

Classical Civilisation

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE 1940**

Report on the Components

June 2008

1940/MS/R/08

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Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

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1940/05 Coursework

Again this year there were a wide variety of titles which were tackled with varying levels of success but always with real enthusiasm, and at the highest scoring end there were some sophisticated pieces which were based on very challenging titles.

As is always the case the most successful candidates used a variety of source material, which was integrated neatly and effectively and came up with their own individual responses to the material that they covered.

There have been a number of coursework reports which have stressed the key areas and, given the experience that many centres now have of this component, this year I feel it would be worthwhile to highlight what are seen by moderators as the consistent pitfalls which prevent students from gaining those extra marks and result often in a change of a centres' marks

Titles

- If someone can write a book or even a substantial chapter of a book on the title candidates choose or are given, the chances are that the title is too broad. The effect of this is often that candidates achieve low marks on factual content – they can't cover the topic- and on organisation, as they will struggle to select the most pertinent facts and could well exceed the word count if they do try to cover the content.
- If titles are in two parts they will encourage factual exposition which will need to be revisited when the evaluative part comes along. The effect of this is similar to the above and evaluation is likely to be bland.
- Titles are best as questions but questions which evoke an evaluative approach. eg. To what extent was a Spartan boy's education vital in preparing him for life as an 'Equal'? Many of the Section 2 essay questions will work in this way, but questions need to provoke evaluation and not only understanding and fact. Not only does the title need to be worthwhile but it has also to work in the context of whether it is a type A or a type B piece. It was noticeable this year that those who chose to do coursework on the literature topics were far more adept at choosing titles and it may be that candidates often choose on civilisation topics and so there is need for greater vetting in this respect.
- Centres are reminded that OCR does offer guidance on the wording of titles. Proposed titles can be submitted for comment using the Classical Civilisation coursework enquiry form, which is available on the Classical Civilisation GCSE page of the OCR website.

When it came to the assessment criteria the following observations would seem to be the most helpful to centres.

Factual Content

This needs to be selected in line with the title and the comments made above have most relevance for this particular criteria.

Having said that, there are some observations in the understanding and evaluation section which will be of some relevance here too.

Primary Source material is really 'use of Primary source material – it must be present, integrated and relevant and support what the candidate says. However, 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 their discussion.

Please note:

Modern/artists impressions do not count as PSM.

Plans/maps unless related to photographs of the original area/site do not count as PSM.

Where comparisons are made with the modern world pictures of modern sources do not count as PSM.

Secondary sources do not count as PSM.

Understanding and Evaluation

For high marks understanding needs to be accompanied by evaluation. There is a danger and a tendency for marks to be credited here for accepted conclusions.

For example: in the Forum of Pompeii there are the remains of the bases of statues of important Pompeian citizens. It is not evaluation to work out that the bases of these statues must have had statues of important Pompeian citizens on them – we know that (that is understanding or even fact). The evaluation comes in working out what the Pompeians' desire to celebrate its citizens (evidenced by the remains of the statues) tells us about life/values in Pompeii.

There is evidence that basic fact, introduced by the words, 'I think' somehow becomes the candidate's own well thought out conclusion.

Organisation

Please remember that excessive wordage must be penalised and this is generally to be considered within the Organisation criterion, although in cases of exceptional length 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.

The above comments are a potted version of the things which have caused concern.

If I were to produce the same potted version of all the things which brought delight to moderators and which centres could be proud of then this report would be ridiculously long. The coursework we read is inspiring and the teaching which lies behind it is equally so.

There is not one moderator who does not come away from this experience having learned something new, rejuvenated his or her love of the subject and thrilled by the way our young people can involve themselves in the classical world and the seed of that is the work done by so many Classics teachers all over the country, many of whom have to deal with difficult circumstances in order to deliver Classics to their students.

Such efforts are respected and appreciated.

1940/11/12 Paper 1 Foundation

General

The performance of candidates at both levels this year was again most encouraging in most areas. It was clear 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. As is the case every year, 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. This is perhaps an area to focus on in terms of practice for candidates who enter at this level. 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.

Topic 1: Greek Religion

Section One

Question 1 proved popular. Most had no problem with (a) and (b). Very few were able to give concrete details for (c) and tended to give vague comments such as; 'there were prayers and sacrifices'. Equally many in (d) knew little beyond the repetition of honouring Athene and it is clear that the wider significance of this festival is something worth pursuing to a greater degree.

Question 2 responses were very mixed. Even the god's responsibilities chosen in (b) were often incorrect and many were unsure as to what an oracle really was all about and surprisingly the process of consultation was somewhat vague. Some candidates however, did answer well.

Question 3: virtually all candidates performed well on this topic area. This was pleasing given that Asklepios is not the most common god referred to. They were able to identify other gods and how they were portrayed in (c) and found something worthwhile to say in (e).

Section Two

Both essays proved equally popular. Candidates scored well on both. In 1 there were some very clear accounts of a sacrifice without much thought as to the effect the various aspects might have on a spectator. There is always a risk of candidates missing the point in such questions by bringing in their own feelings about the treatment of animals generally. Whilst such sentiments might be laudable, candidates must look at such practices in terms of the classical world not their own prejudices. Most made a reasonable attempt at the description of the festival in essay 2 but those who gave some indication of what life was like normally in ancient Athens scored more highly on the evaluation section.

