

**MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2011 question paper
for the guidance of teachers**

9274 CLASSICAL STUDIES

9274/04

Paper 4 (Classical Literature – Sources and Evidence),
maximum raw mark 50

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes must be read in conjunction with the question papers and the report on the examination.

- Cambridge will not enter into discussions or correspondence in connection with these mark schemes.

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- 1 Explore critically how essential unity of plot is to a well-constructed tragedy. In your answer you should consider the passage above and your wider reading of tragedy, as well as the two passages below.

General:

Any critical exploration as an answer to a Paper 4 question will necessarily encompass differing views, knowledge and argument. Thus the mark scheme for these questions cannot and should not be prescriptive.

Candidates are being encouraged to explore, in the exam room, a theme that they will have studied. Engagement with the question as set (in the exam room) may make for limitations in answers but this is preferable to an approach that endeavours to mould pre-worked materials of a not too dissimilar nature from the demands of the actual question.

Examiners are encouraged to constantly refresh their awareness of the question so as not to be carried away by the flow of an argument which may not be absolutely to the point. *Candidates must address the question set and reach an overall judgement, but no set answer is expected. The question can be approached in various ways and what matters is not the conclusions reached but the quality and breadth of the interpretation and evaluation of the texts offered by an answer.*

Successful answers will need to make use of all three passages, draw conclusions and arrive at summative decisions.

Specific:

The two passages given are from the end and the beginning of plays, and should therefore encourage candidates to consider how plays move towards their endings and/or develop from their openings, and whether the plays studied then display a 'unity of plot' in this regard.

The passage from the *Agamemnon* describes the culmination of the play's dramatic action, namely the murder of Agamemnon. That from the *OT* is the prompt for the actions taken by Oedipus that lead to his discovery of his true identity in the play, and so again is tied closely to the central dramatic action of the play. Both passages, therefore, can be argued to show that the plays have a tight formal unity, with beginnings that lead clearly to later actions, and endings which are natural consequences of those actions. Candidates may be expected to compare the beginnings and endings of other plays, perhaps most obviously beginning with the beginning of the *Agamemnon* and the ending of the *OT*. Agamemnon's return provides the opportunity for his murder, and the action of the play is entirely devoted to accomplishing this; the play closes with the completion of this action and the triumph of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. The appeal to Oedipus leads to the investigation into the source of the plague, the murderer of Laius, and thus leads inexorably to Oedipus' discovery; the play closes with his actions in response to this discovery. In the other prescribed plays, Seneca's *Oedipus* follows a similar narrative arc to Sophocles'; Medea's actions lead directly from Jason's recent abandonment of her, and the play closes with the accomplishment of her revenge upon him. Candidates should therefore be able to illustrate fairly comprehensively that there does appear to be some formal narrative unity to all four plays. (Some candidates may find slight differences between Sophocles and Seneca; alternatively, they may simply observe that Seneca follows Sophocles so closely in terms of overall plot that there is little distinction to be made in this discussion.)

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The opening extract from Aristotle also mentions the middles of plays, suggesting that these too should be directly connected with the beginnings and endings. Candidates should therefore also explore what happens between the openings and closings in order to achieve higher mark bands. Ideally they will examine how each episode, at least in the two plays quoted, develops and moves on the action; this should be possible in at least a broader way with the other two prescribed plays. It may prove fairly straightforward to suggest how the actions of Jocasta, Creon and Tiresias move on the action in the *OT*; more difficult but still requiring discussion would be the contributions to the action of, say, Cassandra in the *Agamemnon*. In the *Medea*, the appearance of Aegeus is integral to the action, not only in enabling Medea to escape, but in suggesting the murder of the children to her; there is, more broadly, a clearly marked stage in the development of her plan in each episode.

The better candidates, however, will also pick out the details in the two quoted passages which appear to contradict Aristotle's description. The action of the *OT* and *Medea* occurs in response to an event just prior to the beginning of each play, which is only reasonable; but the *OT* is rooted, of course, in events far longer ago, while the earlier relationship between Jason and Medea is of great relevance in the *Medea*, and is explicitly referred to in the Nurse's prologue. Candidates may well be able to illustrate effectively how and where these earlier events are incorporated into the plot, while the plays still maintain a formal, self-contained unity from beginning to end. Both of these plays make reference to future events, too, and some consideration of how this affects unity should be rewarded; Aristotle is most open to challenge on his assertion that an end "is not itself followed by anything".. The *Agamemnon* provides greater difficulty: the play presents multiple causes and origins of the action taking place on (or off) stage, and that mentioned by Aegisthus in the quoted passage far precedes the play; it also makes frequent reference to future consequences that are nowhere near as straightforward and clear-cut as those looked forward to in the *OT* and *Medea*. These multiple causes and consequences should be clearly known; the future developments in the story may certainly be explained by this play's status as the first in a trilogy (candidates should recognise that true trilogies were markedly unusual, and should certainly avoid classifying the *OT* as part of such); but if the individual play is to be regarded as having unity, then good candidates will need at least to attempt some engagement with the contradiction this presents, as well as with how it manages so complex a web of causation while still presenting a focused and coherent action from the news of Agamemnon's approach, through his actual arrival, to his death.

