

# **Classical Civilisation**

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE 1940**

## **Report on the Components**

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**June 2006**

**1940MS/R/06**

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## 1940/05 Classical Civilisation - Coursework

Another crop of entertaining pieces crossed the Moderation Team's desks this year with a wide variety of titles which were tackled with varying levels of success but always with some sturdy engagement, and at the highest scoring end there were some finely sophisticated pieces.

The relaxation of the rules concerning topic areas for study continued to impact on candidates' choices and some centres had enabled their students to chisel out very individual studies. These almost always resulted in a particularly clear level of interest and commitment, even where the actual skills shown in a particular piece of work were weak and the scores ultimately correspondingly lower. While we naturally aspire to encouraging all students to achieve the finest standard, it is very satisfying to see how a genuine love for the classical world is being engendered at every level.

The most successful candidates had used a variety of source material, which reflected a wide research base that included not only the widely popular internet websites but also the rather older and crustier area of books from libraries. It is worth reminding candidates that books have the advantage of being reliable sources, for the most part, while the web can put up students' submissions to tutors, which are thus not necessarily accurate or sound. Having said that, there is of course a rich source of agreeably well-illustrated material available via the web and it has opened up tremendous avenues for the less well-trod paths. Beware, however, of the ever-growing temptations to plagiarism, on which point see later in this report.

Less successful pieces were those whose titles that encouraged a factual delivery only, and this included not just the usual broad ones like "Roman Food" or "Greek Athletics" but also those where our yearly exhortation to frame the title as a question *had* been heard but the question itself proved unhelpful, for example "What did the Romans eat?" and "What athletic events did the Greeks do?" where the question still left the focus entirely on the factual information. Evaluation will be much more effectively encouraged if the title requires some reflection on the nature of Roman or Greek society and (perhaps) a consideration of how the ancient practice can be compared to aspects of our own social, political or economic structures. Such pieces can be quite sophisticated, for example "How significant were the differences between the life of an Athenian and that of a Spartan woman in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC?" or "Which city state had the more powerful war machine during the era of the Peloponnesian War, Athens or Sparta?" or "To what extent have the elements of the Roman army's success influenced modern military thinking?". They can be very specialised, for example "How far can the Colosseum, both as a building and in its purpose, be compared to Twickenham Rugby stadium?" or "How far is Colchester High Street a reflection of the architectural legacy of ancient Greece and Rome?" What is common to all, however, is that they will always encourage a regular evaluative thread that makes a coherent and effective final piece.

It was pleasing to see that very many centres have impressed upon their candidates the necessity of *including* the source material *within* the work itself and making productive reference to it as part of the progressing argumentation. One of the considerable advantages of the accessibility of the internet is the availability of good source material (most particularly perhaps from Perseus) which candidates are drawing on effectively and which are readily included within word-processed pieces to make some finely integrated work. It is also wonderful that the Classics appear to be held in high regard currently by the TV and film makers (documentaries on the History Channel / BBC / Channel 4; Hollywood's Troy / Alexander etc.) such that many have clearly acquired a wider general awareness of the classical world into which they can slot their particular studies – though naturally one needs to keep an eye on the accuracy of the Hollywood renditions! A further word of caution should be inserted here, however, as always (and an exhortation to be vigilant) over the issue of plagiarism. A timely Google search (simply insert a suspect phrase into the search engine) can alert you to a candidate's copying at which point the piece can be re-done and all is not lost. If it is only discovered when the work reaches the Board, nothing short of disqualification from the component is the inevitable outcome. It might be an appropriate moment here to remind teachers of the importance of the Centre Authentication Sheet, through which the school's reputation for honesty is compromised if a candidate's plagiarism slips by unnoticed.

## *Report on the Components Taken in June 2006*

There were markedly fewer empathy pieces this year, but the best of these were very good indeed, making full and effective use of footnotes or appendices to quote the sources that had informed their historical fictions. One or two had the familiar feel of the increasingly popular novels (Wishart / Davis / Saylor et al.) and some candidates looked set to launch a worthy challenge one day!

On an administrative note, centres are reminded of the importance of keeping each candidate's work together (treasury tags are generally the best for ease of reading), with centre number and candidate number clearly displayed on the cover sheet and the word count indicated. Please remember also that excessive wordage must be penalised – it is the equivalent of giving an exam candidate an extra 15 minutes or so just because they would like the time to say a little more – and this is generally to be considered within the Organisation criterion, although in cases of exceptional length (one piece managed a staggering 4,600 words) consideration should be taken within the UE criterion also, since it is arguably the case that the material is not understood sufficiently to select appropriately, to sift for relevance and to précis the original information for its inclusion as an answer to the question posed. The opposite problem of too few words is most likely to find a natural penalty within the FC criterion, since the facts will fall short of the anticipated content.

In conclusion, centres should generally feel proud of their candidates, whose fine pieces of coursework have impressed the moderators in so many ways. The interesting range of material that has crossed our paths and the enthusiasm with which discoveries have been made have once again been a source of great joy to us all and we are grateful to the teachers who continue to inspire their students with such a fine passion for all aspects of the Classics.

## 1940/11/12 Classical Civilisation - Foundation Tier

### General Comments

The performance of candidates at both levels this year was again most encouraging. Most gratifying was the fact that centres had clearly explained the format of the paper to their candidates and thus there were relatively few rubric infringements, allowing candidates to focus on quality of answer rather than pressure of time. The following report is compiled on the basis of a reasonable number of centres attempting a topic. Therefore where topics are omitted from the report it is due to insufficient candidate or centre entry on which to make valid comment.

As in all years it was clear that candidates benefited from the guidance given in the bullet points, although it is worth reminding candidates once again that they are supposed to give more information and not just include the guidance in a long sentence and in sub questions the mark allocation is a good indication as to how much they should write. Again there were a few candidates who secured their "C" grade by a good margin and could have certainly achieved better on the higher paper.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Topic 1: Greek Religion

##### Section One

- Q1** Question One proved popular. Most had no problem with a) b) and c). A number confused this cult with the Panathenaia.
- Most found plenty to say for e) with the better answers giving some indication of what life was like normally in ancient Athens and thus the appeal was more clearly defined. Weaker answers made simplistic statements with little explanation.
- Q2** In Question Two virtually all candidates performed well on a) and b) but were then vague in c). There were a number who still suggested 'in a temple' for d) and most showed little knowledge beyond the role of the *haruspex* in e). There were some good answers in d), although a number prioritised talking about animal rights rather than classical practice.
- Q3** Performances on Question Three varied. It was very clear which candidates had also studied topic 3, especially in b), c) and d), as many answers reflected knowledge of the Olympics rather than the Panathenaia. Needless to say, some candidates did score well.

##### Section Two

Both essays proved equally popular and candidates scored well on both. In essay 1 there were some very clear accounts of the different gods and their responsibilities. At the other end of the scale there were a number who wrote about the difficulties or advantages of such a society without giving substance to their answers by including hard facts. In essay 2 details of the consultation were generally accurate but weaker candidates failed to assess the need for such consultations.

## **Topic 2: Home and Family in Athens**

### **Section One**

- Q1** Question One was attempted by most candidates. Most scored well on all parts except d) where there seemed little knowledge of the places where lessons might take place. There were some excellent answers in f).
- Q2** Fewer candidates attempted Question Two and did so without great success. Answers were very vague both on the materials used for houses and their layout. Suggestions for c) were often based on modern houses rather than ancient ones. Such a lack of detailed knowledge meant that answers to e) were often muddled and vague.
- Q3** Question Three was done well by most who attempted it. This is a fairly mainstream topic and slave duties were known well, although in b) some failed to recognise the more manual aspect to the slave in the picture.

### **Section Two**

Both essays proved popular with candidates. Perhaps not surprisingly more boys did essay 1 and more girls did essay 2. Again, as often happens at this level, there were many emotive accounts but hard facts were less easy to come by.

## **Topic 3: Greek Athletic and Theatrical Festivals**

### **Section One**

The standard of responses overall in this topic was very good. All three Section One questions were attempted, although question two proved most challenging.

- Q1** In Question One there were few problems, although in g) there was a lack of knowledge in terms of buildings other than the temple of Zeus.
- Q2** Question Two produced mixed responses. Most knew who **A** was but showed little understanding of the nature of **B**.
- Q3** Question Three was done well by virtually all candidates. Candidates demonstrated sound factual knowledge which supported their responses to all sub questions and especially d).

### **Section Two**

Both essays proved to be popular. In essay 1 the bullet points gave some structure to responses and there was some good discussion as to the appeal of the theatre. The wording of the question asked the candidate to be an ancient Greek. Many, however, looked from a purely modern perspective; thus evaluation was less valid. Answers to essay 2 were also generally well done. Weaker responses tended to dwell on descriptions of events and many did not realise they were expected to make a preference and say why.



#### Topic 4: Greek Art and Architecture

At Foundation tier there were too few entries in this topic on which to base a valid report. It is worth saying however that those who are able enough score reasonably but some candidates tend to do worse on this topic than candidates of similar ability do on other topics.

Virtually all candidates chose essay 1 but regrettably most tried to entice us into the museum by promising all the things they would tell us when we got there when such details actually should have formed part of the essay.

