

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/11
Greek Civilisation

General comments

The introduction of a new specification can present a number of different challenges to setters, Examiners, teachers and candidates: new topics and approaches to the material, new styles of questions, new Assessment Objectives and new assessment grids. In this first year of the new specification, it is pleasing to report that the setters/Examiners were much encouraged by candidates' performance on their questions. It is clear that candidates found much to enjoy in the topics they studied, whether it was Socrates' defence, the social messages in Aristophanes' plays, the importance of propaganda to Augustus or the aesthetic qualities of Roman buildings. They wrote with enthusiasm and personal insight about such topics, with some lively and vigorous responses noted at all levels of achievement, even if the quality of English was not always as fluent or sophisticated as one might hope.

The new specification has raised both the profile and the popularity of the essay questions. Many essays were well structured and some showed evidence of planning. In others the quality of written communication, legibility and presentation could be improved. Poor spelling, punctuation and expression can impair the quality of even a well-structured response. Classical names and technical terms were frequently misspelt. Candidates should try to set out their work neatly and clearly. To improve the overall clarity of candidates' work, we should like to encourage candidates to leave space between each answer and start each new complete question on a new page in order to give Examiners sufficient space to write comments and the marks achieved.

This year there also seemed to be many more rubric errors involving answering too many questions or attempting a mix and match approach both to questions and topics. In addition, Examiners felt that some candidates did not have the range of material to answer the questions successfully for the new specification.

To improve the overall performance, candidates need to be advised of the following general points:

- careful reading of the question is required;
- answers should be backed up by detail and supporting evidence;
- arguments should be balanced where appropriate.

There were too few answers to make comments appropriate on Section One: Alexander the Great, Questions 1, 2 and 3, and Section Two: Socrates, Question 5.

Comments on specific questions

SECTION TWO: Socrates

Question 4

- (i) Only a few candidates were able to give accurate answers to the question about who was prosecuting Socrates. Answers ranged from the general 'Athenian people' to names of Greeks from the other Units studied.
- (ii) The majority of candidates knew that Socrates was charged with corrupting the young.
- (iii) Few knew the size of the jury which tried Socrates - a whole range of numbers was given rather than the correct number of 501.
- (iv) Most candidates were able to give a broad general account of the Socratic method, even if they were not always able to use correct terminology such as *dialectic* or *elenchus*.

- (v) Very few candidates recognised the use of analogy in the passage; those who did were able to discuss its use in some detail. Most candidates, however, simply repeated points from their answer to **Question (iv)**.
- (vi) A wide range of answers was offered to this question. Some candidates were able to look at Socrates' cross-examination of Meletus, and use this to show that Socrates was convincing. A few mentioned *daimonion*, but were unsure how this fitted into the argument; Socrates' devotion to the Delphic Oracle was often usefully discussed.

Question 6

A few answers focused a little too generally on Socrates' refusal to save himself at the expense of his principles. References to specific works were limited, with *Crito* featuring most often. Better answers did include mention of Socrates' actions after Arginusae, and resisting the Thirty Tyrants as examples of him abiding by his principles, as well as quoting his attitude at his trial as proof that he refused to compromise. Virtually all the answers agreed that Socrates was a man of high moral principles, but the evidence and discussion varied greatly in quality.

SECTION THREE: Aristophanes

Question 7

- (i) Very few candidates recognised the section of the play from which the passage was taken as the *parabasis*. Most assumed it came from 'the part where the Chorus introduce themselves to the audience'.
- (ii) The majority of the candidates were able to discuss how the Chorus were dressed and could explain the point of the costumes.
- (iii) There were very few good answers to the question about how the Chorus try to rescue Procleon. Most answers were too general and lacking in specific.
- (iv) Few candidates were able to answer the question about social and political messages within the play with any confidence. General points were made, with most candidates concentrating on the comments about the younger generation, and there were few, if any, references being made to the political points.
- (v) Answers to the question about the effectiveness of the Chorus in *Wasps* tended to be general in nature, concentrating on the beginning of the play, and the slapstick humour of the Chorus aiding Procleon's attempts at escape. Few commented on the visual or political aspects of the Chorus, preferring to discuss the Chorus' contribution to the humour in the play.

