach, alongside choice of material and observations on style sometimes seemed rather mechanical and references to the Latin were often confined to providing the text to accompany something from the content. Examiners would encourage, for example, greater appreciation of the effectiveness of word-play such as *lubido ... peteretur*, subtler appreciation of the tone of comments such as *virilis audaciae facinora conmiserat* or *ingenium … haud absurdum etc.* and more comments on colourful expressions such as *praeceps abierat*.