#### Topic 5: Sparta and the Spartan System

##### Section One

- Q1** Question One was done by virtually all candidates and with a good deal of success. There was a tendency to repeat information in a) and b) and a few did not go any further than reproducing the same details in e). Most had a good attempt at f). It is worth candidates at this level realising that they should not use the same facts again and again. To explicitly state this in questions would produce unmanageable wording.
- Q2** There was a broad spectrum of answers produced in Question Two. They ranged from candidates who showed a clear understanding of Spartan battle tactics to those who produced answers which were largely guesswork. Even Leonidas was a mystery to some. Watch the 'Three Hundred Spartans' if possible!
- Q3** Not surprisingly, those who could deal with the Spartan military avoided Question Three and those who did attempt this question tended to know their stuff or, trapped by necessity, had little of value to say. The unusual election procedure in c) was less well known than expected and there were some inventive suggestions.

##### Section Two

Essay One proved the most popular and candidates tended to score well because they were comfortable in elaborating on the bullet points.

Essay Two was less well done largely due to the fact that there were significant gaps in knowledge about how Spartan equals actually lived and instead candidates dwelt on the more gory aspects of the way the Helots were treated. Having said that, most were able by doing so to evaluate the fear of the Helots felt by the Spartan elite.

#### Topic 6: Roman Religion

##### Section One

- Q1** In Question One there were many woolly answers. In b) the '*papa*' was often seen as the man killing the animal. Most recognised the priest from his robe but again saw his main duty as killing the animal when he was clearly not doing so. Most were comfortable with f) and scored well.

- Q2** In Question Two, whilst almost all could give a good account of the appeal of Christianity and ways in which the Romans misunderstood them, they were far less comfortable with the source material and other questions involving Christian symbols, with the obvious exception of the cross.
- Q3** Question Three was popular but not always well done, perhaps because candidates were lulled into a false sense of security by the first few questions and had not realised that a good proportion of the marks came from knowledge of the worship of Vesta.

### **Section Two**

The quality of the essays in this topic was generally encouraging. Essay 1 was more popular than expected and many scored well with a good knowledge of funerals and festivals honouring ancestors. Those who knew little tended to produce answers based solely on modern practice.

Essay 2 was the most popular and candidates were comfortable with the subject matter. The bullet points gave structure to most essays, although many fell short of saying a great deal worthwhile on the final bullet.

## **Topic 7: Roman Home and Family Life**

### **Section One**

- Q1** Question One was attempted by many candidates and to good effect. Most identified the type of accommodation and were able to give some details of what living conditions were like. A few talked about the dangers of fire and collapse in c) and found that they were then repeating themselves in d) and e). Most did not really give much detail about town houses and tended to offer the alternatives to c) rather than giving specific details.
- Q2** Question Two was popular and reasonably well answered, though most thought that B was the priest. The location of the ceremony was often confused and those who knew little again based their answers in c) on modern practice. Virtually all had something worthwhile to contribute in d) with hardly any wishing to be the wife in a Roman marriage.
- Q3** Question Three was less popular and, although candidates were comfortable talking about the general use of the equipment, there was a lack of clear knowledge about the role of the individual teachers and a great deal of vague terms were used, with many Roman pupils learning 'English'.

### **Section Two**

Essay 1 was considerably more popular than essay 2 and candidates tended to score well, some going to great lengths to talk about different jobs of slaves in the houses and the sorry state the families would be in without them.

The relatively small number who attempted essay 1 were less successful and often included little more than an expansion of the bullet points without referring to the pressures and significance of the role of the paterfamilias. Quite often, as seemed to be an emerging pattern this year, details given were largely those which applied to the stereotypical family of 50s and 60s England.

## Topic 8: Roman Sport and Leisure

### Section One

- Q1** In Question One candidates tended to score well until they came to e) and there was a general lack of knowledge as to the process and again answers tended to be based on modern practice rather than the techniques used in ancient times.
- Q2** Question 2 was not particularly well done. Given the information already included in the questions, it was surprising that so few could identify the slave and often referred to him as the joker or jester. Again suggestions as to their respective roles in the plays were very vague and clearly knowledge of the standard Plautine plot was not thorough.
- Q3** Question Three was very popular though the quality of responses was mixed. There were problems identifying the types of gladiator. In a) (iii) guesswork often played its part and, with unbelievable similarity to last year, candidates talked about the armed gladiator being a Roman and the *retiarius* being a slave or foreigner, as he had less armour. Suggestions as to why he was raising his finger were numerous, with unbelievable similarity to last year, and often amusing.

### Section Two

Both essays were equally popular and in both cases many did little more than pad out the bullet points, thus scoring well enough on factual content but little on evaluation as the appeal/popularity aspect was largely a side issue. There tended to be more discussion in essay 1, largely because candidates waxed lyrical on the nudity aspect.

## Topic 9: Pompeii

### Section One

- Q1** Question One was popular. Having said that, the performance of candidates varied considerably. Many scored well on all sections; others had little idea what the mills were actually for and thus their answers to dependant questions were often fanciful. However, all candidates were able to make something of g). Regrettably many talked about the fact that they liked cooking or loved the smell of freshly baked bread which was not really the point of the question.
- Q2** Question Two was done by most candidates with varying degrees of success. In short, knowledge produced success. There were candidates who could write fully about a number of Forum buildings and others who had little idea about any, a minority suggesting that the plan showed a house.
- Q3** Question Three was done by far fewer candidates. Many had problems in b) since the lack of knowledge of the house was evident here. This extended to c). The cupids were often seen simply as Cupid, hence the suggestions in e) often included firing love arrows and making different people fall in love. The layout and possible appeal of the House of the Faun was equally unclear in the scripts of many.

## **Section Two**

Essay 1 was the most popular but often not done as well as expected. Generalisations abounded and many took the opportunity to focus on the plaster-casting and little else was mentioned.

Essay 2 was the least popular. Having said that, a number of centres dealt with this question particularly well and scored highly. Those who did not score well failed to assess the value of the fuller in terms of daily life in Pompeii and said little beyond the fact that people wanted nice clean clothes.

### **Topic 10: Roman Britain**

At Foundation tier there were very few entries in Topic 10 on which to base a valid report. Nevertheless comments made at higher tier will have relevance to those centres who supplied the few foundation tier candidates.

As far as foundation tier is concerned:

In Section One, questions one and two proved the most popular. Although there was little difference in what was said in the two four mark sub questions candidates made a fairly valiant effort at these two sets of questions.

Question Three was not done well and answers produced hardly anything of relevance.

Essay 1 was the least popular with candidates generally taking the bullet points and saying how much better things were

Essay 2 produced some reasonable efforts with some refreshingly accurate factual knowledge included.

## **1940/21/22 Classical Civilisation - Higher Tier**

### **General Comments**

Generally performance was in keeping with previous years. There are still centres who do not clearly grasp the idea that the four mark 'Explain' questions require evaluation of the topic within the context of that society, not simply an elaboration of detail on the original point. This has been highlighted in this report, previous reports and reinforced at INSET.

### **Comments on Individual Questions**

#### **Topic 1: Greek Religion**

##### **Section One**

- Q1** Question One proved popular. Most had no problem with any of the sub questions with the exception of e) where explanations tended to assess the appeal of the cult but made little mention of state religion, as demanded by the wording of the question.
- Q2** In Question Two virtually all candidates performed well on the sub questions with the exception of c). Candidates found it easy to give details of the sacrifice but much more difficult to explain the significance of the various aspects of the sacrifice.
- Q3** Question Three was done well on the whole. The most consistent fault lay in e) with candidates not reading the question properly. The words 'other than the worship of Athene' seemed to have been missed by many and so much accurate information was invalid.

##### **Section Two**

Both essays proved equally popular. Candidates scored well on both. In essay 1 there were some very clear accounts of the different gods and their responsibilities and, unlike the foundation tier, candidates were able to assess the likely effect on people's lives. Most performed well on essay 2, with some excellent responses. Some dwelt wholly on other ways that Greeks could feel in touch with their gods and omitted to say much about Delphi.

#### **Topic 2: Home and Family in Athens**

##### **Section One**

- Q1** Question One was attempted by most candidates. Most scored well on the early parts although, as in the foundation tier, there seemed little knowledge of the places where lessons might take place. There were some excellent answers in e) but it was again clear that some candidates were unaware of the need to make their observations relevant by reference to the wider aspects of Athenian life, in this case the responsibilities of adult males and their possible careers.

**Q2** Fewer candidates attempted Question Two but did so with great success. Answers were very thorough both on the materials used for houses and their layout. Suggestions for d) were often well thought out and tended to focus on the roles of the family members or on religion.

**Q3** Question Three was done well by most who attempted it. This is a fairly mainstream topic and slave duties were known well. Just as in the foundation tier, again in b) some failed to recognise the more manual aspect to the slave in the picture.

### **Section Two**

Both essays proved popular with candidates. In essay 1 many discussed the value of a symposium in a clear and logical manner. Better answers referred to the role of the males in Athenian society. Less accomplished answers made valid suggestions but factual support was less easy to come by.

In essay 2 the best answers stood out by identifying good aspects of women's lives as opposed to dwelling wholly on the status aspect of women in classical Athens, thus there were some sound, balanced discussions.