Question 8

The answers to the question of the contribution of Dionysus to the success of *Frogs* varied in quality. Most were able to make some reference to the part played by Dionysus in the play by describing the various episodes in which he was involved. The answers tended to concentrate on his contribution to the humour in the play, and why candidates tended to find the selected scenes funny. Few candidates commented on his central role in the play, and hardly any mention was made of the political and social significance of his role reversal with Xanthias, and his choice of Aeschylus as the winner of the dramatic contest.

Question 9

Although this question, about which is the funnier of the two plays studied, was not particularly popular, answers showed a variety of opinions, with both plays being found to be funnier. The candidates were able to pick out examples of humour from the plays, even if not always characterising them correctly. Several essays were unbalanced, with almost no discussion of one or either of the plays, which limited the marks available. Some of the better answers included an analysis of the difficulties for a modern audience in understanding aspects of the plays, which limits the appreciation of the humour seen.

SECTION FOUR: Greek Vase Painting

Question 10

- (i) Almost all the candidates identified the artist and dated the pot correctly.
- (ii) Again, almost all the candidates were able to identify two of the three figures, and give the attributes which made the identification possible.
- (iii) Pot B's shape and function were correctly identified by the majority of candidates, as were the features which made it suitable for its purpose.
- (iv) There was a good range of analysis of both pots, with the candidates commenting well on aspects such as composition, narrative and the actual paintings themselves. Most preferred the humorous and delicate approach of the Pan Painter, although the Gorgon Painter also had his supporters.

Question 11

The question about whether candidates preferred black-figure or red-figure pots produced answers which varied significantly in quality. There were some very good discussions of both techniques, with a broad range of pots mentioned, a good appreciation of the positive and negative features of both black-figure and red-figure pots, and with a balanced analysis of why candidates preferred one style over another. Most answers concentrated on the positive aspects of the styles, finding reasons to like one style more than the other, rather than criticising them. Weaker answers were limited by a lack of appropriate examples, with candidates often struggling to find evidence to back up their assertions.

Question 12

A wide range of examples were chosen to illustrate scenes of conflict in answer to this question. As well as the obvious Trojan war vases, the Niobid Painter's calyx krater and pots depicting Heracles' labours were also chosen as examples. Candidates were able to analyse the composition, and to a certain extent, the emotional effect of the vases, but struggled to discuss the nature of the 'opportunities' and 'challenges' which the question demanded. Many answers tended to be simply a list or description of various pots depicting conflict, together with a discussion of the individual pots, rather than approaching the question as a whole.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/12
Greek Civilisation

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- careful reading of the question is required;
- answers should be backed up by detail and supporting evidence;
- arguments should be balanced where appropriate.

Comments on specific questions

SECTION ONE: Alexander

Question 1

- (i) Most candidates mentioned the old and disabled being allowed to return home, and the money they received.
- (ii) Not all candidates were able to offer a full answer to this question. Many simply stated that the men refused to fight and made no mention of their fears that Alexander no longer wanted them and thought that they were useless. Better answers mentioned their ideas about Alexander's opinion of them, and their insults of him.
- (iii) This question was well answered with candidates mentioning details of the promotion of the Persians, and the eventual reconciliation. Many did not discuss the arrest and execution of the ringleaders.
- (iv) Most candidates were able to mention the army Alexander inherited from Philip, the tactics Philip had developed, and Alexander's training at Philip's hands. Better answers also mentioned

Alexander's education and rivalry with Philip. Discussion ranged from simple analysis of what Alexander owed Philip, to more perceptive comments on Alexander's own ability, irrespective of the advantages given to him by Philip.