Topic 2: Home and Family in Athens

Section One

Virtually all candidates attempted Question 1 and with a good deal of success, although some did invent their own version of Kottabos in (d) (and very entertaining their versions would certainly have been!) There were some particularly interesting and varied responses to (e). Knowledge of this area of the topic was, almost without exception, very thorough as was the case with Question 2.

Question 2 was attempted by fewer candidates. Most scored well on the first three questions, although there was a tendency to repeat information already given in (d) when it came to (f) and the details of an ancient Greek marriage ceremony were often muddled.

Section Two

Essay 1 was attempted by fewer candidates but usually by those who knew this particular area well, hence marks tended to be good. Those who did not know this well really seemed to be talking about a modern house.

Essay 2 proved the most popular. Information was very full on the whole, especially in terms of the various aspects of a boy's education and for those who did not know a great deal about life outside the home for a Kyrios or those who knew little about Greek houses it was more accessible. There was a general tendency to dwell on the first few bullet points, however, and the final bullet point tended to provoke repetition of previous information.

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.

In Question 1 there was again some confusion over the stages of the festival and what actually happened. Many saw the timing of the festival as associated only with grapes and the broader aspect of fertility was rarely referred to. This often led to further repetition in (f).

Question 2 was done well by virtually all candidates. Differentiation in terms of knowledge of the topic was only clear in (e) where candidates went into more detail on the use of the effects in conjunction with what they thought a particular type of play might demand.

In Question 3 there were some surprising suggestions as to the event asked for in (c) and some seem, rightly or wrongly, to believe that the Pankrateon still exists today in various sports. Far be it for us to discourage such broad thought and candidates were rewarded for their valid suggestions. Few had problems with (d). There was a general lack of specific detail of the site of Olympia in (e).

Section Two

Essay 1 proved the most popular, the bullet points gave some structure to responses and there was some good discussion as to the appeal. However, many went off at a tangent and talked about enjoyment of the games and specific events, rather than maintaining the link to the religious aspect of the games as a whole.

Essay 2 tended to be less well done as candidates knew little about costumes other than that of a comic slave and the use of masks. Many did little more than incorporate the bullet points into a short paragraph. The aspect of costume affecting performance tended to be wholly lost.

Topic 4: Greek Art and Architecture

At Foundation tier there were too few entries in topic 4 on which to base a valid report.

In the entries that there were however, there was again a general improvement in candidates' understanding of the more technical terminology and processes relevant to the study of this topic. This was particularly noticeable in essay 2.

Topic 5: Sparta and the Spartan System

Section One

Question 1 proved to be very popular: '300' has done its bit for this particular area and for this topic as a whole. Most coped well although a few slipped up in (a) by referring to the behaviour of the Spartans rather than their appearance.

Question 2 was done by virtually all candidates and with a great deal of success. Candidates once again got their chance to catalogue the horrid ways in which the Helots were treated and most, in (c), understood the fear the Spartans had for this class. Again, when it comes to the final section it is worth reinforcing that candidates cannot in their discussion just repeat information they have given in previous parts of the question without considerable expansion and discussion.

Question 3 threw up the general trend this year namely that, although candidates at this level tend to know facts, they are less astute at sequencing them or compartmentalising them; thus the practices given in (b) and (c) were often not relevant to the particular stage of education in which they were placed.

Section Two

Not surprisingly Essay 1 proved the most popular and candidates tended to score well because they were comfortable in elaborating on the bullet points and somehow the women's behaviour seemed to grab candidates more than the varied governmental responsibilities.

Essay 2 was less well done largely due to the fact that there were significant gaps in knowledge and understanding of exactly what each section of the government was responsible for, although in fairness the idea of power did come out in answers and, generally speaking, the Ephors got the vote as the most powerful. As in previous years, answers to this question tended to be very good or very poor.

Topic 6 Roman Religion

Section One

Performance in Question 1 varied considerably. Details of the ceremonies / superstitions surrounding the marriage were often very vague, and as in previous years, some confusion with Greek practice was evident. Surprisingly few knew the animal sacrificed, in (c) and several suggested an animal for (b). Sadly a few read superstitions as suspicions and thus produced fairly absurd answers.

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Question 2 was the generally popular and was very well done. Many candidates still believe that the altar is situated inside a temple, however, and some answers were vague in terms of the purpose behind the examination of entrails.

Performance in Question 3 was generally good. Candidates only really struggled in (c). Candidates were comfortable with the myth in (d) and (e) and the appeal of the cult in (f).

Section Two

The standard of essay on this topic varied considerably. In essay 1 there were some very full accounts, with candidates giving clear detail of different gods, their responsibilities and religious practice. A number of others dwelt on what it was like to have all these gods but gave very little reason or fact to substantiate what they said.

In essay 2 there was the common problem of candidates writing at length about how wonderful their beliefs were or how horrid the Romans were but rarely was there balance or proper development of the bullet points.

Topic 7: Roman Home and Family Life

Section One

Question 1 was attempted by most candidates, but this very common source was misinterpreted by many. It was surprising to examiners to find references to the master having his hair done and the birth of a new baby.