### **Topic 3: Greek Athletic and Theatrical Festivals**

#### **Section One**

**Q1** In Question One there were few problems, although a significant number did not acknowledge the religious nature of the truce in d) and, as was the case in the foundation tier, there was a lack of knowledge in terms of buildings other than the temple of Zeus when it came to discussing the site of Olympia, although a few did refer to the treasuries.

**Q2** Question Two produced fairly sound responses. Some failed to understand the nature of the ship-cart and the identification of Dionysos with the festival being because the festival was in honour of him was a common mishandling of c). The better responses mentioned his association with fertility and the dual personae of wine drinkers and actors.

**Q3** Question Three was done well by virtually all candidates. Regrettably, however, misreading of a) caused a number to simply name the parts of the theatre but not describe their uses. Answers identified the necessary qualities in c) but did not explain them in light of the play or the surroundings.

#### **Section Two**

Both essays proved to be popular. In essay 1 there was a refreshingly thorough exploration of Greek life and the role of theatre in it by some candidates. Answers to essay 2 were also generally well done but in a number of cases it was clear that candidates were producing a prepared essay and thus the elements of wealth and technology were referred to only in passing or in a concluding paragraph.

## **Topic 4: Greek Art and Architecture**

### **Section One**

Though there were not a great deal of candidates who attempted this topic, responses this year were an improvement on previous years. All three section one questions were attempted.

- Q1** Question One was generally answered well with c) being the main sticking point for most candidates.
- Q2** Answers to Question Two were on the whole good. In both the four mark questions so far candidates seemed more comfortable and well-versed in the type of language and phraseology needed to assess pots or art in general.
- Q3** Question Three was the least popular but was, on the whole, done well by candidates. The depth of analysis of the strengths and the weaknesses of Myron's statue, which was produced in c), was impressive.

### **Section Two**

Essay 1 proved to be the most popular and was chosen by candidates who knew the topic well and so produced some very thorough answers. In some cases, though detail was confused and rarely got down to the real details of construction. Whilst there were far fewer who attempted Essay 2, the quality of response tended to be very good and showed that the candidates in question had an excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.

## **Topic 5: Sparta and the Spartan System**

### **Section One**

- Q1** Question One was done by virtually all candidates and with a good deal of success. There was a tendency to repeat information in a) and b) as happened in the foundation tier. Some candidates were less comfortable in assessing Spartan women in comparison to other women in Greece and many of the opinions of Spartan women referred to were more the male view expressed in literature rather than what was more likely the case.
- Q2** In Question Two candidates tended to produce very coherent and thorough exposition of Spartan battle tactics, Leonidas and the reasons for the reputation which Sparta had as a military force, and thus marks were generally high.
- Q3** Question Three was well answered on the whole. Candidates at this level seem generally more comfortable looking at the political organisation of Sparta. A few in d), however, digressed into discussion of the education system, thereby not evaluating the interplay of the different governing bodies of Sparta.

## Section Two

Both essays proved popular at this level and there were some very good answers to both. The concept of Spartan robots certainly captured the imagination of a number of candidates who produced very balanced discussions with a reasoned conclusion. Some thoughtful essays on the Spartan social system pointed out the very demanding lifestyles which the Equals had, whilst agreeing with the assessment of the other two classes. All in all therefore responses to the essays on Sparta were very pleasing.

### Topic 6: Roman Religion

- Q1** Question One proved to be very popular and was soundly covered by candidates at this level.
- Q2** In Question Two many could not explain the significance of the source but went on to score well in the remaining questions. Some read c) as the standard; 'Why did Romans misunderstand Christians' question and so missed the point in some of their responses.
- Q.** Question Three was popular. Answers started well but tended to struggle with aspects of c), d) and e), the significant differences between a Roman temple and a modern church had not been fully grasped; as in the home of a god as opposed to a place of worship. Answers relating to the significance of Vesta were generally good.

## Section Two

The quality of the essays in this topic was generally very good. Just as in the foundation tier, essay 1 was more popular than expected and many scored well with a good knowledge of funerals and festivals honouring ancestors.

Essay 2 was the most popular and candidates were comfortable with the subject matter. As is often the case in this area, however, state religion received only passing mention in comparison to the positives one could gain from mystery cults.

### Topic 7: Roman Home and Family Life

#### Section One

- Q1** Question One was attempted by many candidates and to good effect. Most gave clear details of what living conditions were like, though not quite so many were fully convincing in their descriptions of where the rich would live. Candidates found little difficulty with questions c) and d), and in d) in particular there was some thoughtful discussion about hygiene as well as the standard fire and collapse explanations.
- Q2** Question Two was popular and reasonably well answered, as with the foundation tier, the location of the ceremony was often confused. Answers to d) and e) were generally very good.
- Q3** Question Three was less popular and it was only in the last question e) that candidates found themselves struggling for explanations. Again it must be stressed that these questions require some understanding of the roles of individuals in their own society in order to properly evaluate straightforward factual information.



## **Section Two**

Essay 1 was considerably more popular than essay 2 and candidates tended to score well, some going to great lengths to talk about different jobs of slaves in the houses and the sorry state the families would be in without them. The concept of cruelty was overlooked by many as it seemed that they were producing prepared essays.

Though there were less who attempted essay 2, the performance of candidates tended to be very good and cover the wide range of responsibilities that a paterfamilias had, many of them showing a good deal of sympathy for him due to the demands placed upon him.

## **Topic 8: Roman Sport and Leisure**

### **Section One**

- Q1** In Question One candidates tended to score well until they came to e). It is surprising that many disassociate the topic of recreational hunting, as depicted here, from the commercial hunting of animals for the arena and the actual hunts in the arena. Whilst the specification comes under certain headings, such aspects of life overlap and this overlap can be exploited in questions such as this, for example.
- Q2** Question Two was done well. Candidates at this level simply had a clear understanding of the characterisation, staging and plot of Roman comedy; hence, other than their factual answers, they produced some very valid discussion in d).
- Q3** Question Three covered a topic area which has now been widely practised and candidates took the opportunity to show off their knowledge here and score highly. Of course those who have not yet mastered the technique of the 'explain' questions consistently scored only two of the four available marks.

### **Section Two**

Both essays were equally popular and but in both cases many did not really get to grips with modern tastes and habits in order to really answer the question. Saying that chariot racing is just like formula one so it would appeal is not evaluation. Factually it is wrong; a great deal more analysis is needed to make the point (and many others expressed in the same way) valid.

## **Topic 9: Pompeii**

### **Section One**

- Q1** Examiners were generally disappointed with responses to Question One. Many thought that the mills were made out of 'stone' and in b) whilst they recognised the turning process, very few explained that the bottom section stayed still in order to grind the grain. Some suggested the mills were actually for mixing ingredients and some claimed that they were ovens.
- Answers to c) were equally vague but the basic explanations required for the prosperity of Pompeii in d) were more detailed.

- Q2** Question Two was done by most candidates with a reasonable degree of success. Most had a good working knowledge of the Forum and the contribution that it made to the life of the town.
- Q3** Question Three was done by fewer candidates. Many had problems identifying the house and so answers to b) were irrelevant. More disappointing was the number who in c) made claims about the house's design, which one look at the plan would have shown up to be completely false. In d) some compounded their problems by referring to the Villa of the Mysteries despite the fact that the question talks about a house and says that it is in Pompeii.

## **Section Two**

Many candidates did well on the essay questions. There were many thorough and well constructed discussions of the rediscovery and excavation of Pompeii and the fullers were viewed as something more than just a dry cleaners, their political role being recognised by many, which was encouraging.

## **Topic 10: Roman Britain**

### **Section One**

- Q1** The numbers entering this topic (one which many study as coursework) makes it difficult to go into detail on the various questions. In Section One question one was handled well by virtually all candidates who attempted it; and that was most.
- Q2** Question Two was slightly less well done, the main surprise being the number of answers which did not explain the importance of the standard bearers in a).
- Q3** In Question Three, whilst most candidates were able to name both villas, it was clear that some centres had only made their candidates aware of the existence of one and so the mark scheme was amended to take account of this in light of the wording of the specification; thus no candidates were disadvantaged. Having said that, few did enough to inspire confidence that they had a half decent knowledge of either villa; this was most noticeable in d) and e).

### **Section Two**

In Section Two a relatively small number of candidates attempted essay 1 but they tended to be well versed in the advantages which Rome brought to town life, although administration tended only to be touched on in favour of more obvious practical advantages.

Essay 2 produced some almost scholarly discussion of the place of Boudica's rebellion in history and surprisingly few were actually impressed by her achievements.

Finally, whilst this report often highlights the negative aspects of candidates' performances, it is worth noting, year after year, that examiners are forever impressed by the enthusiasm and knowledge which teachers of Classics are imparting to their students and which emanate from the pages of the scripts which are read and marked by those examiners.

