

CLASSICAL GREEK

Paper 9787/01
Verse Literature

Key Messages

- Most candidates chose the tragedy rather than the Homer option, but, whichever was chosen, it was clear that the candidates knew their set text well.
- While there were some very good answers, some responses demonstrated less-developed literary criticism.

General Comments

Candidates' knowledge of Greek – and of tragic and epic conventions – was impressive. Answers could be improved if the critical approaches used for commentary questions were also used on the Unseen Literary Criticism.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

- (i) Accurately translated.
- (ii) Well answered. Candidates were very astute about the friend/enemy polarity, as well as about the sarcasm of *sophos* in line 6. They were also good on the juxtaposition of *hekouses kou bia* in line 9. After that, the distinctive experience of the Trojans was well analysed.
- (iii) Again, this was well answered. While it was not necessary to contrast the language of the earlier section with this section, most candidates did do just that – and well.

Question 2

- (i) While there were some good answers here, some candidates needed to analyse the different registers employed by Hecuba in these lines. The opening prayer was often discussed accurately in some terms but could have been contrasted with the much more down-to-earth Hecuba of lines 7-11 to better effect.
- (ii) Helen's difficult position was not subtly understood, nor how her language related to that position. Menelaus was better understood.
- (iii) Translated well.

Question 3

- (i) Well answered: the oath and its force were well understood, as was Achilles' extended promise of protection in lines 3 – 6.
- (ii) Well translated.
- (iii) Very well answered: anger, darkness, blazing eyes etc.
- (iv) Well answered. Agamemnon's arrogance was well and specifically observed.

Question 4

- (i) Most candidates answered this well: Thetis' tears and maternal feelings were well commented on, as was her characterization of Achilles in line 5.
- (ii) Well translated.
- (iii) A question candidates found intriguing. The best answers saw that this showed Achilles in rather a distinctive light.
- (iv) Most candidates were able to observe that the tone changes markedly. There is organization, efficiency and co-operation. Most were able to comment on the linguistic distinctiveness of especially lines 24-27, and on the piety of Odysseus' prayer.

Question 5

Few candidates answered this question, but, those that did, completed the essay well. No candidate wrote too generally.

Question 6

This essay was more popular. There were some very good answers and whilst many observed that Hecuba was on stage throughout, this aspect could have been developed. The best answers commented on the various inconsistencies in the way Hecuba is presented.

Question 7

There were a few answers here. When good, they understood how Iliad 1 introduces the main players of the whole poem economically and effectively, but also how one could see Agamemnon's and Achilles' dispute as an episode in itself.

Question 8

There were a few answers here. Most attempted to answer the question with reference to the heroism or leadership of the two characters, which worked well.

Question 9

Even though there were some very good answers, some responses demonstrated less-developed GCSE-style literary criticism.

Question 10-17

Insufficient candidates attempted these questions for a report to be produced.

CLASSICAL GREEK

Paper 9787/02
Prose Literature

Key Messages

Most candidates performed very well on this paper. Translation of the set text was nearly always accurate, while the answers to the literary questions were usually detailed and thoughtful. Candidates were equally divided between Thucydides II and Plato's Phaedo and the quality of answers was even for both authors.

General Comments

Candidates seemed to have good understanding of the passages tested in the questions. The standard of translation of the set texts was consistently high. For the literary questions most candidates showed that they grasped the meaning of the passages in detail and they were able to demonstrate a sound understanding of Plato's and Thucydides' literary style. The strongest candidates used detailed quotation from the passages to give evidence for their opinions. They also demonstrated that they understood what these quotations meant and they used reference to the passage to develop effective answers.