The female slaves were often taken as slaves in general and so many of their duties in (b) included the role of male slaves which was really the point of the evaluation in (d). This may be evidence that some candidates had not read the question properly.

Question 2 was less popular although generally well answered, most knew the responsibilities of the various domestic deities and the way in which they were honoured in the household. In (e) however the sensationalism of the acceptance of the baby was very often taken as a key role of the paterfamilias. This is more an illustration of his theoretical power and many candidates were carried away by what they saw as a critical moment in Roman family life. Roman fathers did not reject their offspring as a matter of course.

Question 3 was answered well in all areas except part (a). Some decided the answer was the impluvium and then regurgitated the same information in (d).

In (e) many talked of the horrors of tenement life without explaining the benefits of life in a typical domus.

Section Two

Both essays were popular; candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of both areas. The problem for many lay in the fact that, whilst using the bullet points as guidance, they wrote about the content but forgot to talk about the worry element in essay 1, and in essay 2 the value of the education.

Also in essay 1 the 'poor girl' mentality meant that many did not think about the positives and most ignored the husband. Generally there was a huge cohort that thought the Romans were marrying boys to girls in their early teens.

Topic 8: Roman Sport and Leisure

Section One

Candidates scored well on Question 1.

Question 2 was also popular and candidates generally scored well. In (e) many did not go beyond bloodlust as the reason for the appeal of the shows and this is perhaps an area that centres could concentrate on in order to counter some candidates' belief that the majority of the people in Rome were a bunch of blood-thirsty animals.

In Question 3 it was pleasing to see that, almost without exception, knowledge of the Roman baths was thorough at this level.

Section Two

Most who attempted essay 1 did little more than pad out into fuller sentences the bullet points given. Again the enjoyment of every aspect became the main reason for going to the plays and the idea of some aspects not appealing was rarely explored. Some kind of basic balance is required to score well.

Essay 2 was the least popular and those who attempted it tended to take a very moral view of the process or stress their horror at the treatment of animals. The emotive elements of the hunt replaced any evaluation of the different aspects involved in hunting. A number did not go beyond what was witnessed in the amphitheatre too and concentrated on the capture of animals for the same.

Topic 9: Pompeii

Section One

Question 1 was surprisingly not very popular but, where it was attempted, was well done on the whole. There were a number who were unaware that the forum was not actually a covered building but most knew the function of the various buildings.

Question 2 was done by far fewer candidates, and was not well answered. Candidates were told that this was the Villa of the Mysteries, yet this mainstream source was poorly recognised and the fact that there was anything significant (Ram's head wine press) beyond this picture was missing from most answers.

Question 3 was popular and was generally well answered. Many suggested that the ash choked people rather than the fumes. It was disappointing that, as in previous years, many candidates wrote about a lava flow burying Pompeii. Fiorelli was well known, despite the suggestions of some implausible methods of plaster-casting.

Section Two

Essay 1 was the least successful but the most popular. Many decided that they could adapt the question of layout and change it to location. Unfortunately this is not an option so there were a number of responses where the content was irrelevant. It was also noticeable that many thought the forum was in the centre of Pompeii. Having said that there were a number of intuitive and perceptive answers to this question.

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Essay 2 was the least popular. However, candidates from a number of centres dealt with this question particularly well and scored highly. Those who did not score well failed to differentiate between the houses. Decorations which actually existed were hard to come by with the exception of Priapus, otherwise there were “nice mosaics and statues and wall paintings” somewhere in the house. Both were bigger than each other and their locations tended to move around Pompeii.

Topic 10: Roman Britain

At Foundation tier there were too few entries in topic 10 on which to base a valid report.

Nevertheless trends would say that the roles of the different constructions of Hadrian’s Wall are not clearly differentiated, and life in fortress towns is not understood either from the point of view of the soldiers or the local inhabitants, but Boudicca is done well.

1940/21/22 Paper 1 Higher

Topic 1: Greek Religion

Section One

The majority of candidates answered Question 1. Most found no difficulty with (a) to (c) and most went into a fair amount of detail on the festival without necessarily explaining the importance of what went on. It was part (d) which differentiated candidates, as only the best answers went beyond repeating in (d) what they had said in (c). There was a general vagueness about anything other than the religious significance of the Panathenaia.

Question 2 was popular and virtually all candidates performed well on this topic area, although some were not comfortable in assessing the importance of the Sacred way in (b). A few asserted a fairly modern perspective in terms of following what the oracle said meant that people were obeying 'god's word' which was not valid.

Question 3 was the least popular and was well done. Virtually all candidates recognised what Aesculapius was doing although a number did not know who his father was. Examiners credited consequential errors in (b) (ii). There were the usual difficulties in (d) where some candidates took the import of the question to imply that the ancient Greeks somehow bestowed a human form upon the gods which meant that they were wandering round on earth and so one had to be careful if one met a stranger in case it was a god in disguise.

Section Two

Both essay questions proved equally popular and the quality of answers on both was impressive. Most seemed to be able to go into a good amount of factual detail and the content of discussions on the importance of the Mysteries was varied and thoughtful as was the discussion of the case for 'State' versus 'the gods' in the question on sacrifice.