## 1940/13/14 Classical Civilisation - Foundation Tier

### General Comments

This year showed a surprising dip in performance levels after a number of years' steady improvement. Frequently there was very poor factual knowledge for the Section 1 questions, where guesswork was often the norm, and minimal ability to recall details from the texts in the essay questions. In addition to this difficulty, more candidates were not answering the question set but were attempting to supply prepared answers to questions that they would have preferred to see on the paper. A startling number completed only one topic with anything like evidence of having studied the topic carefully, while very many did not even attempt the second topic, or gave intermittent answers from a broadly remembered aspect of the subject. It was a joy, therefore, to see those centres where candidates had engaged well with the material and were delivering the information comfortably through the more supportive format that the Foundation Tier offers.

A particular point to be made, once again, concerns the final question in each of the Section 1 questions, where candidates need to be clear about what comprises the effectiveness of their chosen point rather than merely pointing out that it *is* such. Many candidates, for example, were quick to notice the simile in passage 3 of Topic 11 but it is not sufficient merely to say 'this passage is effective because there is a simile'. For the mark to be achieved, there needs to be an explanation of *how* the simile creates the effect (for example, the simile of the lion gives us the impression of Odysseus as a fierce and powerful force dispatching death / the dripping jaws reflect the lion's power and makes us view the blood spattered Odysseus as similarly powerful etc.). Similarly there were many who thought it interesting that Antigone used a lot of questions (13.1.3.d) but too few who used this to reflect that it was an indication of her distraught emotional state.

It was often the case that essays tended to be narrative in nature and to follow rather slavishly the bullet points, giving a factual account of the incident referred to without adding some evaluative comments to answer the issue addressed in the question. There was also a tendency, as in previous years, to rely rather heavily on the stories already covered in the context questions to trigger the factual recall, resulting in essays that were limited in scope and repetitive in nature.

There was a noticeable tendency to perform less successfully on the third topic for those entered for component 14. While this was also noted for Higher Tier to a degree, the effect of fitting three topics into the examination proved more deleterious to Foundation candidates and it was not uncommon to find that they were scoring up to 40% less successfully on their final topic than on their first and second topics. In some cases this was clearly a problem of time, (since there was ample evidence of rushed answers with poor expression and scrawled script in the final topic and over lengthy answers in the earlier topics) but I think it is certainly worth considering that the literature can be very demanding and less easy to manage the additional challenge of three topics.

An infrequent but still alarming error was the attempt to answer more questions than the rubric allows, sometimes by tackling all three of the context questions in Section 1 on their chosen topics, and occasionally by attempting a selection (often rather arbitrary) from the whole range of topics on the paper. This practice is most disadvantageous to the candidate since it means less time to finish the whole paper and gives no extra marks, since marks for only two contexts per Section 1 can be accepted and only two topics (or three for component 14) can be considered for marks at all. Centres should vigorously discourage this practice.

Notwithstanding these gloomy remarks, however, I am pleased to report that there were some fine offerings too, which showed effectively how candidates can be bolstered to achieve a solid C through the accessibility of the Foundation paper's approach. Many candidates this year showed a decent knowledge of the literary texts, as well as a shrewder awareness than in the past of what constitutes good exam performance. Among the better answers the context questions were more precisely and concisely accurate and essays were better organised with a higher level of evaluation and analysis. Indeed many scripts presented a lively picture of grand engagement with the texts and there is a delightful immediacy about the language Foundation Tier candidates use to express themselves ('Admetus is a bit of a muppet'/'the Cyclops eats man-sandwiches'/'mocking a blind man and killing his father cannot deserve a pat on the back').

## Comments on Individual Questions

### Topic 11: Homer *Odyssey* Books 9,10 21-23

Those who knew the story well were able to manage the context questions fairly happily, but there was a clear layer of candidates who gave the impression that they had listened to a good summary of the tale but not interfaced with the text itself. Some offered a rather Hollywoodesque version of life in Homeric times.

#### Section One

- Q1** Q.1 was the most successfully answered of the contexts, since many well remembered the details of the Cyclops' demise and Odysseus' cunning escape. Weaker answers confused the sequence of sharpening and heating the stake, and there were some interesting suggestions for (a)ii (who ate nectar and drank ambrosia), my favourite being the sheep. All found plenty to say about Odysseus' cunning, though some neglected to keep the focus on the passage.
- Q2** Q.2 had a less successful showing since there was very little knowledge of what exactly happened during, and immediately after, the battle. Many caught a point or two, however, by recalling the gruesome details of Melanthius' nose, ears and genitals ((e)iii). In (f) most candidates effectively discussed the graphic and gory descriptions, while the more discerning managed to explore the cinematic approach of the details at the beginning and the starkly abrupt contrast when Antinous' throat is pierced.
- Q3** In Q.3 (a)i many omitted the defining point about Eurycleia, which was that she was Odysseus' nurse, though all were back on track with the significance of the scar ((a)ii), notwithstanding the variations on the theme such as that she recognised him from the scare he got from a bore. In (a)iii too many thought Odysseus was not recognised merely because 20 years had passed and he was older, omitting the vital element of *disguise* as a *beggar*. In (d) almost everyone spoke of the simile but few got to grips with *why* it made the passage interesting.

## Section Two

Q.1: The majority of offerings were essentially narratives following the bullet prompts, with little detailed information to suggest that more than a broad outline. Some could deliver one episode with considerable detail but would flag at more. Very few remembered that Odysseus was off to the horrors of the Underworld as he left Circe. The best answers, however, looked carefully at the merits of each tale to the description of exciting or dramatic and attempted to give sensible reasons for how Homer drew different reactions in his audience from the different parts of the storyline and from the differing ways in which he delivered them.

Q.2 was the more popular but again tended not to be well handled. Some argued that Penelope had flirted with the suitors, which was a line hard to sustain. In this essay broad generalisations were frequent, though a few had some specific details about the tapestry unravelling and the bed trick. Many criticised Penelope for failing to fall into Odysseus' arms the moment he returned, thus missing a significant part of her character. Almost all gave (broadly) a character sketch of Penelope, but some discussed Odysseus' behaviour with Circe and Calypso to suggest that *he* clearly didn't think that much of her (since he didn't mind being unfaithful at all) and since the question was phrased to put a focus on the candidate's empathy with Odysseus' position, it was nice to see this attempt to get him into the picture.

### Topic 12: Homer *Iliad* Books 1,9,22 and 24

This was not a commonly answered topic and those attempting it found the detail once again hard to deliver.

## Section One

- Q1** Q.1 brought a lot of guesswork to play for (a) and in (b) the commonest answer was the death of Hektor, even though Priam is speaking to his son in this passage. The detail of Hekabe's breast-baring was generally well remembered ((f)i) though few could think of why she had decided to do it ((f)ii). For (h) many produced creditable attempts to explain their sympathy for Priam, with a competent use of the passage on the whole.
- Q2** Q.2: Although these seemed to be significant details of the story, few managed the highest marks, with particular vagueness over Athene's trick in (b) and Priam's hopes of success in ((c)iii). There was a great outpouring of sympathy for Andromache in (e) with many speaking eloquently about the pathos of getting Hektor's bath ready. Clearly this scene had touched a collective nerve.
- Q3** Q.3 was not popular, and the answers were often inexact. Hardly any recalled how Priam had attempted to win over Achilles (e) though some managed some character analysis for (f).

## Section Two

Q.1 drew primarily narrative accounts of the quarrel, which scored comfortably on the FC ladder but managed little beyond that. Some candidates remembered that Thetis was involved in Book 1 and a small minority said a few things about the gods' careless disinterest in the affairs of mortals as they laugh and joke at the end of the book. There was almost no consideration of the later books despite the prompt in the bullet points.

Q.2 This was also a poor delivery of the information. Few knew much other than that there had been an embassy, so quite what it was for eluded them. The skill with which some candidates wove their words into a lengthy discourse without actually naming a single individual or offering one specific detail that Homer narrates was a source of amazement. Some gave some interesting insights into the differing styles of the three ambassadors and gave consideration to how far they could have done anything to affect the stubbornness of Achilleus' piqued sensitivities.

## Topic 13: Sophocles *Oedipus the King* and *Antigone*

There was a strong tendency to put down what are arguably the most obvious factual details in the plays (Oedipus kills his father, he marries his mother, Antigone wants to bury her brother, Creon never listens to anyone, Teiresias upsets everyone, most of the characters die) in arbitrary fashion in response to all questions. This scattergun approach naturally received some hits, but was bound to be a low scoring option and candidates are advised against it as a policy.

## Section One

### Q1 & Q2

The contexts generally received equal interest, with Q.3 proving the more successful on the whole. There was much confusion over the oracle details in Q.1 and some equally uncertain suggestions about the sequence of events with the Corinthian messenger and the old shepherd in Q.2. Many saw Jocasta's agitation in 2(g) but were unsure what it represented (suggestions ranging from joy to despair to hilarity to curiosity).

### Q3

In Q.3 an understanding of the thread of events and the proper identification of which brother was the one buried and which one needed burial was happily slightly more in evidence this year, though there was still substantial uncertainty about the relationship between Antigone and Creon, with one candidate suggesting that he might be her aunt and another her mother in ((a)i) despite the clue in the wording of 'why does she call *him* commander' in ((a)ii). Many chose to write what they knew about Antigone from elsewhere in the play and much time was wasted explaining how she wanted to bury her brother when there is no evidence of this from the passage.