Question 2

The answers to the question on the influence of Olympias on Alexander tended to concentrate on Olympias' beliefs about Alexander's parentage and ancestry as inspiration for his achievements. Few commented on the relationship between Olympias and Philip, and fewer still on her role in securing him the throne of Macedon. Some candidates considered her influence within the wider context of Alexander's upbringing, balancing the effect she had on him with other factors. There was a tendency to just consider Olympias' positive influences upon her son.

Question 3

In this popular question candidates tended to concentrate on Alexander's military achievements, often skimming over or ignoring the political aspects of his life and career. Those who did tackle his political leadership often produced some perceptive arguments about the policy of fusion, and his use of propaganda, commenting on the lack of success in uniting the two cultures. A few noted that his political success was limited because the Empire collapsed after his death. A not insignificant number of candidates either neglected to address the comparative aspect of the question or left this to the conclusion. Often, the answer consisted of little more than a description of a few battles.

SECTION TWO: Socrates

Question 4

- (i) Most candidates were able to identify the location, although quite a few did not mention the King Archon.
- (ii) Answers mentioned Socrates' trial, but many missed the idea that Euthyphro considered himself an expert on piety.
- (iii) A few candidates were able to comment on the references accurately, but most found it hard, especially when discussing 'The Robe'.
- (iv) The details of Euthyphro's case were known and accurately described by a large majority of the candidates.
- (v) Virtually all the candidates knew that Socrates rejected the definition of holiness because it was an example rather than a definition.
- (vi) Most candidates had a good idea of the different definitions of holiness given in the dialogue. They were able both to state the definition as given, whether by Euthyphro or by Socrates, and analyse the reasons for the rejection of the definition. Some found it hard to recall all the definitions, whilst others were not always able to put them in the right order. In general, candidates had a sound knowledge of the dialogue, and a good grasp of the issues involved.

Question 5

Most candidates knew the general content of the *Apology*, but were not always able to link this accurately to answering the question. Points about Socrates' portrayal in Aristophanes' *Clouds* were made by some, as were references to Socrates' discussion of his lifestyle. Balanced answers noted both these general comments, which take up a major part of the *Apology*, and Socrates' attempts to disprove the specific charges against him in the later part of his defence. Candidates on the whole produced answers with a good factual basis, and some reasoned arguments.

Question 6

Most of the candidates were aware of the views expressed by Socrates about death and the soul. Better answers distinguished between the two, and discussed them separately, including those who were able to detect a change in emphasis from one dialogue to the next. There were, however, a number of candidates who discussed the topic in overall terms, without knowing which points were made in which dialogue, or attributing them incorrectly. The range of detail also varied considerably.

SECTION THREE: Aristophanes

Question 7

- (i) Most candidates recognised the section of the play as the *parabasis* and knew its purpose.
- (ii) Background knowledge of the play was not generally strong and only a handful of candidates could explain the reference to the 'misguided souls'.
- (iii) Most candidates displayed good recall and were able to describe the costume swapping scene, and the reasons why Dionysus and Xanthias swapped the Heracles' outfit.
- (iv) Few candidates were able to answer this question with any confidence. General points were derived from the passage, with some confusion over distinguishing between political and social messages. Responses were often hampered by weak background knowledge.
- (v) Answers to this question tended to concentrate on the humorous aspects of the Chorus in the play. There was generally a sound knowledge of what the Chorus did in the play but many responses would have benefitted from evaluating their actual contribution to the overall impact of the play or of comparing their contribution to that of other elements of the comedy. Distinction was not always made between the two different Choruses, and several candidates hardly mentioned the role of the Chorus in the *agon*. Better answers discussed not only the political messages of the *parabasis*, but even pointed out the implicit message in the costume of the Initiates, and their hymn to Dionysus.

Question 8

Candidates generally had a good idea of the part played by Procleon and his contribution to the plot. Most answers concentrated on Procleon's humorous aspects, discussing his characterisation and his contribution to the physical comedy of the play. Most examples were drawn from the first half of the play, in particular his attempts to escape from the house. Few candidates used many examples from the second half. The tendency was to discuss how he contributes to the humour of the play, with the messages he portrays, such as the old/young divide and the political aspects, not being mentioned by many candidates. Some candidates misread the question and answered it as 'How far does Procleon contribute to the success of *Wasps*? '.

