

Report on the Units

January 2009

3818/7818/MS/R/09J

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

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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Advanced Subsidiary GCE Latin (3818)

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2471-2480 Latin Literature 1

General Comments

The examiners are confident that these papers set candidates tasks of appropriate difficulty balanced across the range of texts prescribed and questions asked, and that they produced an appropriate range of marks. Although many candidates were deservedly awarded high marks, there were a few areas of weakness found in some answers.

Some candidates did not recall the storylines in sufficient detail when answering the 9 and 15 mark questions.

There were, as ever, candidates who tended to concentrate on content (and not always in sufficient detail) rather than style in the 30 mark questions. A number showed this weakness the other way round, however, particularly if their recall of the narrative detail was insecure.

The examiners noted a tendency for candidates to avoid risk in showing their knowledge of the meaning of the Latin to which they referred and that candidates frequently failed to quote the Latin to which they were referring in discussion, in some cases in enough detail, in sadly more, at all. Avoiding the Latin has the effect of limiting the achievement of marks higher than Band 3 on 30 mark questions.

There were no rubric errors encountered, but there were signs that a small number of candidates did not finish their answers. The Quality of Written Communication was generally excellent, and most candidates were deservedly awarded the full 6 marks for each question.

On a rather more mundane level, there are still candidates who do not help the examiners to mark their answers by writing clearly and do not leave the examiners sufficient space at the end of answers to annotate scripts usefully.

The examiners, as ever, are very keen to offer their genuine thanks to all the centres and candidates whose work they have assessed.

Comments on Individual Questions

Cicero

- 1
- (a) Often well answered, though the last point in the mark scheme, where Cicero contends that a case of this nature needs more than 'idle speculation, dubious witnesses and a clever prosecutor' was quite often omitted.
 - (b) This was often well answered, though less strong candidates confined their answers to only a few lines. Full discussion of the last few lines, dealing with the pejorative comparison with animals' relationships with their parents, being particularly rare. Often candidates seemed unsure about the meanings of some words, and attempted to disguise this uncertainty, rarely successfully.
 - (c) This brought a number of good answers, though many candidates did not fully understand the point that as no-one could possibly sleep with parricide on his conscience, the sons of Caelius were acquitted because they were asleep, and *a fortiori* therefore Roscius should be acquitted too.
- 2
- (a) This was generally well and fully answered.
 - (b) Some confusion appeared here as to exactly whose *tenuitas* was being discussed, but with that proviso this was mostly well answered.
 - (c) Answers here were often good, full and well expressed. The essential point of the contrast between Magnus and Sextus Roscius being expressed in a torrent of rhetorical antitheses was well understood and brought out. Again a good number of candidates let themselves down by confining their discussion to the first half of the lines set, omitting some very good opportunities for discussion of both content and style in the last sentence or so.
There is a tendency in discussing Cicero to focus on the word *iudices* and make the fact that Cicero refers to the judges have much more rhetorical weight than it really deserves. This point is a straw at which less strong candidates are especially prone to grasp.

Virgil

- 1
- (a) There were a good number of accurate answers to this question. The chief omission was Turnus' reassurance to Amata that he is not in control of his destiny and his desire not to be sent away by her with tears, as that would be a bad omen for him on the battlefield.
 - (b) Generally well answered, but some candidates lost marks by giving a sound, even complete, discussion without quoting the Latin as asked. Some candidates also lost marks by focusing on the horses and not discussing the equipment.

- (c) Here, as elsewhere in the 30 mark questions, candidates who did not achieve the highest banding of marks either confined their discussion to too narrow a section of the lines set, or did not show that they understood the meaning of the Latin (or too often, did not quote any Latin at all). These weaknesses are unlikely to produce a mark higher than a Band 3 or low Band 2. In particular examiners found discussion of the passage tailed off at the start of the 'bull simile', where discussion in several scripts was limited to 'Turnus is like a bull' or even an untranslated *taurus*. (One candidate rather lessened the frightening belligerence of Turnus by describing him as a *torus*, though whether through a phobia of soft furnishings or just confusion with Spanish was not clear.) Less strong candidates also confused simile with metaphor here.
- 2 (a) Generally well answered, though some candidates did not say exactly at what Latinus was amazed, ending at 'the two men' and omitting that they had come from the ends of the earth to duel.
- (b) Comments on the parallel sub question on passage 1 also apply here. In particular, candidates ran out of steam at the point where Jupiter appears. There was often very limited discussion of the simile about the bulls, despite its length and detail in the text.
- (c) This was quite often well answered, though some candidates confined themselves to discussing the asymmetrical warfare between mortal and divine made weaponry, and did not fully discuss Turnus picking up the wrong sword.