## Section Two

Q.1 was the less popular essay though those that chose it seem to have enjoyed the animated hard-sell approach. Too few managed to back up their claims to be the very best playwright in the world with any hard evidence from either play and there was very little discussion of staging. It is to be hoped that this aspect of the topic will find a greater focus among students now that the McAuslan and Franklin editions are being used, since these try to offer reminders about visual impact and theatrical experience.

Q.2 proved difficult for many, largely because, there was a lack of knowledge about the detail of what Creon and Oedipus actually say and do during the plays. Most arguments revolved around being able to avoid fate or not, which was good as far as it went, but there was so much to be said - not least of which was about each one's views of kingship and the circumstances in which they found themselves.

**Topic 14: Euripides *Hippolytus* and *Alcestis***

There were insufficient scripts at this level to make valid comments about this topic.

**Topic 15: Aristophanes *Acharnians* and *Lysistrata***

Again there were too few to make much comment, but it was noticeable that for those who had some respectable factual knowledge, the context questions at least were quite accessible. The essays were weaker, with the questions tending to be answered by narrative rather than through good use of the guiding bullet points.

**Topic 16: Herodotus *The Persian War***

There were insufficient scripts at this level to make valid comments about this topic.

**Topic 17: Virgil *Aeneid* Books 1,2 and 4**

Some answers were let down here, as mentioned on other topics, by the poor level of knowledge of the storyline. Some were clearly confused by their study of the Iliad.

**Section One**

- Q1** Q.1 Most found this an accessible passage, though once again the details eluded them (how Dido found out about Sychaeus' murder in (a)ii/what Aeneas discovered from Hector and Creusa in (c). In (f) there were some nice ideas about the passage, with some fair comments both positive and negative, with most tending to focus on the bee simile (with varying levels of success in identifying *why* they liked it).
- Q2** Q.2 was probably the most successfully answered of the three, with many of the details known well. In (f) many managed a good level of response about Dido's excitement over Aeneas with his handsome looks and the charm of his adventurous tales. Some talked effectively of how her love resembled the passion of a teenage crush (particularly from her exclamations). Some answers talked about the excitement of the punctuation, which was missing the point rather.
- Q3** Q.3 was also generally quite comfortably managed, though (e) and (f) tripped up some, who guessed wildly about wanting Aeneas to perish at sea with all his men as a kind of joint answer for both. Many found their attention nicely grabbed in (g), mostly by the oozing black sap, though some were clearly a little distressed by the poor foal whose brow seemed to have been mauled most horribly at a crucial time in its bonding-time with its mother.

## Section Two7

Q.1 There was a tendency to over-compensate for poor factual knowledge with long-winded generalisations about gods' behaviour (for example) rather than showing how the gods affect the story and our enjoyment of it. For many the temptation was to latch on to the bullet points and write a few sentences that paraphrased those. The best answers used these as a platform on which to build a picture of the gods' interaction with the events.

Q.2 There was a little more success generally with this essay, with most candidates being able to tell the tale of the wooden horse. Evaluation here needed a range of points to show the various different ways in which Virgil develops the excitement, such as the tension of trying to effect his family's rescue, the drama of the flames on Iulus' head and the supernatural elements (of Venus' revelation to Aeneas of the gods destroying the city and Creusa's ghostly appearance before him) – all suggested by the bullet point clues. Sadly there was still some residual evidence of the Hollywood version as the focus of knowledge of the fall of Troy.

## Topic 18: Ovid *Metamorphoses* Books 7 and 8

This was not a popular option. Contexts generally scored badly, with insufficient knowledge of the text being the primary problem once again.

### Section One

Few found much to say on Q.1 and Q.2 but Baucis and Philemon had clearly inspired a number, whose general grasp of the basics here was not too bad. There were few details offered for Q.3 (b), though there were plenty to choose from, and (c) caught out many, who believed that this was a test by the gods.

### Section Two

Q.1 Almost exclusively candidates read this as a question on Medea herself alone and offered a (more or less) detailed account of her character with remarks about how she was changeable thrown in sporadically. They thus missed the variety of the plotline and the differing ways that Ovid presents the parts of the tale to keep his audience engaged and entertained throughout, which was the wider thrust of the question. In Q.2 there was a better grasp of the basics of the story on the whole, although there was an undue focus on Althaea's dilemma rather than the exclusion of Meleager's plight.

## Topic 19: Pliny *A selection of his letters*

### Section One

There were some sound scripts here, but common problems were in knowing the details of Pliny's kindness to his ex-slave (1(b)) and of the Makedo incident (1(c)). Q.2 proved quite straightforward and most did well on (f) particularly, praising Pliny for his tremendous concern for education, while a pleasing few also managed to notice the way in which Pliny manages to slide in some passing remarks about his own generosity. In Q.3 there was less certainty about Pliny's role in Bithynia, with some very broad generalities replacing the specifics required.



## **Section Two**

The essays drew equal interest. Some creditable offerings were produced for Q.1 (Pliny as a friend) with a fair range of evidence and some attempts at viewing Pliny with a critical eye on his pomposity. For Q.2 (Pliny as a good husband) many seem to have read this as 'write all you know about Pliny and Calpurnia' and thus lost the valuable evaluative marks for considering what kind of *marriage partners* they were.

### **Topic 20: Tacitus *Empire and Emperors* chapters 1-6**

There were insufficient scripts at this level to make valid comments about this topic.

## 1940/23/24 Classical Civilisation - Higher Tier

### General Comments

This year there seemed to be some bunching of candidates in the more average mark range, with fewer scoring at the very low end of the spectrum but equally not as many as one would like to see at the very top end. All the examiners felt that the largest cause of lower scores was the lack of knowledge about the details of the texts. Section 1 of each topic naturally suffered from this, since the nature of such questions is to require some precision in the responses, but many essays in Section 2 also floundered since even the fullest evaluative discourses can gain only mediocre marks if there is little factual information derived from the texts to support the arguments. Having said that, it was pleasing to see some very sophisticated answers from the highest scoring papers, where there were some very well thought out essays showing good understanding and intelligent interpretation, even in the more complex areas such as the political satire of Aristophanes. An interesting new feature this year was the way that some candidates produced their essay plans in two columns headed FC and E in the fashion of the mark scheme's grid and this seemed to be an effective way of helping them to think about how they could put their argument together to ensure both scoring ladders were properly managed.

In the most popular topic stakes there was, as always, Homer's *Odyssey* in pole position, with Sophocles and Virgil vying for the title of second runner and Ovid making a respectable bid for the next spot. The other topics had their various fans, though Tacitus and Herodotus aficionados were very thin on the ground, and Aristophanes and Euripides (though still maintaining their base of particular admirers) were far from well represented. A modest increase in the *Iliad* numbers presented itself this year and performance varied but it was agreeable to note the growth.

In general terms the areas where answers were more likely to lose marks and acquit themselves less well was, as mentioned initially, in the lack of sufficient detailed knowledge of the text. However, a further problem was noted at various points in the paper: it is expected that candidates will have some understanding of the historical and social context within which the literature was composed and delivered. The Specification Aims encompass this and teachers might like to refresh their memories by referring to Assessment Objectives AO1(ii) and AO2(i) in particular. The papers are required to include an appropriate number of questions specifically to address these aims and each year there is evidence that some centres have not fully taken this on board. However, this year there was a more noticeable lack of such understanding in the questions that sought to elicit evidence of it (for example the laws of *xenia* governing host and guest in topic 11, section 1, question (1)a and topic 18, section 1 question (3)b(ii)/the nature of the Homeric hero in topic 12, section 1, question (3)d/the significance of the Peloponnesian War at various points in *Acharnians* and *Lysistrata*) and it seems sensible to offer a reminder to centres in this report to look over the specification again and to encourage their candidates to consider these wider issues as they study their texts. Most of the editions specified for this course have notes that offer (at the very least) basic explanations of, and comments on, the social mores/historical events/mythological references that an ancient reader would be expected to pick up, as appropriate to the texts.

A final general remark is needed yet again concerning the final question in each of the Section 1 questions, where candidates need to be clear about what comprises the effectiveness of their chosen point rather than merely pointing out that it *is* such. Many candidates, for example, were quick to notice the simile in passage 3 of topic 11 but it is not sufficient merely to say 'this passage is effective because there is a simile'. For the mark to be achieved, there needs to be an explanation of *how* the simile creates the effect (for example, the simile of the lion gives us the impression of Odysseus as a fierce and powerful force dispatching death/the dripping jaws reflect the lion's power and makes us view the blood spattered Odysseus as similarly powerful etc.).

Similarly there were many who thought it interesting that Antigone used a lot of questions (topic 13, section 1, question (3)d) but too few who used this to reflect that it was an indication of her distraught emotional state (a good start to the play since this is characteristic of her throughout/it makes an effective impact to throw the audience into the play at a moment of high tension).