Topic 2: Home and Family in Athens

Section One

Question 1 was attempted by most candidates and there were few problems at this level.

Virtually all candidates attempted Question 2 and with a good deal of success. This area of the syllabus would seem to be very well known.

Question 3 was less well done. Many did not latch on to the fact that question (a) went well beyond a wife's duties in the home. Also many did not differentiate between the two questions about marriage, (c) and (d), and their different requirements in terms of content.

Section Two

Essay 1 proved to be the least popular but produced some impressive answers which covered both factual detail and understanding of importance of the various areas in terms of what they revealed about family life in ancient Athens. Candidates again showed that they are becoming more familiar with the evaluation sections on the essay questions.

Essay 2 was also answered well, factual knowledge of Athenian education tended to be good though some candidates dwelt too long on one particular aspect and thus did not cover the topic fully. There was less detailed knowledge in the area of how the education fitted in with adult roles.

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.

In Question 1 there were no specific difficulties, although the concept of presentation to the people was often ignored in (c) and candidates simply talked about what happened at the festival. Candidates also need to be reminded that, if they repeat information already used in previous questions, they are unlikely to score well without considerable expansion and evaluation. This point was evident in many responses to (e).

There were very few problems with Question 2 and on the whole it was answered, although in (e) some did not base their answers around the plot element of the two types of play, which suggests that the question may not have been read properly.

Question 3 caused few problems although the same warning about repeating information applies here too, especially in (e) and the idea of 'barbaric' was not always explored adequately.

Section Two

Examiners generally felt that these essays were handled well by the majority of candidates. Both proved equally popular and candidates managed to avoid the purely descriptive approach in favour of a discussion and thus they scored well on the whole.

Topic 4: Greek Art and Architecture

Section One

Question 1 produced some good answers, showing a sound factual knowledge. Even at this level, however, consideration of the differences and similarities of the two temples was very mixed. In (c) many talked about usage rather than structure.

In Question 2 candidates tended to produce some very vague answers, both in terms of what other areas of the frieze showed and the location and structure of the main decorative elements. Answers discussing the skill aspects as revealed by the two structures were much fuller.

Question 3 produced some very impressive answers with the exception of (d), guesswork came into play here. Otherwise it was pleasing to see that centres have clearly given thorough coverage to candidates' skills at evaluating these works of art.

Section Two

Essay 1 proved to be the least popular, in fact, in a topic which has relatively few entries it was attempted by hardly any, so no valid overall conclusions can be drawn.

Essay 2 then was attempted by virtually all candidates and the quality of response tended to be very good and showed that the candidates had an excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.

Topic 5: Sparta and the Spartan System

Section One

Question 1 was answered by virtually all candidates and their performances showed a thorough knowledge of this area of the topic. This was an obvious improvement on the previous years and one wonders whether '300' has made its mark in inspiring candidates. Weaker answers struggled in particular with (c) as they did not consider the practices of the 'Equals' and tended to go back to education.

Question 2 produced some good responses although the values of Spartan society were often ignored in (a) in favour of an answer which wrongly implied that the Spartans were just too busy fighting.

Question 3 was generally answered well. At this level candidates are generally better at seeing the education system in Sparta as one organised in stages and each stage developing the young men in different ways. It was pleasing to see that candidates understood the roles of the less martial discipline in (e).

Section Two

Both essays produced some excellent answers and knowledge of both topic areas was thorough. It is clear that the interplay between the various sections of Spartan government is now being looked at by centres rather than candidates simply learning the responsibilities of each.

The overall role of women seems clearly understood.

Topic 6: Roman Religion

Section One

Question 1 was fairly popular and produced some very good answers. Surprisingly few knew the goddess in (e) but otherwise knowledge was fairly thorough.

Question 2 was popular although less well done than expected. Too many still believe that the altar can be found inside the temple and many dwelt excessively on the examination of entrails as the key aspect in both (c) and (d), thus failing to acknowledge the overall purpose of the ceremony.

Question 3 was done well by the majority of candidates. The myth was well known as was understanding of its significance, but only the most able explained the importance to the Romans in conjunction with the number of other gods which existed.

Section Two

There were some excellent answers to essay 1 with candidates showing a full knowledge of the different gods and the pitfalls and advantages of having so many around. The use of an anonymous quote again encouraged detailed and thoughtful discussion.

Essay 2 was attempted by fewer candidates and these tended to dwell on one aspect of the question rather than develop an overview, for example in the way some answers dwelt on only one aspect in their assessment of Rome's treatment of the Christians.

Topic 7: Roman Home and Family Life

Section One

Question 1 caused few problems at this level. Respective duties were clearly understood and there was some meaningful discussion in (c) with a fairly equal spread in terms of those agreeing or disagreeing with the quote.

In Question 2 candidates showed a less than clear knowledge of the different spirits who were honoured in a Roman household - many simply said that the lares were spirits of the home without recognising the ancestral link. Most recovered well by demonstrating accurate understanding of the role of a paterfamilias.

Question 3 posed few problems for candidates with exception of part (c) where many simply failed to understand the relevance of the tablinum – some seeing it as a sort of 'living room'.

