

# CLASSICAL GREEK

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Paper 9787/01  
Verse Literature

## General Comments

The standard overall was very high. It was clear that the majority of the candidates knew their texts extremely well and were able to write about them with some sophistication. They were able to do this both in their detailed comment on passages and in essays (where an extraordinary amount of relevant detail was recalled by candidates, though often with admirable concision).

Of the centres, all but one chose the tragedy option. All the candidates chose the Unseen Literary Criticism option rather than the Theme essay. The other commentary and translation questions were well handled for the most part. The unseen literary criticism was mainly well answered, especially part (a). Not all the candidates got to grips with the shocking nature of the metaphors in their answers to part (b).

## Question Number

### Question 1

- (i) Not always accurately answered..
- (ii) The translation was well done.
- (iii) This was fairly well answered. Most picked up on some ambiguity (filial piety but eagerness for glory, and so on).
- (iv) Mainly well answered. *pikron* noticed and analysed well, as was the army crowding Neoptolemus as he arrives. Then candidates dealt well with the change of tone, specifically in relation to loos of arms and father.

### Question 2

- (i) Candidates grasped clearly that Philoctetes is shocked and angry at Odysseus, and were able to refer to the text appropriately to back up their points.
- (ii) Again, candidates understood the passage well, especially how Neoptolemus in these lines is less eager than Philoctetes to get moving. They were also able to analyse Neoptolemus' hesitation.
- (iii) Well translated.

### Question 3 and 4

The one candidate answered both questions well, showing attention to detail, well-organised answers and accurate translation.

### Question 5

There were some good and some reasonable answers here. One might have expected a little more discussion of what 'break' actually means. At the same time, candidates clearly had good knowledge of their text and, for the most part, wrote detailed and thoughtful answers. Few seemed to see that this was a question about the nature of tragic heroism. Closer focus on theme texts will help candidates pick out the themes in questions.

### Question 6

There were some good, well organised essays in answer to this question, but most answers were better on the compelling characters than the unsatisfactory plot. This was mainly because few candidates were prepared to define plot, preferring to take the term's meaning as self-evident. Still, there were some answers that wrote well about the peculiarities of the plot of the play, with some candidates making good comparisons with other tragedies. On occasion, there was even mention of Aristotle's *Poetics*.

Homer essay

This essay was well answered by the candidate showing detailed knowledge of the set text and good organisation. It was extremely well written, with many thoughtful and interesting points.

### Question 9

- (i) Well answered: most candidates noted the opening exclamation, the listing of sensory perceptions, the mental turbulence connoted by the wave metaphor, the further metaphor of the ship. More could have been made of 'half-ruined' and the corpses as neighbours.
- (ii) Fairly well answered with some thorough consideration of Heracles as someone who has just unwittingly murdered his own family. Some were able to point to the explicit vocabulary of abandonment and loss. A few stronger answers invoked Heracles' status as the pre-eminent Greek hero, and contrasted that status with his current predicament.

Candidates are increasingly seeing that, just because they are studying poetry for this paper, they do not need to concentrate solely on the way poetry uses language to the exclusion of what the poetry is actually saying. On occasion still too much attention was paid to sound effects and position of words.

# CLASSICAL GREEK

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Paper 9787/02  
Prose Literature

## Key Messages

The candidates again performed well on this paper. Most Centres chose to study Thucydides VII, but some Centres did study Plato's *Phaedo*. There was plenty of evidence of good teaching of both texts. The general level of the scripts was good, although there was a wider range of marks than last year.

## General Comments

Most Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the longer passages of Greek text for both Thucydides and Plato. The standard of translation of the set texts was good for both authors. Answers to the literary questions were usually good and I was pleased with the detailed reference to the text. The best answers responded well to the specific question with sophisticated analysis. Essay questions were usually well done and candidates showed sound understanding of the texts. The strongest candidates showed evidence of detailed study of the texts and effective planning in their essays. Weaker candidates sometimes appeared short of time. Effective time management is very important for this paper.

I was delighted that they were a number of D1 performances on this paper and I congratulate candidates and teachers for the high standard of work produced.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### *Section A*

#### Question 1

- (i) Translations were generally accurate.
- (ii) Candidates answered this question well, covering the points listed in the mark scheme. Most candidates could discuss how Thucydides made Nicias' words appropriate to the serious situation. His tone is encouraging, but sincere and realistic. The best candidates pointed out that Nicias' speech is rather downbeat for a general trying to rouse his men before battle, but this is consistent with Thucydides' portrayal of Nicias' character.
- (iii) Most candidates understood that Nicias stressed that the changes of tactics were the result of discussion with steersmen from the triremes and that Nicias talked about difficulties from earlier battles, such as the narrowness of the harbour. The best candidates referred to Nicias's phrase "a land battle at sea" and quoted the relevant Greek phrase from the text.