Essay questions were usually well done and candidates demonstrated a detailed knowledge of much of the prescribed texts. There was often evidence of effective planning and preparation. For Thucydides, **Question 5** was more popular than **Question 6**. For Plato, **Questions 7** and **8** were chosen by a similar number of candidates.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

- (i) Candidates answered this question well, covering the points listed in the mark scheme. Most answers demonstrated an understanding that the speech is carefully structured and highly rhetorical. The best candidates explained in detail how Thucydides represents Pericles as using a number of different contrasts to emphasise his points. Most candidates used quotation effectively to answer this question: e.g. παράδειγμα δὲ μᾶλλον ... ἢ μιμούμενοι ἑτέρους, μὴ ἐς ὀλίγους ἀλλ' ἐς πλείονας, ἀπὸ μέρους ... ἢ ἀπ' ἀρετῆς etc.
- (ii) Translations were generally accurate.
- (iii) Most candidates explained how Pericles uses a patriotic tone to describe the wealth of Athens in these lines. Only the strongest candidates showed how Pericles' discussion of the variety of recreation in Athens provides a striking contrast with life in Sparta.

Question 2

- (i) Most candidates understood this passage well and found plenty of material to discuss. Most answers explained how Thucydides uses graphic and vivid description of the suffering of the Athenians during the plague; e.g. νεκροὶ ἐπ' ἀλλήλοις ἀποθνήσκοντες ἔκειντο, περὶ τὰς κρήνας ἀπάσας ἡμιθνήτες τοῦ ὕδατος ἐπιθυμία, etc. The strongest candidates explained how Thucydides' narrative becomes more and more horrifying as he explains how normal social traditions, such as burial rites, broke down due to the disaster of the plague.
- (ii) This was a challenging passage for translation and it differentiated effectively between stronger and weaker candidates. The strongest candidates translated this passage accurately.
- (iii) Good answers to this question often focused on how Thucydides discusses the rapid changes of fortune that happened during the plague and how this led to increased lawlessness in Athens. Strong candidates discussed Thucydides' use of antithesis when he describes how the rich frequently died suddenly and that those who had been poor took over their property.

Question 3

- (i) Most translations of this passage were accurate and fluent.
- (ii) Most candidates could find plenty of examples of forceful language in the extract. They discussed Socrates' provocative statement that the real activity of philosophers is dying and being dead. Quotations from the Greek text were usually relevant and accurate and candidates focused effectively on the most important words and phrases; ὀρθῶς ἀπτόμενοι φιλοσοφίας, ἀποθνήσκειν τε καὶ τεθνάναι, ἄτοπον δήπου ἂν εἶη etc.
- (iii) Most candidates answered this question well and some answers were particularly impressive. They discussed Plato's use of humour in the passage and they demonstrated a sound understanding of Simmias' points. The best answers explained how Simmias feels that it is ironic that most people would agree that philosophers are as good as dead/want to die. Good candidates also explained the change in tone when Socrates responds by saying that the ordinary people completely misunderstand in what sense philosophers are worthy of death. Again, there was good use of quotation from the passage: οὐ πάνυ γέ με νυνδὴ γελασεῖοντα ἐποίησας γελάσαι, ὅτι τῶ ὄντι οἱ φιλοσοφοῦντες θανατῶσι, λέληθεν γὰρ αὐτοὺς ἦ τε θανατῶσι etc.

Question 4

- (i) Most candidates showed good understanding of Plato's use of dialogue in their answers. They summarised the argument effectively and pointed out the differences between Socrates and Simmias. They explained that Socrates is portrayed as authoritative and logical and that this impression is heightened by Simmias' enthusiastic responses. The best answers pointed out that Simmias accepts Socrates' points without questioning important assumptions, even though Socrates makes some sweeping conclusions. Most answers quoted effectively from the extract: φῶμεν μέντοι νῆ Δί', ἔφη ὁ Σιμμίας, οὐδεπώποτε γε, ὦ Σώκρατες etc.
- (ii) Translations of this passage were accurate and clear.
- (iii) Most candidates explained clearly how Plato thinks that objects perceived as equal fall short of absolute equality. The best candidates discussed the role this example plays in the recollection argument in some detail; e.g. that Plato argues that objects we perceive make us think about absolute qualities (forms) that we could only have learned about before birth. If we learn about qualities, such as absolute equality, before being born, this would prove that the soul could exist outside the body and give us good reason to believe that the soul is immortal.

Question 5

This was the more popular of the two Thucydides essays and most candidates had prepared their answers well. Most candidates showed a detailed understanding of Pericles' funeral speech, but not many discussed Thucydides' account of Pericles' naval expedition against the Peloponnese or his later speech to the Athenian assembly. The best answers discussed whether Thucydides' horrifying description of the effects of the plague undermines his apparently positive picture of Pericles. They also discussed whether Thucydides' verdict on Pericles' career is justified from the preceding narrative.