Tacitus

- 1 (a) Generally well answered. This was clearly quite a familiar part of Tacitus' narrative. The final point on the results of the clouds hiding the moon was sometimes 'telescoped' in discussion.
- (b) The content/style balance was not weighed properly here by some candidates, who were not always certain of the details of the narrative but recalled some aspects of Tacitean style. There were, though, a good number of candidates who seemed much more confident about the storyline.
- (c) This was generally well and fully answered, though the sending of the letter to Tiberius was not always fully discussed.
- 2 (a) This was generally very well answered, being a familiar and exciting moment in the story.
- (b) This was also generally well answered by those who saw that the content was important and that numerous pieces of style back it up. Less strong candidates again were caught out by poor recall of the detail of the content of the passage. In particular they were not clear who the *hostis* were and some discussions did not really go beyond *civile bellum suscipi*.
- (c) This was generally well answered by those who recalled the translation of the passage, and therefore realised quickly how straightforward the question was, but some less thoroughly prepared candidates were caught out here by poor recall of the detail of the narrative.

Ovid

- 1
- (a) Generally well answered, provided candidates brought to the examination a sound recall of the 'narrative' of the poem.
 - (b) Here less strong candidates often let themselves down by too narrow a discussion of the lines set. They began well with a mention of the doorkeeper's putative love life, and discussed the effect of the repeated 'refrain' in *tempora noctis eunt; excute poste seram*'. They mentioned the effect of the repetition of *fallimur*, (though they frequently called it 'repetition' both here and elsewhere in the examination) but less often felt secure about what was going on at that moment, and insecurity of recall continued to grow from that point. Those who were stronger in their recall of the translation in this poem fully deserved the higher marks that this gave them, as they were clearly able to see style as the handmaid of content in this passage and answer the question thoroughly on that basis.
 - (c) Generally very well answered, though, as with the parallel Virgil question, more than one candidate quoted no Latin expressions.
- 2
- (a) This question was also generally well answered.
 - (b) Stronger candidates found this question very congenial. Others who scored less highly again let themselves down with poor recall of the content detail. There was generally sound discussion of the fairly clear antitheses in the earlier lines, but less strong candidates did not say much about the point of the mention of Rhesus beyond saying who he was. Some candidates with less strong recall of the content were prone to discuss style 'in vacuo' and gained some credit for this, but not all the credit they might.
 - (c) Often well answered; less strong candidates did not understand the point being made, that one should not think of Love as idleness, for men of action were also involved with relationships, though they mostly knew the mythical examples of this well enough.

2491 Latin Literature 2

General Comments

The examiners again feel that this paper set the candidates appropriate tasks, balanced across the range of texts which invited response at the appropriate level.

The quality of performance on this unit varied from poor to excellent but was generally sound. The examiners were again very pleased to note very few examples of whole centres offering shared inaccurate dictated or printed translations.

The errors encountered in translation, perhaps inevitably, remain much the same, in particular the omission of key words, especially conjunctions, or the 'telescoping' of translation of a section of the text, where detailed recall has proved more elusive.

While there were numerous examples of good and well thought-out essays which exhibited a detailed recall of the text (including both 'halves' where two authors had been studied), there were still a number of essays which were essentially narrative in nature, with at best a randomly placed 'nod' to the question set.

There were no signs of rubric errors, most candidates except those who exhibited weakness of recall in the translations completed all the questions attempted. Many candidates achieved a well deserved full mark for the quality of their written communication, though some who did not express themselves clearly, or whose essay structure was weak, did lose a mark here.

As ever, the examiners wish to express their real thanks to centres and candidates for the hard work and sound learning exhibited in the scripts assessed.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A: Translation

Cicero

- (i) This was generally accurately translated, though the following weaknesses arose:-
omission of *autem*
omission of either *voluntate patris* or *rei familiari* or indeed both
confusion of *ipse* with an imagined *iste*
confusion of *ad balneas* with a putative *ab balneas*
omission of *maleficii*
confusion over the sentence structure *verum* to *fecerit*, especially how to fit in the relative clause, or thinking that *quod* here meant 'because'
not seeing *adfinem* as a complement to *hunc*
- (ii) There were several surefooted translations of this passage, except for:-
- taking *reperiebas* as present tense
 - not understanding the meaning of *res*
 - omission of *de*
 - omission of *paratum*
 - omission of *me, ne quidem* or even both
 - thinking *causis* was *causa*

Virgil

- (i) There was a range of achievement in this passage, many fully accurate versions, but a good number of misunderstandings, omissions and compressions in various sections, particularly:
- omission of *bellator*
 - taking *extremo* as simply meaning 'another'
not establishing the nouns described by *caecis* or *commixtum*
 - confusing *aura aures* and indeed even reading *aurum*
 - omitting *impulit*
 - translating *tanto* and *tantus* as simply *magno* and *magnus*
- (ii) Common errors in this translation included the following:
- omission of *forte* or confusion with *fortis*
 - taking *steterat* as *stabat*; the point is that the tree was **no longer** standing
 - omitting the connection implicit in *ubi*
 - seeing *divo* as *divis* and misunderstanding *votas*
 - taking *sustulerant* as if it were *tollebant*, though it would surely not be wise for the Trojans still to be engaged in tree surgery at that moment.