#### Question 2

- (i) Candidates again demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of this passage. The best candidates gave a detailed explanation of how Thucydides stresses the reversal of fortune experienced by the Athenians and referred to the Greek text in detail. They described how Thucydides emphasises that the Athenians had begun the Sicilian expedition with great hope, but that now their city was in great danger. Good candidates also focused on specific detail from the passage, such as the Athenian sadness because the dead were left unburied and that the fact that they had to leave behind wounded or ill companions caused them even more grief. Strong candidates also pointed out significant grammatical features, such as Thucydides' repeated use of comparatives to create pathos.

- (ii) Again most candidates answered this question well. There was a lot of relevant detail in the passage and this meant that most candidates had plenty to say. The best candidates analysed how Thucydides engages the sympathy of his readers by describing the prayers and lamentations of Athenian soldiers who were left behind by the retreating army. They also discussed specific detail, such as the attempts of the wounded to cling on to the necks of their tent comrades. Strong candidates also explained the effect of Thucydides' comparison of the retreating force to the population of a substantial city.
- (iii) Again, translations were generally accurate.

### Question 3

- (i) Candidates generally showed a good understanding of the passage. The strongest candidates pointed out that Socrates does ask leading questions and he steers Simmias' responses here. They also discussed how Simmias' responses echo Socrates' language. Weaker candidates tended to focus on discussing the passage in general terms rather than answering the specific question posed.
- (ii) This translation was well done.
- (iii) This question proved surprisingly challenging. Candidates could generally summarise what Socrates says in the passage, but some found it hard to relate this to Socrates' overall argument. Only the best candidates discussed how Socrates is discrediting the idea of searching for truth through the bodily senses and few pointed out that Socrates is going to argue that it is only when the soul is free from the hindrance of the body that the philosopher will have any chance of true understanding.

### Question 4

- (i) This was another of the more challenging questions. Weaker candidates wrote answers that did not show enough understanding of the passage. The strongest candidates could demonstrate detailed knowledge of the text and answer the specific question. They discussed Plato's use of the circle simile to explain the two processes.
- (ii) Most candidates answered this question well. They referred to Plato's frequent use of pairs of opposites and unusual vocabulary. Most candidates effectively explained Plato's references to Endymion and Anaxagoras.
- (iii) Again, translations were generally accurate.

### Question 5

This was the more popular of the two essay questions on Thucydides VII. Candidates normally scored high marks for AO1 by demonstrating relevant knowledge and understanding of the Thucydides VII text. Most candidates showed detailed knowledge of Nicias and Gylippus' speeches and a good understanding of their role in Thucydides' narrative.

There was a wider range of marks for AO3. Good candidates effectively analysed the differences between Thucydides' presentations of Nicias and Gylippus. They showed how Gylippus is described as an effective and decisive commander, while Nicias comes over as an honourable citizen, but an ineffective general. Some candidates compared Nicias to a figure from Greek tragedy.

### Question 6

A few candidates attempted this question. Most of them scored well for AO1 by showing relevant and detailed knowledge of the text. They discussed Thucydides' description of the Athenian naval defeat in the Great Harbour and the desperate attempts of the Athenians to retreat by land. They also covered the executions of Demosthenes and Nicias and the appalling conditions of the Athenian prisoners in the Syracusan stone quarries. Some candidates found it harder to achieve good marks for AO3. However, the best candidates responded well to the specific question and they discussed the variations in Thucydides' narrative. They also analysed how Thucydides focused on Nicias as an individual and compared this to his description of the suffering of ordinary Athenians.

### Question 7

A few candidates attempted this question. Most scored well on AO1 and good candidates discussed Plato's argument that philosophers should show courage when facing death as their priority will be to free the soul from the body. The strongest candidates scored well on AO 3 by considering how effectively the Phaedo portrays Socrates as the ideal philosopher and how Plato emphasises his personal courage. They also analysed the ending of the Phaedo and discussed the effect of Socrates' personal composure in the face of death.

### Question 8

This was the more popular question on Plato's Phaedo. Most candidates scored well for AO1. Good candidates could effectively summarise both the argument from recollection and the argument from opposites and the strongest candidates also considered the responses of Simmias and Cebes. Candidates did find it harder to compare the arguments; however the strongest candidates did this successfully. The best candidates discussed the effectiveness of Plato's use of metaphor and similes in the argument from opposites and the role of the theory of forms in the argument from recollection

# CLASSICAL GREEK

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Paper 9787/03  
Unseen Translation

## Key Messages

Most candidates produced accurate and fluent translations for both passages. They demonstrated good knowledge of vocabulary and a sound understanding of grammar. There were many excellent candidates and they appeared to have been well prepared.