Question 9

Answers to this question showed a variety of opinions, with both plays being found to deliver their messages more forcefully. Candidates were able to pick out examples of messages from the plays, but were not always able to discuss how they were presented. Several essays were unbalanced, with almost no discussion of one or either of the plays, which limited the marks available. Some better answers included an analysis of the difficulties in understanding aspects of the plays, which limited appreciation of the messages for a modern audience. The *parabasis* of both plays featured, but not as much as might be expected.

SECTION FOUR: Greek Vase Painting

Question 10

- (i) The painters of both pots were known and both answers were allowed.
- (ii) Whilst candidates were able to pick out examples of decorative motifs from both pots, they were not always able to comment on the effect.

- (iii) Achilles and Ajax were identified and the techniques used by Exekias were usually well known. Some candidates were able to identify Dionysus and the Maenads, as well as comment on the iconography used by the Amasis Painter.
- (iv) The comparisons between the two pots often concentrated on some very basic points such as the depiction of a god and two heroes or the fact that both pots were painted using black-figure. Better answers commented on the composition of the two scenes, the balance of the arrangement of the figures and the quality of the incision. Candidates found it more difficult to explain why they found one pot more aesthetically pleasing than the other.

Question 11

The question about the gains and losses in the transition from the black-figure to the red-figure technique was very popular. Candidates were able to discuss points concerning the gains in a very sensible fashion. Such points, however, were not always supported with detailed reference to examples of recognisable pots. In addition, candidates needed to discuss the losses made during the transition in order to produce more balanced and rounded responses.

Question 12

The limitations placed on painters by the shapes of the pots was a less popular topic. Some candidates needed to observe the rubric that stated **at least three** different shapes had to be discussed. Answers tended to concentrate on general aspects of vase painting. Those who picked out a particular shape, identified the difficulties a painter faced when decorating it and went on to discuss a specific pot were more successful in producing an effective answer to the question.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/13
Greek Civilisation

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CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/21
Roman Civilisation

Comments on specific questions

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate on Section One: Augustus, Questions 1, 2 and 3.

SECTION TWO: Virgil

Question 4

- (i) Candidates had a general idea about why Dido was 'on fire with love' but all candidates made reference to Venus or Cupid.
- (ii) The candidates generally responded well and sensitively to the question about the simile. Candidates were able to link the arrow with Cupid and the wound that will bring about the deaths of the deer and Dido.
- (iii) Most candidates were able to find appropriate examples showing how Virgil highlights the power of love. Many responses, however, failed to address the second part of the question and some went outside the specified lines.
- (iv) The majority of responses argued that it was extremely difficult to feel any sympathy towards Dido. Very few considered how she was a victim of the gods or how she was treated rather shabbily by Aeneas. The importance of considering the counter argument and of including a range of detailed examples cannot be stressed enough.

Question 5

Some candidates were able to identify heroic traits from either a modern or ancient viewpoint. Others needed to support their points with relevant, detailed examples from the epic.

Question 6

There were some responses which identified a range of valid points, both in favour and against the statement, and supported them with relevant examples. The majority of answers needed to be more precise and specific in their comments and make more reference to the text.

SECTION THREE: Juvenal

Question 7

- (i) Most candidates were able to identify Umbricius as the speaker in the passage. Some thought that Juvenal was the speaker.
- (ii) The first part of the question often caused confusion although there was generally good understanding of what the purple symbolised.
- (iii) The question about how the speaker emphasises his native upbringing was well-answered.
- (iv) Candidates generally demonstrated a good knowledge of the satiric techniques employed by Juvenal and selected relevant examples from the passage. Many would have benefitted from explaining their effect in greater depth.

- (v) Candidates tried very hard to come up with relevant points about Juvenal's opinions concerning the adverse effects foreigners were having on Rome. Comments tended to be a little too general and answers would have been improved by demonstration of a detailed knowledge of the relevant sections of the prescribed satires.