Section Two

Examiners were pleased with the overall quality of answers to both essay questions and particularly essay 2 which produced some very carefully thought out discussion on the various roles which would be expected of an adult in Rome. The best answers in essay 1 came from those who acknowledged the woman's need to be married in terms of her social acceptability and reputation.

Topic 8: Roman Sport and Leisure.

Section One

Question 1 proved popular with candidates and knowledge was generally sound, though some answers dealt less well with physical descriptions, giving a few details about the Circus Maximus rather than producing an explanation of the advantage of such a design [part (b)].

In (d), many answers did not go far enough in relating the appeal of the races to a Roman audience as opposed to a modern audience.

In Question 2 many did not understand the significance of the musicians and in (d) many did not go further than the popularity element. In some answers this was then linked to how many 'votes' the emperor would get.

In Question 3, although most knew what went on at the baths, descriptions of the hypocaust again left much to be desired (pipes/ heated water etc) and in (e) many candidates decided that this question was about the importance of baths to the Romans and therefore omitted any details about their lifestyle or daily routine.

Section Two

Both essays produced a wide range of marks. In essay 1 there were a number who wrote clearly structured essays that covered the development and significance of the plays and their responses were a pleasure to read. There were, however, a number who made no reference to

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the stock characters and actual plot but spoke in vague terms about the type of humour involved in the plays without any concrete details.

In the case of essay 2 many gave a full factual account of the elements of the hunt which appealed to Romans and incorporated analysis of its role in their lives. Some made only passing reference to the techniques and spoke in vague terms about its cruelty, dwelling rather too long on modern hunting.

Topic 9: Pompeii

Section One

Question 1 was less popular than might be expected. Most knew the layout of the Forum and so could identify the buildings. Very few understood the background to the construction of the Eumachia building (c) and knew where the road (d) led.

Candidates tended to recover in (e).

Question 2 was not well answered. Given that the introduction tells students where the scene comes from, it was surprising to find so few who knew its content or significance. Answers to (d) were generally vague as knowledge was patchy and the ram's head wine press, or even wine production generally, was rarely mentioned.

Question 3 was answered well by the majority of candidates. In (e) a number could not see the how the nature of the destruction of Pompeii was significant and a disappointing number included the suggestion of a lava flow burying Pompeii.

Section Two

Essay 1 was attempted by a relatively small number of candidates. Some who did so produced excellent answers. Others misunderstood layout as location and thus wasted time talking about the area where Pompeii was situated and its ability to exploit trade and the fertility of the region.

Essay 2 was by far the most popular but not done as well as expected. Many answers simply stressed the wealth and luxury of the houses and did not look at evidence of daily life; for example many referred to the cupids as decoration but failed to see them as depictions of the daily life and commerce of the town. Factual knowledge of the houses was generally very good; relating that knowledge to the question was less so.

Topic 10: Roman Britain

Section One

Question 1 produced some very mixed responses, particularly disappointing was the lack of specific knowledge as to the varied roles of the Roman army. Having said that, particularly impressive was the range of discussion in (e) around the function of the wall.

Question 2 was not popular. In (a) very few answers included the advantages of the actual site. Knowledge of trades was almost non-existent (there is material available from Bath museum). Answers to (c) and (d) were considerably better.

Question 3 produced some very good answers. Candidates demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the rebellion, its causes and the events. They were slightly less well versed in any consequences and many guessed that Britain was placed under some very rigorous system of supervision.

Section Two

Almost all candidates attempted essay 1 and the performance was generally very good. The best essays covered a wide range of topics and analysed each although few concentrated enough on the word 'benefits'. Others dwelt on a few areas with fairly thorough explanation.

Essay 2 was less popular and was less well answered. Answers were lacking in sufficient facts and argument.

Finally, whilst this report often highlights the negative aspects of candidates' performances, it is worth noting 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 Paper 2 Foundation

There were a number of good scripts at this level, which showed a sound knowledge of the texts studied and made thorough attempts at evaluating the questions set where appropriate.

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

Section One

This topic was very popular, and produced a full range of answers. Most of the questions proved straightforward for the candidates who had a good knowledge of the text.

In Question 1 (a) many candidates did not know the name Ilium, which also caused some difficulties with the second part of the question.

Section Two

Few candidates answered Essay 1.

Most candidates did Essay 2. There was an unfortunate lack of detailed knowledge – many seemed to be recalling the film, and did not know the details of the story from the text. Basic details were often missing from otherwise competent answers.

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

There were not enough candidates to make a detailed report on this topic, but it was generally well answered by those candidates who did it.

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

This topic was well-handled, with quite widespread sophisticated understanding of fate, responsibility, and the shifting balance of these in relation to Oedipus and Creon.

Plot knowledge of Oedipus was good as well, with general awareness of which shepherd did what when and with what consequences.

Very few answers included that for Oedipus to abandon the search for Laius' killer on Teiresias' advice isn't an option as plague would persist.

Topic 14: Euripides: *Bacchae* and *Medea*

At Foundation tier there were too few entries in topic 14 on which to base a valid report.

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

At Foundation tier there were too few entries in topic 15 on which to base a valid report.

Topic 16: Herodotus: *The Persian War*

At Foundation tier there were too few entries in topic 16 on which to base a valid report.

