

# LATIN

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Paper 0480/01

Language

## General comments

Candidates generally performed better in **Section A** (Translation) than in **Section B** (Comprehension), where there were a higher proportion of weak performers. Significantly, as part of their rough working, most of the weak candidates had laboriously copied out both Latin passages in full and, as a consequence, left themselves insufficient time to complete, still less do justice to, the comprehension questions. Obviously it is not advisable for candidates to use up valuable time in this way.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A**

Candidates, on the whole, rose well to the challenges of the Livy passage and many translations were in the good to excellent range. The second and penultimate sentences proved problematic, with the present participles *fugientium* and *fugientes* being handled badly and the verb forms *actus est* and *egerat* not recognised as coming from *ago*. Elsewhere candidates mostly coped well, notably in the long fourth sentence (lines 4-7 *Sabini...fugere*), whose clearly marked structure was well followed. Among constructions, the indirect statements in lines 7-10 were in general competently handled, and even though the separation of *me* from *aedificaturum esse* in lines 7-8 proved something of a stumbling block for candidates, many still obtained most of the correct sense by translating 'I promise myself that...a temple will be built for you here'. The conditional clause here was also well translated, as was the ablative absolute in line 9, but a number of candidates seemed unfamiliar with the use of *noli* with the infinitive in lines 6-7. Relatively few versions were seriously handicapped by vocabulary problems, but little words like *sic*, *inde*, *huc* and *hinc* were frequently mistranslated or omitted and *hic* was sometimes translated in its adjectival sense when clearly it meant 'here'. Other words not known to varying degrees were '*se recipere*, *veterem*, *arcem*, *sinere*, *iterum* and *impetum*. The superlative force of *maxime*, *optimus* and *maximus* was often spotted and verb parts such as *cecidit*, *iussus*, *coge*, *redde*, and *auditas esse* were usually well recognised; but *posui* was sometimes thought to be from *possum*, *adiuvisse* from *audio* and *aberat* from *abeo*, and *decucurrerat* was often translated as a perfect. Among other mistakes, *arcem...captam iam habent* (in line 4) was frequently translated as 'they have now captured the citadel' and some were deceived by the word order of *restiterunt Romani* (line 11) into taking *Romani* as object.

### **Section B**

Though there were, as mentioned above, a number of weak performances here, the best candidates displayed an excellent understanding of the Latin passage and many showed a good grasp of the story even if they were sometimes found wanting on detail. It is all too easy to lose sight of detail in loose paraphrase and, as a rule, candidates are best advised to keep as closely to the Latin as possible in their answers to comprehension questions.

- (a) Most picked up marks here, while occasionally missing the point that Xerxes was making for Athens. In rendering the content of line 2 of the passage in their answer, a number of candidates misinterpreted or omitted *de rebus suis*.
- (b) The meaning of *se munire* ('to defend/fortify themselves') was not always understood.

- (c)(i) While many correctly gave the content of Themistocles' advice, some failed to mention that none of his fellow citizens understood the response of the priestess.
- (ii) Most candidates realised from the number of marks allocated that it was not enough just to say that Themistocles' advice was approved and rightly took account in their answer of the rest of the sentence following *tali consilio probato*.
- (d)(i) What Xerxes did on arrival in Athens was in general quite well understood. A few candidates, however, did not know the meaning of *incensam* or *delevit*, *sacerdotibus* was occasionally taken as singular and some omitted the detail that the priests were on the citadel.
- (ii) Many succeeded here in picking out and translating the phrase *nullis defendentibus*.
- (e) Most candidates correctly noted that the sailors on the Greek fleet were terrified, but the rest of their answer was quite often hindered by the confusion of *auderent* with *audirent* or ignorance of the meaning of *hortarentur*.
- (f) This question was in general very well answered.
- (g) This was also well answered.
- (h) The derivations were, as usual well done, though a number of candidates found trouble with *miserunt* (e.g. 'miserable') and *auderent* gave rise to some derivations based on *audio*.

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Paper 0480/02

Literature

The general standard was good, although there was the usual clear distinction between those candidates who were able to translate the prescribed texts fluently, and those who were unable to do so. The former group tended to score high marks on all questions, whereas the latter were often unable to approach those questions that were based on the text itself, such as those requiring analysis of style. Virgil and Petronius proved to be the most popular of the prescribed authors, to judge by the general level of response from candidates.

In the passages for translation certain words tripped some candidates, such as *modo* and *veniam* in **Question 1 (iv)**, *leti* and *specie* in **Question 2 (v)**, *militiae* and *libertatem* in **Question 4 (iv)** and *mori*, *timore*, *donec* and *larva* in **Question 5 (i)**. Most candidates were familiar with the more basic background material asked for in **Question 1 (i)** and **(v)** and **Question 2 (i)**, but many did not show an awareness of the broader context in their answers to **Question 1 (ii)** and **(iii)**, and **Question 4 (i)**. Many candidates did not know the names and functions of the gods mentioned in **Question 1 (vi)** and **(vii)**. Scansion was generally poorly done in **Question 2 (vi)**, but there were good answers to Questions requiring an appreciation of style, such as **Question 2 (iv)**, **Question 4 (iv)** and **Question 5 (iv)**. The essay questions (**Question 3** and **Question 6**) elicited some thoughtful answers. The better answers to **Question 3** not only identified the main examples of the spoken word – the conversations between Dido and Anna, and between Juno and Venus – but also assessed their importance to the story; some candidates appropriately mentioned Rumour. In answers to **Question 6** too many candidates stated boldly what Tacitus' intentions were, but better answers suggested that these can only be inferred from the text, and offered various suggestions.

All in all candidates showed a laudable ability to assimilate a large amount of disparate material, to work on it in a thoughtful manner, and to show that they had gained some insights into the Roman World.