Question 8

There were very few attempts at this question. Answers tended to be hampered by a lack of detailed knowledge of *Satire 10*.

Question 9

Of the few answers which were seen for the question on Roman society, there was often some sort of general comment about what Juvenal considered to have gone wrong in Rome. Answers would have been improved by demonstrating a more detailed knowledge of the prescribed satires.

SECTION FOUR: Roman Architecture

Question 10

- (i) Few correctly identified this type of building as an amphitheatre.
- (ii) Candidates displayed knowledge of who often funded local public buildings but few were able to give valid possible reasons for this.
- (iii) Almost all responses included reference to gladiatorial combats but public executions or beast hunts were rarely mentioned.
- (iv) Candidates showed awareness of the design of an amphitheatre but few were able to explain how its design suited its function.
- (v) A number of responses showed signs of not having read the question closely enough. Some candidates needed to address the 'two different types' and 'entertainment' wording of the question. Not all responses were able to make reference to specific buildings. Stronger responses made valid comparisons of their design, materials used and functions.

Question 11

Many responses seemed not to have used the prompt to help when answering the question and neglected to make 'close reference to different elements' of the Pantheon. There was often some generalised comment about why it was perfect in some very broad and far-reaching way without really addressing the question.

Question 12

There was generally good understanding of the advantages which concrete afforded architects but many responses would have benefitted from showing a detailed knowledge of a range of **specific**, relevant Roman buildings.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/22
Roman Civilisation

Comments on specific questions

SECTION ONE: Augustus

Question 1

- (a) Virtually all the candidates knew that Julia was the daughter of Augustus.
- (b) Candidates were able to name Julia's husbands.
- (c) Most candidates could explain why Gaius and Lucius were unable to succeed Augustus.
- (d) Nearly all candidates knew that Agrippa Postumus was the brother of Gaius and Lucius.
- (e) Details of Julia's activities were generally well known, although details of her punishment were not always clear. Most knew of her exile, but few mentioned Augustus' arrangements for her burial.
- (f) Most candidates knew the arrangements Augustus made for a successor. They were able to discuss the various successors he appointed, although surprisingly few mentioned Marcellus. Julia's role in ensuring the succession was mentioned in most answers. Many candidates found it harder to analyse the reasons why Augustus could not simply name a successor, but more perceptive answers discussed his constitutional position and the restraints this placed upon him.

Question 2

Candidates were able to discuss how Augustus' victories over his enemies restored peace to the Roman Empire, and ensured its survival. Answers included mention of the closing of the Gates of Janus and his rebuilding of Rome. While most candidates agreed that he did deserve the award for saving the state, some were able to distinguish between the physical saving of the city and people, and his destruction of the Republican system of government, arguing that the award was not completely deserved.

Question 3

Candidates had a good knowledge of the differing forms of propaganda used by Augustus, and the effect these had. Discussion of propaganda in obtaining power, such as his assumption of Caesar's name, and his portrayal of his enemies in the civil wars, was mostly clear and accurate, with good comments. However, candidates found it harder to deal with the use of propaganda in keeping power, often citing political moves such as *imperium maius* as examples of propaganda without making a convincing case. Discussion of the use of the arts, such as poetry and sculpture, and religion, was neglected by most candidates, although there were some very good answers which analysed the use of these facets of propaganda.

SECTION TWO: Virgil

Question 4

- (a) Candidates mentioned Juno's role in the Trojan fleet landing on the shores of Libya; Aeolus was not always mentioned.
- (b) Most candidates knew the general details, although the reasons given by Dido for the pyre's construction were not always well known.

- (c) Candidates generally made good reference to the passage and were able to select some appropriate examples of Vergil's use of language. Many responses could have included greater analysis in explaining their effectiveness fully.
- (d) There was some lively discussion on the question of who should be blamed for Dido's death, with many candidates giving detailed points in favour of blaming the gods and Aeneas. More astute responses also considered Anna and Dido herself.