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

Section One

The standard of answers on this topic was good in the main, with some detailed knowledge of the text coming through in the Section One answers.

Section Two

The essays were well handled in the main, although there were a number of candidates who allowed their imagination to run away with them when considering various aspects of Dido and Aeneas' relationship. It was clear that candidates knew the text reasonably well, but they would profit from making their points as fully as possible, and ensuring that the relevant textual knowledge is shown.

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

Section One

Although many candidates coped well with the questions on this topic, there was clear evidence of *Jason and the Argonauts* in some scripts. Candidates must be able to demonstrate a good knowledge of the text itself.

Question 2 was least well answered, with almost nobody knowing of the sequence of Theseus' 'labours' en route to Athens, and few doing much better on the origin of Aegina's name.

Section Two

Both essay questions inspired some balanced discussions, with some well-judged answers and some good insight into the enjoyment of ghastly misfortune.

Topic 19: Pliny: *Letters*

Section One

Many candidates demonstrated good knowledge in answers to the Section One questions, with good responses on Makedo's death, and that of Pliny's uncle. However, candidates need to ensure that they give the right amount of information – if three points are required, they must make three points.

Section Two

The Section 2 essay questions were well handled in the main, with some good answers on Calpurnia – candidates seemed to have a good appreciation of her relationship with Pliny, and were able to give their knowledge of the letters effectively.

Topic 20: Tacitus: *Empire and Emperors*

At Foundation tier there were too few entries in topic 20 on which to base a valid report.

1940/23/24 Paper 2 Higher

In general the performance in the literature topics was of a similar standard to previous years. Those who took the three literature topics option (24) were of a notably high standard, with excellent answers throughout the paper from most candidates. Candidates, however, should be reminded of the importance of showing precise knowledge of the texts both in the Section One and Section Two (Essay) answers. There were a number of cases where the papers were very uneven, with candidates showing excellent knowledge in the first half and then collapsing in the essays, which may indicate a need for more work on basic essay planning and the effective deployment of knowledge in response to an essay question.

In Section One, candidates should also be reminded that an explain question worth 2 marks requires a point and an explanation, whilst the four mark questions require two points with evidence which in most cases are taken directly from the passage. Many candidates failed to use the passage on the paper, and lost marks unnecessarily as a result.

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

As before, this was by far the most popular topic and received a great range of quality in answers. In general, the Section One questions were handled better than the essays in this topic.

Section One

Knowledge of Question 1 was in general good, with the majority knowing the exact number of men killed in (c) and almost everyone knowing the Lotus eaters story. Equally, many got the complete 4 marks in (e). The only question to cause problems was (b ii), as *xenia* proved a difficult issue, (although there was a slight improvement in how many people knew it compared with previous years).

Question 2 was the least well-answered of the 3 questions. Generalised knowledge of Penelope's trick was almost universal, but the variety of things she was making was remarkable (from knitting a sweater/scarf for Laertes to making a carpet). (d) caused some candidates difficulties, also for the lack of knowledge of *xenia* mentioned above. (e) was by far the most poorly answered 4 mark question in this topic, with major misunderstanding about Penelope's motivations here and most giving stock character traits (loyalty, cunning): it is important that the traits noted are related to examples from the passage, and that candidates support their answers in this way.

Question 3 was the most popular of the 3 questions and in general was very well answered. In (b ii) some candidates could highlight what Athene was goddess of, but then failed to make the necessary link to why this was appropriate. (c) The stronger answers were easily able to get all 4 marks, while the weaker ones seemed to have less idea what the question was asking for. There were some excellent answers, reflecting a detailed knowledge of Homeric style.

Section Two

In responses to Essay 1 a wide range of characters was often mentioned (and most, but not all, steered clear of using the major characters). This essay was not that well handled in the main by the few candidates who decided to do it.

Report on the Components taken in June 2008

The overwhelming majority answered Essay 2 and answers of all standards appeared. Factual knowledge was often good, to impressive standards in some cases with very minor detail being recalled or numerous accurate quotes given. The lower scoring essays tended to concentrate just on tension/suspense. A surprising number of answers missed out key elements of the story such as the 'nobody' trick.

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

This seemed to be a slightly more popular topic this year. There still seemed to be lack of knowledge regarding the social aspects of the poem, particularly understanding of the heroic code.

Section One

Question 1 was by far the most popular question of this topic and everyone knew Briseis. As highlighted, lack of full understanding of the heroic code meant that (a ii and iii) were rarely well answered. The embassy was generally well known and (d) was also well answered.

Question 2 was generally well answered; almost everyone knew the details of Patroklos' death, identified Deiphobos by name, and had at least some understanding of proper burial rites.

A few issues caused problems in Question 3. (a ii) met the same issue of the heroic code again. Few candidates got the full marks in (c) as they did not know the details necessary to make a satisfactory 'explain' answer. (d) was a very good question for getting candidates to think and raised some exceptionally thoughtful and independent answers.

Section Two

In general, the essays were of a reasonable standard, but there were a number of very superficial treatments, which were little more than a narrative of the events.