Tacitus

- (i) There were some very accurate translations here, notwithstanding the following mistakes:-
- *lymphati* was rarely included in translation
 - *vetustissima* was not infrequently taken with *odiis* rather than *materies*
 - *verberibus* was often taken as *verbis* or simply omitted
 - *convulsos* was often omitted
 - *Septimius* was often misspelt, as was *Caecina*, taken as *Caecinus*
 - *eo* and/or *usque* were quite often omitted
- (ii) There were relatively few examples of this translation, the weak points being:-
- taking *miseratio* as *miser* or *miseria*
 - attributing amnesia to Agrippa (or even his father) and Augustus, rather than lack of memory about them on the soldier's part
 - little clarity in elucidating the meaning of *fecunditate* and *puclitia* or linking them to Agrippina (whom a few candidates confused with Agrippa)
 - seeing the present tense in *appellabant* (and *induebant*) or omitting *vocabulo*, which is more than just *verbo*; 'nickname' was adjudged the best translation
 - *plerumque* only rarely appeared in translations
 - some confused *vulgi* with *vultus*
 - *obsistunt* was quite often taken as subjunctive - 'they begged her to stand in the way'

Ovid

- (i) Professor Barsby's translation in the recommended edition led many to full marks in this question; those who tripped up did so at the following places:-
- *Livor* was sometimes left as 'Livor' in the translation
 - *more patrum* and the entire clause *dum ... aetas* were not infrequently missed out
 - *quod* was sometimes taken to mean 'because'
 - *canar* was sometimes omitted
- (ii) Again there were some fully accurate translations of this, except for the following:-
- the adjectives in the first couplet were not attached to the correct nouns
 - *auctor* was quite often missed out, as was the whole of line 3 in some versions
 - *hac faciunt* was rendered as 'do this'
 - *me* was sometimes taken for *ego* and *Amor* for *Amorem*
 - 'gives' was not thought quite full enough for *donat*, 'grants' or 'presents' is better

Section B: Essays

Cicero

A number of very good answers were seen. Those candidates who achieved the highest marks were those who (as with a similar question on last year's paper on the 'Pro Milone') did more than recall the text and drop in repeatedly (and in places almost randomly) 'and this shows that attack is the best form of defence'. The most effective answers began by approaching the notion of 'defence' and 'attack', and looked analytically for the grounds on which Cicero built his attack on the Roscii and Chrysogonus. They often knew the text details really thoroughly, though not many forged a firm link between this and the '*cui bono*' argument. Relatively few candidates considered the attack on Erucius. A few did consider that Cicero had other defence strategies, such as arousing emotion for Sextus Roscius in his loss and his fear of execution in the interesting way the Romans invented for parricides (or, as some wrote, 'patricides').

Virgil

Quite a few essays offered a rather pedestrian review of the storyline with a 'nod' towards the 'picture of Turnus'. Most candidates saw Turnus as brave, patriotic, a Homeric hero, and referred competently to places in the narrative which illustrated this. Some saw him as even a 'tragic' hero, though for some of them 'tragic' was just a synonym for 'sad'. Some saw him as naive, some as completely mad, even berserk in places, and not a few read him as a coward hiding behind the skirts of Juturna, Amata, Juno or a combination of the three. Very few really discussed the role of the gods in this, or saw him as the unfortunate plaything or victim of forces beyond his control. There was remarkably little discussion of the reader's attitude to the final scene and his death, beyond criticism of him for having stolen Pallas' baldric (sometimes given a post televisual capital 'B', provoking some doubts as to exactly what, or who, they thought a baldric was).

Tacitus

This question produced some very rewarding answers, with some candidates quite easily able to find examples of the negative side of human nature and behaviour and even some balance between the good and the bad in the people discussed in the text. Those who did not achieve high marks tended to show a less full and broad recall of the details of the narrative, or to have some confusion as to 'who did what' in the storyline.

Ovid

This produced some good, full and well illustrated answers but there were a good number of candidates who did not see that 'trawling' the text for a composite picture of the 'puella' was really what was wanted. The result was that they did not have quite enough detailed recall of the poems to give a full answer. There were signs here of attempts to twist the question into one that candidates had answered already in their work on the text, on Ovid's attitude to women, or to relationships or love, for instance. The reshaping did not often work, when candidates became rather bogged down in the question of whether Ovid's view can be seen at all, or of whether the puella is a literary device not a real person. The decision that that latter point is the case came a little too early in the writing of the essay for some, so that they did not attempt to show knowledge of the text even within the remit of their revision of the question. Poem 5 in particular was mentioned only to say that the girl was first named here, rather than to give any view of her beauty or attractiveness. Some automatically took her holding on to her tunic at face value as genuine reluctance to love, and so an indication of Ovid's brutality. Some confined their discussion to too narrow a range of poems, not mentioning the relationship with others in the household which features widely in the poems prescribed.

Grade Thresholds

Advanced GCE Latin 3818, 7818
January 2009 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
2471-80	Raw	120	93	81	70	59	48	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2491	Raw	90	69	61	53	45	38	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
3818	300	240	210	180	150	120	0
7818	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
3818	48.6	73.0	83.8	89.2	100	100	37
7818	20.0	60.0	80.0	80.0	100	100	5

42 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:

http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html

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

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

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Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553

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