Question 5

Candidates generally had a good awareness of events in the *Aeneid*, with some giving an exceptional range of detail which went beyond the prescribed material. Although some answers were able to produce well-argued and powerful discussions both for Aeneas being a good leader, and against the statement, too many candidates found themselves being side-tracked into a discussion of Aeneas as a **hero**, concentrating on the 'Homeric' and 'Roman' aspects of his heroism, rather than on his qualities as a leader. Many mentioned *pietas*, but were unable to link this into an argument about his leadership. Stronger answers not only kept the focus firmly fixed on his skills as a leader, but also developed a counter argument.

Question 6

There were many candidates who attempted this question and produced some interesting and thought-provoking answers. The best were those which considered a range of examples from the epic and considered both sides of the question from both an ancient and modern perspective. Most candidates were able to discuss both the optimistic aspect of the epic, looking forward to the glorious future of Rome, and the depressing aspects, such as the destruction of Troy and the suffering of, amongst others, Dido. However, although most answers mentioned examples of the more depressing passages in the poem, few candidates were able to produce specific examples of the optimistic tone; this was discussed in very general terms. There were very few mentions of the prophetic passages, although a few candidates did discuss the pageant of heroes as an example of Virgil's positive viewpoint.

SECTION THREE: Juvenal

Question 7

- (a) The majority of candidates were able to identify Rome as the city in the passage.
- (b) Whilst candidates could discuss the point Juvenal was making in using the cited examples, very few were able to explain who Numa and Scipio were.
- (c) Generally, candidates were able to make good use of the passage to select three criticisms Juvenal makes about wealth and many were then able to go on and give a full explanation of their selected criticisms.
- (d) Many answers considered the threat money posed in general terms, but would have benefitted from having a much surer knowledge of the relevant examples concerning wealth from the relevant satires.

Question 8

Many candidates attempted the question on Satire 10 and demonstrated a good understanding of how it differed from Juvenal's earlier satires and were able to make appropriate comparisons. Areas of discussion often included its structure as being clear to follow, its didactic nature, its lack of anger etc. Some responses needed to include greater and detailed reference to the satire in question.

Question 9

Nearly all candidates were able to cite examples of Juvenal's anger. Stronger responses made attempts to explore how Juvenal puts across his anger in the way he writes and choice of example. Many responses would also have benefitted from developing the counter argument more fully and to have considered other ways Juvenal expresses himself, apart from with anger.

SECTION FOUR: Roman Architecture

Question 10

- (a) Candidates were able to identify the Pantheon and explain why it was given this name.
- (b) Many responses neglected to make reference to the inscription on the frieze and what was written on it.
- (c) Most candidates stated that Hadrian was the person who commissioned the building in the illustration. Some did not read the question carefully enough and referred to the original building.
- (d) Some candidates were able to correctly identify the area as the porch but many were unclear about the materials used. Some discussed materials used in the rest of the building.
- (e) Most candidates were able to explore the different ways in which the Pantheon was innovative but many struggled to see how it was similar to other temples of this period.

Question 11

Although this was not a popular question, there were some very interesting responses in which the candidates used the quotation from Vitruvius very wisely to help structure the essay. However, many responses were either hampered by not demonstrating enough knowledge of their chosen buildings or of not considering all parts or sides of the question.

Question 12

The question about the considerations an architect had to bear in mind when designing and constructing an amphitheatre was a popular one. There was some excellent detail about the Colosseum and a range of amphitheatres from Chester, Pompeii, Verona, France and North Africa. To improve performance on this question, candidates needed to address the whole question and not simply describe the amphitheatres studied. Some candidates selected a theatre as their second amphitheatre.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/23
Roman Civilisation

Comments on specific questions

SECTION ONE: Augustus

Question 1

- (a) Virtually all the candidates knew that Julia was the daughter of Augustus.
- (b) Candidates were able to name Julia's husbands.
- (c) Most candidates could explain why Gaius and Lucius were unable to succeed Augustus.
- (d) Nearly all candidates knew that Agrippa Postumus was the brother of Gaius and Lucius.
- (e) Details of Julia's activities were generally well known, although details of her punishment were not always clear. Most knew of her exile, but few mentioned Augustus' arrangements for her burial.
- (f) Most candidates knew the arrangements Augustus made for a successor. They were able to discuss the various successors he appointed, although surprisingly few mentioned Marcellus. Julia's role in ensuring the succession was mentioned in most answers. Many candidates found it harder to analyse the reasons why Augustus could not simply name a successor, but more perceptive answers discussed his constitutional position and the restraints this placed upon him.