Essay 1 was the more popular of the two. It also raised a clear split between the weaker and stronger responses. The weaker ones produced only a recitation of how Achilles is angry in each book without any real evaluation. The stronger ones had a clear picture of the epic as a whole, with a few extremely intelligent answers seeing subtle patterns in the composition, and also looked beyond the obvious to other themes.

All candidates found something useful to say in response to Essay 2 and there was a surprising variety of viewpoints. Factual knowledge was decent but could often have been more detailed.

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

This remained the second most popular topic and showed a definite improvement over last year's performance, both in knowledge of the texts and in understanding of how they worked. There was also a remarkable improvement in knowledge and accurate use of dramatic terms such as *peripeteia*, *anagnorisis* and *hubris*.

Section One

Question 1 was generally well answered, excepting (a i) which no one knew in its full detail. In (b ii) the more unexpected answer of 'god of music' actually proved to be the most popular one. (a ii) and (c) were almost universally known. Likewise, the majority of candidates managed to get the full 4 marks in (d).

Report on the Components taken in June 2008

Answers to Question 2 showed that basic details were well known, although candidates often struggled to get the full marks over the first three questions. The most common problem was forgetting that he thought Polybus and Merope were his real parents. Most were able to make a decent attempt at (c). (d) was the 4 mark question that caused the most problems in this topic; while an impressive number remembered stichomythia, this often was the only useful answer offered.

Question 3 was the most popular of the 3 questions. Few got the full 2 marks in (a) by failing to explain. (b) and (d) were well known, but (c) caused problems amongst some, with answers failing to include enough knowledge. On a minor note, Acheron and Charon were often confused. (e) distinguished well between stronger and weaker answers, with the stronger ones finding plenty to say and the weaker ones only being able to say 'because no wedding songs will hymn her' without any analysis.

Section Two

Essay 1 proved to be a challenge: many candidates either focused on one play and failed to balance the answer, or were reduced to simple 'I like' statements about characters.

Essay 2 was by far the more popular essay and gave candidates of all levels a chance to say something useful. A wide range of issues was considered by most candidates and there was a good range of viewpoints as well. Knowledge of the texts showed a clear improvement over last year, with some including an impressive number of quotes, although there were still some who only remembered the fact that Oedipus killed his father and married his mother.

Topic 14: Euripides: *Bacchae* and *Medea*

This was if anything even less popular than last year, but in general answers showed a good standard of knowledge.

Section One

Question 1 was noticeably the least popular of the 3 questions. General knowledge was good, although (c) and (d) both caused problems (of a factual and an understanding nature respectively). Most had something to say in (e), mainly noting the humour of the old men dancing.

Again, in Question 2 general knowledge was good, although details of the punishment idea in (c ii) were vague and (c i) was not answered correctly by anyone (all assumed it was because she was his mother). (d) was very well answered, with almost everyone able to get the full 4 marks.

General knowledge was good in Question 3 too, excepting (b iii) where the idea of heirs was rarely known. (c) was surprisingly poorly answered with few understanding the dramatic features this famous speech offers, with 'she is confused' often being the only useful point given.

Section Two

Essay 1 was the more popular question and almost everyone had something useful to say, although few reached a very good understanding of what was being asked. Reasons for Pentheus deserving punishment *per se* were described in fairly good detail and range, but greater emphasis was needed on whether or not his punishment was itself inhumane.

Very few attempted Essay 2.

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

This was also slightly less popular this year, although factual knowledge of the plays did seem to have improved slightly and more candidates were looking beyond coarse humour.

Question 1 was noticeably the least popular question and was often poorly answered. Basic details of (a) and (b) were known but the Executive caused problems in (c). It was good in (e) to see candidates making a real attempt to look beyond slapstick humour.

In Question 2 the eels were well remembered! The informer confused a lot of candidates, with the majority offering only 'something he can't get in Thebes'. (e) a number of answers achieved full marks.

In Question 3 Artemisia was very poorly known in (b), and most confused her with Artemis. Few got the full 2 marks in (c).

Section Two

Essay 1 was the more popular question and offered something for everyone to say. There were some highly impressive answers to this question with both careful analysis and well remembered details.

Essay 2 was less popular and where it was attempted was generally not answered well. Most were able to recognise that Aristophanes was giving important messages (generally just peace), but failed to say *how* he did that or even to analyse the comedy part of the question.

Topic 16: Herodotus: *The Persian War*

In general, the answers on this topic were mixed: some good performances, and some very weak.

Section One

The explain element of Question 2 (b i) was hardly addressed by any candidates.

Section Two

In Essay 1 'How effectively' seemed not to be addressed by many candidates.

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

This seemed to be more popular this year and also to be better answered.

Section One

All three questions were fairly equally answered in terms of numbers.

Question 1 was answered least well. Creusa's prophecy (a ii) was confused with the other ones given to Aeneas. (b) was either known in full detail or completely misunderstood. The judgement of Paris (c) produced very few problems and a surprising number knew all about the Punic wars (d). (e) was very poorly answered (surprisingly considering the good attempts made at the comparable question regarding the end of the *Iliad*). Almost all that was offered was 'it tells us what is going to happen' with little attempt at seeing it on a grander scale or more subtle analysis.