On the plus side, there were very few rubric infringements this year and candidates were able to concentrate effectively on the correct number of topics within the appropriate time frame. There was some evidence that the essay on the final topic was a little rushed, but on the whole there seemed to be a good level of time management. Many candidates produced brief essay plans (often in the form of spider diagrams) and this generally resulted in a better organised piece, suggesting that the time used to co-ordinate the thoughts was well spent despite the rather tight framework of this paper.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Topic 11: Homer *Odyssey* Books 9,10 21-23

##### Section One

- Q1** Q1 was much favoured and candidates could score comfortably with the well-known details of the blinding of the Cyclops and the escape from the cave. The error in (c), which wrongly ascribed the remark to Odysseus, did not confuse too many and most were able to make a reasonable point about the exquisite nature of the wine (either being unconcerned about the error, or in some cases politely but firmly pointing it out to the examiner). Fewer thought to mention that the gods ate and drank the nectar and ambrosia, though it was that which gave force to the point about its fine quality.
- Q2** Q2 was also very popular, with some candidates offering some considerable detail about Iphitos (not anticipated as the primary answer for this) in (a). Quite a few were struggling to remember exactly what Telemachus did in the battle that might be construed as classing him as a good warrior (or worrier, as some would have it) for (d)i and there was also some uncertainty about how he was ruthless (d)ii. A minority missed the question's carefully positioned pointer '*after the battle*' here.
- Q3** Q3 caused some confusion, with few seeing the impiety of Eurycleia's shouting and the fact that the suitors were the gods' victims, thinking instead that it was to do with keeping it all quiet (which is not appropriate to this point in the text). The detail of the sulphur and fire was not well known though all took a fair stab at the need for purification. In (f) a surprising number remarked that Telemachus was brutal because he says 'Get up, old woman'. The simile was well observed by most (many preferring to spell it similie or smile) but there was less success at identifying *why* it was effective.

## Section Two

There was an even spread of interest in the two questions, and the best answers offered considerable detail from the text adduced as evidence for the arguments, expressing themselves in language that reflected considered thought and sophisticated reasoning.

Q1 There was a good range of available factual information for this essay, which the best answers used effectively as evidence in their discussion of the varied methods of entertainment Homer uses in Book 10. The details most commonly omitted were those from the end of the book, once Odysseus has managed to get his men turned back to human form, and in fact somewhat surprisingly there was less detail altogether on the different parts of the Circe story, which occupies the larger section of the book and which in the past has produced swathes of information. The 'bag of winds' episode naturally featured consistently and was most elaborately described, with a good level of discussion to show Homer's use of suspense and pathos. Relationships between Odysseus and his men were effectively considered by some.

Q2 There was much support for Penelope as Wife Extraordinary, though all too few moved beyond the obvious line of her considerable (the time-span ranging from 8 years to 25) fidelity to him as a husband and the place the tapestry trick played in all this. Many missed the significance of the final part in the question ('for a hero such as Odysseus') and neglected to consider how her intelligence/cunning was a suitable match for her famously wily husband. Some became very vexed at her inability to leap into his arms the moment she was told it was him but the more astute gave a nice résumé of her sensible mothering of Telemachus and the wise caution of her ingenious testing with the bed. Very few managed to consider her position within the society of her time.

## Topic 12: Homer *Iliad* Books 1,9,22 and 24

### Section One

- Q1** Q1 A surprisingly frequent answer to (b) was 'the death of Hektor' even though Priam is speaking to him in the passage. Hekabe's breast-baring was well rehearsed (d) though fewer managed to explain *why* she bared it, to gain the additional mark for how this dramatic act was expected to persuade her son to come back in. In (f) many merely picked out 'old man' or 'pitifully' with no analysis. Better answers looked at the pathos to be derived from the out-stretched arms and the beating of his head.
- Q2** Q2 The idea of Hektor's pride was not well grasped (b), nor was there much certainty about the treatment of Hektor's body (c): quite a few remembered the stabbing, but too many merely talked of Achilles' dragging the body round the walls, ignoring the focus on the *Achaean*s. In (e) there was plenty to use and there were some very effective answers. Some offered interesting thoughts about the contrast between the calm opening and the drama later on, as well as the effectiveness of the description of her physical reactions.
- Q3** Q3 The nature of the heroic code and its place in Priam's move to recover Hektor's body (a) were infrequently considered. However, a pleasing number remembered the detail of the eagle (d) and made a respectable attempt at to analyse the dramatic impact of the passage for (e).

## Section Two

Q1 There was something of a divide between those who gave intelligent and well-considered answers to this essay (Book 1 as an effective introduction to the *Iliad*) and those who were able to give factual information about the contents of the book but couldn't seem to place it comfortably into the *Iliad* as a whole. At the finest end there were some sophisticated answers that even grappled with ring composition and the concept of starting *in medias res*. Some answers gave only vague generalities of the quarrel.

Q2 Candidates who scored well talked about all 4 characters (with varying levels of primary focus, which was fine because it was not necessary to cover each of them evenly). They were familiar with the traits revealed, referring to the intelligence of Odysseus, the fatherly approach of Phoenix, the pride of Achilles and the bluntness of Ajax. Some answers had vague factual recollection (e.g. Odysseus talks about Achilles' father, Phoenix talks about his past with Achilles) but the better answers delivered discussion of the slight mellowing of Achilles during the book, considering his threats to leave and his promises to fight again if the action got nearer the ships, and ultimately making a value judgement both about how far he did or didn't respond well to each of the embassy members and about how far they felt Homer was encouraging approval or disapproval in how Achilles behaved.

## Topic 13: Sophocles *Oedipus the King* and *Antigone*

Despite the continuing popularity of the topic, many were unfamiliar with the plotlines, making substantial errors (that the play shows the death of Laius on stage/that Haemon kills his father) and confusing the actions of Creon and Teiresias across the two plays. It was pleasant to see, however, that for once Polyneices and Eteocles were for the most part understood the right way round!

## Section One

**Q1** Q1 Despite the significant development of the information about the problem of the plague, very many answers still had no idea that the oracle itself only says 'drive out the corruption' in typically vague terms. The sequence of questioning this year ((c)i then (c)ii) was deliberately devised to avoid falling into this trap, yet it still occurred and marks were lost unnecessarily when answers failed to see how Creon could add to the banishing-of-Laius'-murderer theme. Few understood that the oracle at Delphi was the kind of place where you would find out answers to difficult questions in the ancient world ((b)ii) – another example of how an understanding of the context is expected in this syllabus. In (e) many were comfortable with Oedipus' character (particularly his care for his people) but were less secure about Creon, suggesting only that he was loyal to Oedipus, for which they had no evidence in the passage.

**Q2** Q2 There was some oracle confusion with some thinking that Jocasta was talking about her dream and its interpretation, though the context of the passage makes that completely illogical. The physical evidence of ((c)iii) was variously Polybus' body, his tomb, a letter, the crown and a ring - entertaining but unhelpful. It proved difficult for many to find much to say for (d) and there was a tendency to fall back on generalised comments about Jocasta from elsewhere in the play. Characterisation within a passage is often used as a focus for this final question in the context passages across the paper, and it would be helpful for candidates to look at the more unusual parts, where the characters are not behaving quite as they do elsewhere, or where there are the more minor figures involved.

- Q3** Q3 was not as popular overall as the other two contexts but interestingly quite well answered by many. The hardest part was undoubtedly (d) where there was plenty of discussion of Antigone's passion but little consideration of how that (or anything else) was relevant to this being the *beginning of the play*. Very many said how it showed Ismene to be cowardly (law-abiding, dutiful etc..) because she refused to bury Polyneices, but this is not what is happening *in this passage*.

## Section Two

Both these essays suffered from a twofold problem: firstly, answers did not include the subtleties of the plays' layers; secondly, answers had no *details* from the plays to substantiate their rather vague ideas of what went on when.

Q1 Answers lacked the necessary detail from the plays to make a convincing argument. Some mentioned modern performances as part of their discussion but fewer than anticipated seem to have given this one a practice airing. Many disregarded the obvious prompts in the question (characters, drama and themes, *gone on* entertaining) and the tendency was to deliver a very general discussion about, for example, how grippingly relevant it was to understand how to avoid incest. The best answers, however, had thought carefully about the plays' relevance in the modern world.

Q2 Once again there was a tendency to be too general and unspecific with the remarks. Few were able to talk confidently about Oedipus' decisions within the play and just stuck to the broad point that he was unable to avoid anything (thus also ignoring the elements of his own character that led him to behave as he did at the crossroads etc.). Some managed a better consideration of how Creon could have avoided his tragic outcome and looked at the issue of his difficulty with women, placing this effectively in the context of the ancient world as well as considering how a modern audience could engage with this feminist stance. Indeed, there were some well-argued sophisticated pieces.

## Topic 14: Euripides *Hippolytus* and *Alcestis*

There was broadly a good level of engagement with the plays and their themes. Answers often reflected a considerable commitment to the characters and their dilemmas and it was here, as elsewhere, that there was a lack of details of the storyline that would give appropriate and telling evidence for their arguments.

## Section One

- Q1** Q1 Most were well aware that Hippolytus had neglected Aphrodite to his cost (a) and remembered well his injuries ((b)ii). There was rather a lot of vague generalisation in (d) over the satisfactory or otherwise ending of the play, with the 'it was unfair because everyone dies' type of response proving the most popular. It would have been nice to see a sense of the goddesses' injustice/disregard for humans/petty jealousies or a consideration of the Theseus/Hippolytus dynamic. On the other hand there were some pleasantly effective views on Hippolytus' self-righteousness and self-pity in (e), with refreshingly few saying he was just innocent and it was so unfair.