Question 2

Candidates were able to discuss how Augustus' victories over his enemies restored peace to the Roman Empire, and ensured its survival. Answers included mention of the closing of the Gates of Janus and his rebuilding of Rome. While most candidates agreed that he did deserve the award for saving the state, some were able to distinguish between the physical saving of the city and people, and his destruction of the Republican system of government, arguing that the award was not completely deserved.

Question 3

Candidates had a good knowledge of the differing forms of propaganda used by Augustus, and the effect these had. Discussion of propaganda in obtaining power, such as his assumption of Caesar's name, and his portrayal of his enemies in the civil wars, was mostly clear and accurate, with good comments. However, candidates found it harder to deal with the use of propaganda in keeping power, often citing political moves such as *imperium maius* as examples of propaganda without making a convincing case. Discussion of the use of the arts, such as poetry and sculpture, and religion, was neglected by most candidates, although there were some very good answers which analysed the use of these facets of propaganda.

SECTION TWO: Virgil

Question 4

- (a) Candidates mentioned Juno's role in the Trojan fleet landing on the shores of Libya; Aeolus was not always mentioned.
- (b) Most candidates knew the general details, although the reasons given by Dido for the pyre's construction were not always well known.

- (c) Candidates generally made good reference to the passage and were able to select some appropriate examples of Vergil's use of language. Many responses could have included greater analysis in explaining their effectiveness fully.
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CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/03

History: Source and Evidence

In this first session for the new Paper 3, candidates in general showed that they understood the format of the paper and were able to cope with the demands of the style of question. There were some interesting and well-constructed answers which engaged well with the material on the paper itself and also used their wider reading to good effect in contextualising the sources they were dealing with.

Many candidates did take the opportunity to plan their work; a very few of these arguably spent too long planning their answer and then struggled to complete the essay adequately in the time allowed. There were also candidates who charged into the essay without planning; some of these would have achieved more if they had made use of the time to structure their thoughts more carefully. The best essays were complete and were brought to an effective conclusion which related clearly to the argument presented in the body of the answer.

More than half of the candidates attempted **Question 1** on Greek history. Generally candidates on both sections seemed to have been thoroughly prepared, though in some cases this led them to adopt a largely narrative approach which could lead them both away from the question and from the passages on the paper.

The best answers addressed the question directly and made clear use of the key terms in presenting a structured response. In some cases, particularly in the Roman question, candidates had a range of points clearly prepared in advance which they worked through with reference to the three main sources studied, but in some cases made little or no use of the passages on the paper. It is important that candidates do heed the rubric on the paper which does direct them towards both the modern scholarship and the two passages from the sources.

In **Question 1**, it was noticeable that some candidates had a very good grasp of the narrative of the period, while others had a much patchier understanding, particularly of events later in the period. Candidates who knew the final outcome of the Peloponnesian War still wrote awkwardly about Sparta's claim to be liberators of Hellas, as they did not take into account the necessity of gaining Persian support in the final stages of the war. The very best candidates tackled the question, and unpicked the problems of 'united opposition'; there were some perceptive comments about the way the different sides were presented in the sources.

There were however some weaknesses over the dating of events, and some essays appeared to be attempts to rework material on the causes of the Peloponnesian War without restructuring the material to suit the question on the paper. A number of candidates offered generalities: they suggested, for example, that cleruchies were important, but did not seem very clear what they were, and no examples were offered. Weaker candidates did confuse the sequence of events (or rather offered no explanation as to why they were tackling events in a particular order). There was a tendency to assume that examples were obvious to the reader and did not need to be spelled out in detail. It is also important for candidates to evaluate the sources they discuss: it was not clear from some of the discussions of Aristophanes that candidates were clear he was a writer of comedies.