Some candidates may reasonably interpret the passage from the end of the *Agamemnon* as being the middle of a true trilogy, and respond to it accordingly. They should not lose sight of the fact that it is a discrete play, albeit one intended to be performed in sequence, and that this is an *ending*, if not *the end*. The fact that they are only required to study this play from the trilogy should mean that they are aware of this. But so long as they do not stretch too far the point that this may in some sense be viewed as a point of transition, leeway can be given here.

Candidates may draw any sensible conclusions provided that these are supported with critical reference to the texts.

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Gods and heroes: the importance of epic.

- 2 Explore critically Bowra's view of the nature of the gods' behaviour. In your answer you should make use of your wider reading as well as the two passages below:

General:

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Candidates are being encouraged to explore, in the exam room, a theme that they will have studied. Engagement with the question as set (in the exam room) may make for limitations in answers but this is preferable to an approach that endeavours to mould pre-worked materials of a not too dissimilar nature from the demands of the actual question.

Examiners are encouraged to constantly refresh their awareness of the question so as not to be carried away by the flow of an argument which may not be absolutely to the point. Candidates must address the question set and reach an overall judgement, but no set answer is expected. The question can be approached in various ways and what matters is not the conclusions reached but the quality and breadth of the interpretation and evaluation of the texts offered by an answer.

Successful answers will need to make use of all three passages, draw conclusions and arrive at summative decisions.

Specific:

Any successful exploration of this type of question in Paper 4 will require the candidate to define their argument from the critical comment and make good use of the key words and phrases in the light of the passages and their wider reading. In this passage key words and phrases are: free to do what they please, without responsibility and obligations, the contrast between power and magnificence and not noble or dignified.

Using the two passages as a starting point will allow candidates to identify a certain childishness in the behaviour of Hyperion. It could be argued that he is behaving in a way that Greeks would have understood in demanding redress and looking to Zeus to fulfil his obligations as leader of the gods, except that his idea of repayment is the death of the men not a financial settlement. Nonetheless, Zeus is given no room for manoeuvre – either he accedes to the sun god's demands or there will be no more sunlight above ground. The fact that Zeus accedes without demur seems also to reinforce the view expressed by Bowra. Zeus does not attempt to negotiate (as he does with Poseidon over the fate of the Phaeacian sailors) but capitulates. He might have offered mitigating circumstances – the gods had trapped them on the island, their food had run out and after thirty days they were hungry and so decided to take their chance. Better to die with a full belly than an empty one! Other examples of similarly childish behaviour may be cited. From this, candidates might argue that this does show gods behaving in a way that is neither noble nor dignified; that their attitude towards mortals is to treat them as little better than pawns in a game, often enjoying themselves while mortals suffer.

The extract from the *Aeneid*, which follows the debate between Venus and Juno over what is to become of Aeneas and his Trojans, does give a different picture of the Father of the gods. While it is clear that there is to be no favouritism, it is also true that Jupiter is going to be impartial and remain as the guardian of Fate. He is also here rebuking the gods, and Juno in particular, for not adhering to his initial decree of peace between Trojan and Italian. Candidates may argue that this shows a sense of duty and moral obligation towards mortals and Fate and that, by extension, the

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gods are bound by Fate. That he swears an oath by the Styx shows the level of intensity in his pronouncement. In this way, candidates might argue that Jupiter can be seen as a very 'imperial' figure aware of his responsibilities and obligations.

Candidates should be able to advance examples of the gods not being aware of what is going on among the mortals – thus 'free from care' - Jupiter's pronouncement here is reactive not proactive; Jupiter has no idea what is going on in Carthage until Iarbas prays to him; when Zeus feels a sense of sorrow for Hektor, in the *Iliad*, because Hektor sacrificed to him so copiously, he is quickly rebuked by Apollo, showing perhaps that mortal feelings are not to be admired in a god; do Calypso and Circe see Odysseus as anything more than a 'sex toy'? Does Athena feel any sort of responsibility for Odysseus other than that of wanting to get him home thus showing that he is the cleverest of mortals whilst she is the cleverest of the immortals. She is content to make him suffer on several occasions. Another example that might be cited might be that of Venus' first appearance to her son in book 1 of the *Aeneid*, disguised as a Spartan huntress, which leads to Aeneas' exasperation that she never treats him as a mother should – while she is floating off carefree to Paphos.

Candidates might give many examples of power and magnificence: thunderbolts; rescuing mortals from battles; intervening in combats between mortals, as well as more mundane examples of undignified behaviour – the story of Ares and Aphrodite (the only example of mortal marital infidelity is the one that brings about the Trojan War – with serious consequences – yet the gods treat the affair between Ares and Aphrodite as inconsequential and Hephaestus' outrage as a laughing matter) or Hephaestus breaking the tension between the gods by making them laugh at him.

If candidates follow the quotation to the end they may decide to address the idea of 'noble or dignified in a human sense'. Examples of this sort of behaviour abound in the epics from facing up to the demands made on leaders by the structure of their society and the reality of death to completing a mission and confronting exceptional challenges. Candidates may be tempted to suggest that, in doing these and similar things, mortals behave more like the way they expect the gods to behave than the way the gods actually do behave. This may lead to a discussion of the wider context of the societies which the epics reflect.

Candidates are also expected to discuss further examples drawn from the range of the prescribed texts. It is to be hoped that some candidates may offer examples and consider ideas from their wider reading beyond the prescription.

Candidates may draw any sensible conclusions provided that they are supported with critical reference to the texts.