The judgement of Paris (b i) was also well known in Question 2, although the role of the Palladium was not (b ii). While most knew what happened to Laocoon, few made the link that it was a punishment (c ii). (d) was also very poorly answered, despite the range of possibilities available in the mark scheme.

In Question 3 knowledge of Priam's death has significantly improved compared to equivalent questions in past years. Overall, factual knowledge was strong in this question. (d) was by far the best answered 4 mark question, with most being able to gain full marks.

Section Two

Essay 1 was the more popular essay question and even the weaker responses were reasonable attempts at answering it. While evaluation was strong overall, factual knowledge could certainly have been improved.

Those who did answer Question 2 generally did well with a good range of points offered.

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

This was a relatively popular topic, although possibly slightly less than last year. It evoked a wide range of standards.

Section One

Question 1 was by far the most popular of the three questions. Factually it was very strong with the only problems appearing in (e). Very few found anything to say beyond 'she is confused by her feelings' despite the range of possible answers.

Very few answered Question 2. Those who did knew the subject well indeed and also made good attempts at (e).

Answers to Question 3 were also factually strong, with only (d) causing difficulties as few were able to gain the full 2 marks by explaining. (e) was generally very well answered.

Section Two

Essay 1 was slightly the less popular question and also slightly less well answered. While a good number offered both sides of the question, few bothered to go beyond listing examples.

For Essay 2 also, the majority were happy to contradict the statement and give the opposite side as well. There was a slightly better attempt overall with this question to try and explain why Ovid's stories are often dark. For both questions, factual knowledge could have been improved. While most candidates knew at least 2 or 3 stories, detail was very often poor.

Topic 19: Pliny: *Letters*

Significantly fewer candidates did this topic this year.

Section One

Factual knowledge in responses to Question 1 was strong, excepting the Emperor in (b ii). (Once again Tacitus appeared as an emperor!) (f) caused major problems with few being clear what the 'good old Romans' were and inventing their qualities to fit what they wanted to say.

Report on the Components taken in June 2008

Question 2 was noticeably the most popular question. Factual knowledge was generally secure, except in (e) where two details were often lacking (most just offered 'he pretended to be dead'/'he was unconscious'). (g) was decently answered.

Question 3 was noticeably the least well answered question. Basic, not full, knowledge was supplied for (a) and (b), while hardly anyone got more than one reason in (c) (generally just 'to shake out the accounts'). There was also confusion in (d) with most seeing it as typical and not noticing the stronger tone.

Section Two

In general, the essays often lacked factual detail.

Essay 1 was slightly the less popular question. Basic factual knowledge was secure, although not as strong as in last year's Calpurnia questions. Most had something to say, however.

Factual knowledge again was decent in answers to Essay 2, although there was a temptation to repeat the topics raised in the 3 earlier questions. Most saw Pliny as highly committed indeed, although greater evaluation would have been good.

Topic 20: Tacitus: *Empire and Emperors*

There were too few entries in topic 20 on which to base a valid report.

Grade Thresholds

General Certificate of Secondary Education
Classical Civilisation (Specification Code 1940)
June 2008 Examination Series

Component Threshold Marks

Component	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
11	80			48	41	33	25	18
12	120			71	60	48	37	26
13	80			43	36	30	24	18
14	120			64	54	45	36	27
21	80	55	48	41	34			
22	120	80	70	61	50			
23	80	52	42	33	22			
24	120	78	64	49	33			
05	40	32	28	24	19	15	11	7

Specification Options

Foundation Tier

Option FA

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	200				112	91	70	49	28
Percentage in Grade					47.7	40.9	4.6	2.3	2.2
Cumulative Percentage in Grade					47.7	88.6	93.2	95.5	97.7

The total entry for the examination was 45.

Option FB

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	200				114	96	78	61	44
Percentage in Grade					26.4	23.6	16.0	17.5	9.9
Cumulative Percentage in Grade					26.4	50.0	66.0	83.5	93.4

The total entry for the examination was 219.

Option FC

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks					114	96	78	60	42
Percentage in Grade					37.7	19.0	25.6	7.5	6.9
Cumulative Percentage in Grade					37.7	56.7	82.3	89.8	96.7

The total entry for the examination was 233.

Higher Tier

Option HA

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	200	155	133	111	90	67	55		
Percentage in Grade		19.8	33.8	26.2	11.6	6.5	0.8		
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		19.8	53.6	79.8	91.6	98.1	98.9		

The total entry for the examination was 267.

Option HB

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	200	150	131	112	94	72	61		
Percentage in Grade		16.1	21.4	25.5	17.3	13.4	3.2		
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		16.1	37.5	63.0	80.3	93.7	96.9		

The total entry for the examination was 1107.

Option HC

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	200	155	136	117	98	75	63		
Percentage in Grade		15.3	30.3	27.2	18.2	7.2	1.2		
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		15.3	45.6	72.8	91.0	98.2	99.4		

The total entry for the examination was 1682.

Overall

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Percentage in Grade	13.8	23.6	22.9	19.6	11.2	4.3	1.5	1.1
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	13.8	37.4	60.3	79.9	91.1	95.4	96.9	98.0

The total entry for the examination was 3553.

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

14 – 19 Qualifications (General)

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

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