## General Comments

It was pleasing that candidates coped well with translating different authors this year. Both passages produced a decent range of marks. The best responses produced almost flawless translations, but even weaker responses produced respectable work. Candidates are to be encouraged to work hard on learning the principal parts of important verbs

## Comments on Specific Questions

### Question 1

The overall standard was high, but there were a few challenging sections to differentiate between the stronger candidates. The best translations were very good indeed.

qhrw̄si de\ l̄ndoi \. epebiken: most candidates found the first section of this passage reasonably straightforward and translated this section accurately. A few candidates misunderstood epiken and epebiken.

a) l̄a\topon ... epauli sasqai: again most candidates translated this section well. The main difficulty here was correct translation of ōson and epauli sasqai.

entauqa ... th̄h̄ taf̄ron: the main difficulties in this section were the correct translation of katasth̄sant̄ej and qhl̄ ew̄n. Some of the weakest responses surprisingly struggled with the numbers.

oi(de)aḡrioi ... toīj̄ taufoij: a number of candidates struggled with toīj̄ oīkoum̄hoij. Only the best responses worked out the meaning of planw̄tai. Another challenge here was to work out that toīj̄ taufoij was dative because it was dependent on eport̄noi.

epeidañ ouñ ... pefragm̄on: some candidates struggled to translate t̄s̄on correctly. Weaker responses struggled with the phrase droh̄īnt̄ai.

oi(de)aq̄r̄wpoi ... ekont̄ai ājei=on: caught out some candidates. Weaker responses did not translate ekont̄ai correctly.

oi(de)akous̄ant̄ej ... epi\tolefoj: many candidates struggled with the difficult phrase epibaīhousi tw̄ kratist̄wn te toñ qum̄h̄ kai\xeiroh̄q̄st̄af̄wn.

e) asant̄ej de\ ... t̄=dīȳ ei doul wqh̄ai: the two Aorist passive infinitives here created a challenge for a number of candidates.

## Question 2

Candidates seemed to find this passage a little more difficult. There was a slightly wider range of marks this year, but many candidates did very well indeed. Most candidates did well on the scansion.

- (a) πῶς δ' ... μὴ σφαλῆ ποτε: candidates generally made a good start to the passage. The main difficulty in this section for candidates was to realise that εὐτυχῆ was accusative. The phrase μὴ σφαλῆ ποτε proved challenging for a number of candidates.

ἐμοὶ γὰρ ... δοῦλον ἴσχουσιν βίον: candidates needed to realise that ὁρώση agreed with ἐμοὶ. Some candidates found the relative clause in line 8 quite difficult to translate, while others struggled with the phrase ἐξ ἐλευθέρων ἴσως ἀνδρῶν.

ὦ Ζεῦ τροπαῖε ... τάσδ' ὀρωμένη: lines 10-11 were quite challenging and a number of candidates struggled with the correct translation of χωρήσαντά. Another phrase which caused difficulties was τῆσδέ γε ζώσης ἔτι. Some candidates did not realise that ὀρωμένη was a middle and transitive participle.

ὦ δυστάλαινα ... γενναία δέ τις: some candidates struggled to produce an idiomatic translation of νεανίδων. Another challenging phrase was πάντων ἄπειρος τῶνδε.

Λίχα ... φιλύσας πατήρ: most candidates finished the translation well. The main challenge in this section was to produce a good translation of the genitive τίνοσ.

- (b) The scansion was generally done well and candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of the technique for scanning Greek verse.

# CLASSICAL GREEK

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Paper 9787/04

Prose Composition or Comprehension

## General Comments

The standard was extremely high, if not quite as high as last year. The best compositions displayed excellent grammatical knowledge, an awareness of how to subordinate and to use appropriate connectives. There was some choice vocabulary, even in those compositions with a slightly lower score; there was also on occasion some ingenious recasting.

## Section A

This was well done, as a rule.

- First sentence      Something of a challenge, this: a few candidates were not able to translate 'outside' correctly, but most were able to translate the indirect command correctly. There were some good – and some less successful – attempts to translate the conditional within the indirect command. On the other hand, most handled the relative clause well, with some using appropriate participial phrasing.
- Second sentence    The opening subordinate clause caused some problems, but a few managed some extremely accurate and sometimes stylish translation. Quite a few candidates saw an opportunity in this sentence for a genitive absolute: if they managed the accident correctly, they were duly rewarded.
- Third sentence     There was some good vocabulary for 'denied' and also for 'claiming'. The indirect statement was generally handled well. 'Merely' was sometimes ignored but was also well translated by some. The conditional clause was recast by some – perfectly acceptably – as a genitive absolute.
- Fourth sentence    Some good connectives used here, and some very clever recasting of 'which of the two sides'.
- Fifth sentence     There were some good translations of 'at any rate', but few could translate 'as soon as'. Otherwise, this sentence was well translated.
- Final sentence     Good connection, again, but 'bad faith' was something of a challenge: attempts to translate it ranged from the ingenious to the less convincing. 'hatred' caused some problems, as did 'between'.

## Section B

Only two candidates took this option. Most of the comprehension questions were answered (mainly) accurately. Of the grammatical questions, the following were answered incorrectly:

- ix. b      Aorist passive participle incorrectly identified;  
ix. d      Causal participle: perhaps not understood?
- x. a.      ndefinite construction not clearly understood.
- xi. b.     *onta* – case identified correctly but not why.



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Candidates clearly had plenty of time to complete the paper. Some of those who attempted the prose composition had written out several versions (as last year).

Prose composition remains an excellent way to differentiate candidates: the best displayed an admirably wide-ranging Greek vocabulary, as well as sound grammatical knowledge. To do this paper very well – as a number of candidates did – shows that you really know your Greek.