Answers to the Roman question generally showed a sound understanding of the sources studied, even if they made relatively limited use of the examples on the paper. It was good to see some detailed accounts of the archaeology of the different regions used to support discussion, but this was not always made particularly relevant to the question set. Candidates were happy to focus on bias in the sources, but did not always keep to the issue of 'opposition to the Romans'.

Some of the candidates included a good deal of generalised discussion of the background of the authors, in some cases conveying a very simplified context for the career of, for example, Julius Caesar. In general weaker candidates relied too much on narrative and did not deal effectively with the key terms of the question.

Most candidates were able to write at reasonable length, and presentation was acceptable. It was good to see some candidates presenting their work via computer, though in some cases, very quick typing can result in an excessively long answer which would benefit from more considered planning.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/04

Classical Literature - Sources and Evidence

As this was the first session in which this paper was available and was of a format very different from anything previously encountered, it was to the credit of the candidates that there were many sound and carefully argued answers.

The time allocations for the paper and the instructions to candidates indicate that they should set aside time for both thinking and planning before committing an answer to paper. There was little evidence of draft planning in the answer books from many candidates, which was a pity. Those candidates who invested time in thinking and a written plan tended to do well as the plan enabled them to maintain the thrust of the argument to a logical conclusion. As ever in exams, length did not necessarily constitute a good score. Candidates should be reminded that clear handwriting and orthography are admirable qualities and that they should avoid hastily coined 'exam room' neologisms.

Another key requirement of the paper is to find, define, and use key terms from the critical passage and, subsequently, to make use of the two classical text passages. This was an area in which there was a variety of response from those who used all three passages very maturely to those who culled a couple of points from the critical passage and did not mention the text passages at all.

In this, the literature-based paper, there is no one right answer though some lines of thought may be more obviously productive and relevant than others. What is sought is a clear line of substantiated argument reaching a logical conclusion produced in the exam room. Answers from different standpoints argued logically and substantiated were credited on their merits.

All answers bar one on this paper were on the question on epic and the nature of gods' behaviour. There was a wide range of answers from those arguing that the gods were 'like a two year old playing with a Lego set' to those finding them, particularly Zeus/Jupiter, to be responsible and under an obligation to Fate/Destiny and not able to do as they pleased. A number of candidates also addressed the final point of the Bowra extract of the gods not being noble or dignified in a human sense. In better answers this led to a discussion of mortality/immortality and, at the other extreme, the idea that since the gods are immortal they cannot be expected to behave in a human way.

It was interesting to note that many candidates felt that the *Odyssey* passage showed Zeus fulfilling an obligation not just submitting to crude blackmail. However, few mentioned that when Thetis intercedes with Zeus for Achilles, Zeus accedes because he owes her a 'favour', nor that Venus get Aeneas' new armour by seducing Vulcan, different sorts of obligation perhaps. Better answers also acknowledged the frivolous nature of the gods 'partying while mortals are dying', and the direct involvement of gods in battle without the risk of dying or suffering the after effects of wounds for eternity. Many recognised that the gods often act for the benefit of mortals or their chosen protégés through self-interest rather than a desire to appear philanthropic.

Many candidates pointed out that the second passage, from the *Aeneid*, showed Jupiter to be the guardian of fate and a much more serious, duty bound, Roman deity. Distinctions were drawn between the gods of Homer and Virgil. There was some mention of a wider context of society and literature.

As there was only one answer on the Nature of Tragedy question, there is very little that can be drawn from it, other than the general points mentioned in this report which apply equally to both topics on the paper.

A successful answer required a mixture of narrative and evaluation. Some answers fell short and did give the impression of having adapted pre-worked material, however well constructed, into the format required for the essay question in the exam room. Conversely, however, when narrative and evaluation were well combined, answers were of an impressive maturity for what is a high level and demanding task.