- Q2** Q2 There was a surprising uncertainty over Apollo's reasons for granting Admetus this favour of avoiding death ((a)i) though all had a good range of answers for his father's reasons for refusal to help him ((a)ii). Even those who had understood the importance of hospitality in Topic 11 had not necessarily grasped the concept in relation to this play and so missed the significance of (b)i. For (c) Alcestis was broadly (if a little superficially) understood by most but only a very few noted Admetus' real character, the majority talking only of his undying love for her and missing his self-absorption completely.
- Q3** Q3 Details were the problem here for most of the questions, what Heracles *planned* to do and what he *actually did* to rescue Alcestis was unclear. There were some good responses to (e) where the evidence from the passage was tellingly used, though the some found it harder to make two separate points.

## Section Two

Q1 elicited some passionate answers, with vigorous argument in support of much maligned Phaedra and poor dear Alcestis. It was remarkable for the variety of individual responses all valid in their own way. A pleasing number made effective use of Hippolytus' misogynist speech, acknowledging that one must take into account his nature and the circumstances that he was in, such that this was hardly reliable evidence of Euripides' usual viewpoint. Sadly few thought to look at the other important female characters – the nurse and the goddesses.

Q2 There was great uncertainty about the minor characters and some wrote about the main characters anyway. This is an area for study identified on the specification and it is to be hoped that candidates will find time to consider these nicely rounded figures who are so typical of Euripides' writings.

## Topic 15: Aristophanes *Acharnians* and *Lysistrata*

While this was still an area attracting a minority of centres, there were enough to consider it a modestly growing topic. It is clearly a very demanding one, however, by virtue of the need to understand so much of the political and historical context in order to appreciate substantial aspects of the humour. However, having said that, some candidates had clearly engaged well with the plays and were able to deliver an impressive analysis of the issues.

## Section One

- Q1** In Q1 (a) most could recall quite precise details (e.g. 2 drachmas a day, contrast between the squalor at Athens and the luxury on campaign) but for (b) most only picked up the 'pseud-' nuance. In (c) the one eye was easily given but the trireme connection eluded most and in (d) many neglected to mention that Dikaiopolis' peace was a *private* one. The anticipated question for (e) gathered a good crop of sexual and lavatorial humour.
- Q2** Q2 The ekkyklema was generally well explained ((a)ii) but the parody of Euripides' Telephus in (b) proved unfathomable to the majority who therefore found (c) equally impossible to interpret. This information is given in the notes on the play (31 and 32 in the '73 edition; 56 and 57 primarily in the 2003 edition) and should form part of the candidates' understanding of the humour of this passage. However, in (e) there were some good references to the tragic diction and general comments about the frustration of Euripides.

- Q3** Q3 The least popular question but not badly done on the whole apart from (d) where there was an almost universal lack of understanding why Pylos was significant (notes 74/153). In (f) everyone picked up readily on the sexual overtones and the use of the phallus.

## Section Two

Q1 This question (*the best argument for peace*) elicited some highly individualised responses and was on average the better answered of the two essays. Interestingly there seemed to be a clear split between those who barely used any textual evidence and those who knew the plays extremely well and brought it to bear on their claims with good relevance. There was something of a tendency to over narrate and the political overtones (particularly of the deeply significant parabases) were all too rarely mentioned. Better answers talked about the parodies of the assembly, Lamachus and the role of women both in the play and in real life.

Q2 Here the problems were looking beyond the element of humour (and consider the broader notion of *interest* in a play) or to envisaging the plays as *performances*. The analysis of the humour was well accomplished on the whole. There was little reference to the issues, use of the stage, costume and other things relating to the production and the feeling was often that candidates were writing on which play was the *funnier*. There was thus a depressing trend not to appreciate the plays as living, visual works. The question required so much more than a consideration of humour.

## Topic 16: Herodotus *The Persian War*

Again a very thin showing of support for Herodotus but those who did tackle it were often agreeably successful.

## Section One

- Q1** Q1 The first part ((a)i) was well answered but many failed to pick out the key words in (ii) preferring to quote 'this is how the Athenian victory was won'. Few knew the reasons Miltiades used to persuade the Polemarch in (b) though most recalled the detail of the split votes and the casting vote (c). There were some very sound answers to (e) where the same evidence (e.g. casualty figures, lack of details) was effectively used to argue both ways. Many referred to the inaccurate figures, whilst some were impressed with the precision of 192 dead.
- Q2** Q2 Most knew of the plan and the problem of the narrow pass for (a) though there was less agreement about the Spartans' preparations (b). Most made much of the heroism of the Greeks in comparison to the weakness of the Persians (d) for which they used the evidence of the passage effectively.
- Q3** Q3 was less well tackled, with some poor recognition of the usefulness of the fleet (a) and no real idea of why Alexander made a good choice of ambassador (c). There were some glimmers of inspiration in the analysis of Herodotus' style of history writing (e) but in general this was rather disappointing since it is one of the main areas of consideration in the areas for study in the specification. It was also something of a surprise in view of the popularity and fair success of the essay question on this area.



## Section Two

Q1 This was the less popular choice but there were some intelligent answers in there. Most remembered incidents like Artemisia and the ghost ship, but the better ones found room for discussion of the trick of Themistocles before the battle. Most remarked upon the way in which the battle details were vague.

Q2 This produced a fine crop of well prepared answers, with frequent mention of bias, unbelievable stories, inaccuracies over figures, anecdotes, use of invented speeches etc. The best answers realised Herodotus sought to tell events, not to question them.

## Topic 17: Virgil *Aeneid* Books 1, 2 and 4

This was by far the most popular of the Roman topics once again and answers were in many cases well focused on the question asked. At the weaker end, however, there was a tendency to think that the *Aeneid* was just a love affair between Aeneas and Dido.

### Section One

- Q1** Q1: Factually most answers were secure, though many found it harder to get the second mark in (a). There were some poor answers to (c)ii where there was little focus on the moment of meeting. The most common answer was how it helped them to fall in love, with few seeing any deeper purpose to the mist. In (e) most identified the bee simile and explained how it operated while one or two matched the flowers/honey with the city, which was excellent. Rather a number were too fond of the bland statement of a vivid picture of the building work at Carthage. Hardly anyone mentioned Dido's appearance at the end.
- Q2** Q2: Some sound knowledge was revealed here for the most part. Answers to (f), however, were often poor. Despite the amount of literary features in this passage, all too few noticed the fact that the love is negatively described, remarking only that she is 'deeply in love' and missing entirely the effectiveness of the 'love-wound' and 'painfully in love'. Even those who did pick out the fire references too often neglected to consider the imagery but again just said that it showed she loved him.
- Q3** In Q3 (b)ii caused some considerable difficulties in misunderstanding. Some strangely believed that Dido's second thoughts were due to her not killing herself properly (having *fallen* on her sword rather than stabbing herself) and few recalled Dido's thoughts as she lay in bed the night before. Some mentioned her asking Anna to beg Aeneas to stay, thereby not recalling the order of events correctly (this happens beforehand). In (c) the details of the curse were not always well recalled and the understanding of the Punic wars connection was very variable. Many forgot that Mercury was involved in (d) and suggested that Aeneas was scared of Dido. Fortunately (e) brought some good answers which used the passage effectively, though a small minority thought that Dido's bare foot was significant as an indication of her distress.

### Section Two

Q1 A popular choice, this essay often allowed candidates to deliver a good range of factual information with a sound level of discussion of the impact of the divinities on the enjoyment of the tale (we know the outcome, they do too much etc.). A common pitfall was to ignore Jupiter's place in the story, focusing on Book 1 (Juno/Aeolus/Neptune/Venus-in-disguise) and largely neglecting Books 2 and 4, and as elsewhere some lacked sufficient detailed knowledge of the text to gain high marks on the FC ladder.

Q2 More surprising, perhaps, was the lack of factual knowledge of the events of Book 2. There were lots of vague references to slaughter and tension but few details of particular moments where these could be found. The wooden horse (with Sinon/Laocoon) featured prominently (sometimes to the exclusion of all else) in some answers but was completely absent in others. An alarming number thought that there was indeed only the adventure story element to the book but those who did understand that there was more to it often lacked the detail to explain how this deeper element was delivered or lost marks by neglecting to reveal how it was *also* an adventure story. A few missed the vital reference in the question to Book 2 and innocently discussed Dido at length, affording us the opportunity here to warn candidates again of the huge importance of reading the question carefully. Some of the best answers, however, gave expression to some sound ideas, discussing the nature of Aeneas as a new hero (and less Homeric), the heavy nature of his fate and the powerful pathos in the death of Priam/the loss of Creusa etc. Some also brought in mention of Augustus' influence in his commissioning of the work, which afforded some interesting discussion.

### Topic 18: Ovid *Metamorphoses* Books 7 and 8

Holding its own this year in the popularity chart, this topic attracted a respectable number of candidates, the many of whom revealed a fine engagement with the work. The first context question proved to be the least popular and was not, on the whole, tackled very well. Of the essays, the Medea one was the favourite by a large margin, though here again some candidates had not really taken on board the entire question and tended to offer a character sketch of Medea rather than to consider Ovid's management of the story.

#### Section One

- Q1** Q1 In (a) many remembered that there was a need for help against Minos, but there was much less understanding of the fact that Athens and Aegina were bound by treaties. Details of the plague proved difficult to recall with answers struggling to find reasons for the spread of the plague in (c) where many resorted to mentioning the serpents of the passage. In (d) too many talked about Juno sending the plague and so none of the gods were able to intervene, while for (e) a significant few felt that Jupiter was a good person to ask for help since, as Juno's wife, he would correct her behaviour. Many candidates found much to say about the dramatic nature of this rich passage in (f).
- Q2** Q2 Well answered on the whole. In (a) there was rather too much interest in the keys to the gates ignoring what it was that Scylla wanted (i.e. Minos) and why her father was in the way of this (i.e. that he and Minos were at war). All knew that the safety of the city depended on the purple tress (b) but quite a number neglected to explain what the purple tress was, and some who did offer an explanation had clearly misunderstood it and talked of hats or (in one memorable case) a wart. Many were enthusiastic in their interpretation of Minos' character (e) almost all choosing to praise his upright rejection of Scylla's offer, with only a discerning few preferring to see the lesser qualities of this man, who was at Athens to demand fodder for his monstrous Minotaur as a 'just' recompense for the murder of his son. There were also sound answers to (f) though some misguidedly thought that 'she is deeply in love' constituted a valid *character* trait.

- Q3** Q.3: A surprisingly wide range of gods were offered in answer to (a) including a selection of goddesses by a select few. In (b)ii the commonest pitfall was not to realise that the gods had been travelling and were merely seeking to rest for the night (*xenia* at large once again) thinking instead that this had been a test by the gods. There were some excellent points in (d) on the characterisation of the old couple, though many misunderstood the early mention of stretching out their hands as a pious acknowledgement of the visiting gods. It is clear (from the fact that they only later in the passage reveal that they are gods) that at this point *Baucis and Philemon* have no idea that their visitors are divine, only that the wine refilling has been an amazing event. Their beseeching of the gods at this point, therefore, is entirely to do with apologies for presenting a rather meagre repast. The best answers noted the gentle humour that is so characteristic of Ovid's style.

## Section Two

Q1 Most candidates offered a thorough explanation of the different aspects of *Medea's* character revealed through the various storylines of the Book, charting her journey (both physically and metaphorically) with varying levels of specific detail, and this was naturally a fine start. However, the best essays went on to consider the nature of Ovid's skill in effecting a variety of approaches within his lengthy storyline, and delivered a well-rounded answer to the full question that was *not* a character sketch of *Medea* (though an unfortunate number clearly read it as this).

Q2 Much less popular, this essay proved to be very demanding but some of those who tackled it found it a fine vehicle for revealing their understanding of the subtleties of Ovid's characterisation, reflecting first on *Meleager's* understandable anger with his uncles (while acknowledging the excessive nature of his response to it) and the pathos of his death which remains incomprehensible to him, and then considering how far one could sympathise with *Althaea's* agony of indecision, employing a good level of factual detail to support the arguments.

## Topic 19: Pliny A selection of his letters

There seemed to be a more successful feel to this topic this year, with candidates having a more secure knowledge of the letters than had been in evidence from last year's cohort. Overall, however, there was something of a lack of understanding of Pliny as a rounded character, with candidates either accepting him at face value or virulently hating him for being a pompous idiot.

### Section One

- Q1** Q1: This was the best of the factually accurate answers, with almost all candidates being confident in what Pliny did for his slaves and what had happened to *Makedo*. The only weaker answer seemed to be (b) where quite a few said 'the slave died and so the money spent on buying him was lost' which did not go far enough to gain the second mark.
- Q2** Q2: This was weaker, with many forgetting *Tacitus* (a) and even if they did remember him, they then thought he was the emperor ((b)ii). All managed (f) comfortably, with full use of the information in the passage.

**Q3** Q3: There was some vagueness in this question too, with a surprisingly large number being very unsure about what Pliny's purpose was in going to Bithynia in the first place, and resorting to offering 'to shake out the accounts' from the passage in (a). In (e), however, there were a lot of sound offerings with a good balance of viewpoints on both Pliny and Trajan.

## Section Two

Q1 This was the less popular choice this year but there was good evidence that candidates knew their texts well. Apart from a few who believed that Pliny did indeed think more of others and was completely self-sacrificial, most answered it securely if not sophisticatedly. Apart from a few who relied very heavily on the extracts printed on the paper, most essays brought a good range of letters to bear on the issue.  
Q2 This proved to be the most attractive essay and those tackling it were knowledgeable in the details of the letters pertaining to Calpurnia. While a solid score could be obtained by listing the places where she is mentioned and then merely stating whether these were more like a daughter or a wife, the best offerings delivered sensible discussion on what Roman society regarded as the traditional wifely virtues and how far Pliny's relationship could be regarded as conforming to that type.

## Topic 20: Tacitus *Empire and Emperors* chapters 1-6

### Section One

Very few centres indeed attempted this topic and here it was particularly noticeable that the factual details were inadequately known. To some extent it suffered from always being the last topic to be tackled, and when this was compounded by being the third topic on the paper, it represented a considerable disadvantage.

**Q1** Q1 Details of Augustus' rise to power and his concerns over the succession were generally only sketchily known in (a) to (c) but (d) seemed to be fairly well grasped by the majority. In (e) most seemed able to pick out Tacitus' opinions and covert suggestions.

**Q2** In Q2 there were the usual unfortunate confusions over which of the mutinies was being referred to here. Most remembered the details of Agrippina's involvement (b) but few remembered the bridge over the Rhine and the invasion of Germany for (c). There was also much misunderstanding over Tiberius' character, offering 'cowardice' as a primary quality and missing the wealth of possible (and more discerning) conclusions.

**Q3** Q3 (Clutorius' trial) was the least popular choice and produced the least successful answers. Even in the last question where many can readily pick up marks by analysing the passage effectively, few seemed able to show how it might be vivid in (e), even though this passage is quite rich in possibilities.

## **Section Two**

Q.1 Apart from the rock fall, details on Sejanus' evil influence on Tiberius was scarcely absorbed. Those who did have some particular references to offer tended only to state why Sejanus was bad, rather than considering his effect upon Tiberius' principate, how this influence was achieved and how far Tiberius was himself responsible for the decline.

Q2 was potentially the more stretching of the two essays, since some understanding of the aims and expectations of Roman historians versus modern ones was necessary if the discussion was to be full enough for the highest marks, but those few who tackled it produced some decent opinions and acquitted themselves well.

**General Certificate of Secondary Education Classical Civilisation (1940)  
June 2006 Assessment Series**

**Component Threshold Marks**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Max Mark</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
Paper 11	80			45	37	30	23	16
Paper 12	120			67	56	45	34	23
Paper 13	80			36	29	22	16	10
Paper 14	120			54	44	34	24	14
Paper 21	80	55	48	41	33			
Paper 22	120	82	71	61	49			
Paper 23	80	52	42	33	22			
Paper 24	120	78	63	49	33			
Paper 05	40	31	27	23	18	14	10	6

**Syllabus Options**

**Foundation Tier**

Option FA

	<b>Max Mark</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
Overall Threshold Marks	200				98	81	64	47	30
Percentage in Grade					42.9	23.8	9.5	11.9	4.8
Cumulative Percentage in Grade					42.9	66.7	76.2	88.1	92.9

The total entry for the examination was 43.

Option FB

	<b>Max Mark</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
Overall Threshold Marks	200				103	85	67	50	33
Percentage in Grade					30.2	14.8	21.3	15.4	11.2
Cumulative Percentage in Grade					30.2	45.0	66.3	81.7	92.9

The total entry for the examination was 174.

Option FC

	<b>Max Mark</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
Overall Threshold Marks	200				103	85	67	49	31
Percentage in Grade					35.3	19.4	15.7	14.9	8.8
Cumulative Percentage in Grade					35.3	54.6	70.3	85.2	93.9

The total entry for the examination was 380.

Report on the Components Taken in June 2006

**Higher Tier**

Option HA

	<b>Max Mark</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
Overall Threshold Marks	200	154	133	111	90	66	54		
Percentage in Grade		13.7	25.2	30.3	22.4	7.0	1.4		
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		13.7	38.9	69.2	91.6	98.6	100.0		

The total entry for the examination was 357.

Option HB

	<b>Max Mark</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
Overall Threshold Marks	200	154	134	114	94	71	59		
Percentage in Grade		19.2	26.7	23.5	16.8	11.0	1.8		
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		19.2	46.0	69.5	86.3	97.3	99.1		

The total entry for the examination was 1064.

Option HC

	<b>Max Mark</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
Overall Threshold Marks	200	156	136	116	97	73	61		
Percentage in Grade		16.0	27.4	28.7	17.1	8.4	1.0		
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		16.0	43.4	72.1	89.3	97.7	98.7		

The total entry for the examination was 1772.

**Overall**

	<b>A*</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
Percentage in Grade	14.2	22.8	22.9	20.2	10.6	3.7	2.3	1.4
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	14.2	36.9	59.9	80.1	90.7	94.4	96.7	98.1

The total entry for the examination was 3790.





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