Question 6

Answers to this question tended to be weaker than those for **Question 5**. Candidates did discuss Thucydides' description of Pericles' funeral speech and his account of the plague, but their analysis was quite straightforward. Only the strongest answers considered the influence of Greek tragedy on Thucydides and it was a shame that more candidates did not make a comparison with Homer or the Greek medical writers.

Question 7

Both Plato essays proved equally popular with candidates. Most answers to this question demonstrated detailed knowledge of the different arguments for immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo*. The best answers also discussed Plato's rejection of the possibility of a philosopher gaining true knowledge through the body. Most candidates were able to evaluate the different arguments used by Socrates and there was plenty of interesting discussion of Socrates' different methods of persuasion. Some good answers also discussed the force of Cebes' objection that Socrates does not prove the immortality of the soul before arguing that philosophers should welcome death. The strongest answers discussed Plato's use of analogy and reference to myth to make the arguments more persuasive.

Question 8

Plenty of candidates chose this question and most produced good answers. Most candidates fully discussed Plato's characterisation of Socrates and they also demonstrated detailed knowledge of the characterisation of Simmias and Cebes. The most detailed answers also covered some of Socrates' other companions, such as Crito and Apollodorus.

The strongest answers showed how Plato depicts Socrates as an attractive character. They were impressed with his humour, his courage, his concern for his companions and his commitment to philosophy, but they pointed out that he could dominate discussion and some candidates understandably were not so impressed with how he treats his wife, Xanthippe.

CLASSICAL GREEK

Paper 9787/03
Unseen Translation

Key Messages

To do well in this paper, candidates need to have a detailed and accurate knowledge of Greek grammar and a working vocabulary of the language's most common words; only by using both these elements together will they be able to produce accurate versions in English. In addition, up to 5 marks are awarded for stylistic fluency in the translation of the prose passage, and a detailed knowledge of the iambic trimeter is needed to gain the scansion marks on the verse passage.

General Comments

Many candidates did both unseens very well indeed. As a rule they found the prose passage marginally easier than the verse, and their marks reflected this distinction, though there were also cases where this norm was reversed. Where marks were a bit lower, vocabulary confusion or ignorance was usually to blame, itself occasionally leading to a more wholesale abandonment of grammatical caution in favour of guesswork - never a good idea! The scansion question was, on the whole, very well done.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

On the whole this question was well done, and the best scripts were very good indeed. Some candidates favour at times a kind of 'Translationese' for their versions, rather than something that reads naturally in English. Inevitably, the more of this there is, the lower the style mark.

ἐνταῦθα Γαυλίτης ... προσιόντος: a surprising number of people, despite the title and many tell-tale singulars all around, did not realise that Gaulites was one person from Samos, but rather got off to a bad start by determinedly forcing 'the Gaulites' (whoever they thought they were), or even more implausibly, 'the Gauls' into this story of warring Greeks and Persians. καὶ μήν was well handled, as were the more testing διὰ τὸ ἐν τοιοῦτῳ εἶναι and the genitive absolute τοῦ κινδύνου προσιόντος.

ἐὰν δὲ ... ὑπισχνῆ: on the whole this section was well understood. τι in the first clause was often ignored in translation, and not everyone handled with complete ease the Remote Future Conditional (εἰ μεμνηῖο ..., 'if you were to remember ...').

ἀκούσας ... ποιῆσαι: this whole section, even if there were a few stumbles over ἀρχὴ πατρῶα ('my father's kingdom'), was usually well done, many having no problems with μέχρι οὗ and either knowing or working out well καῦμα, ἄρκτον and χειμῶνα (here something like 'wintry cold'). χωρίων ('places') was too often translated as if it said χωρῶν ('countries').

ὥστε ... δώσω: this section sometimes went a bit astray, particularly if, as at least once, δέδοικα ('I fear') was taken to be δέδωκα ('I have given'), so that the fearing clauses made less obvious sense.

οἱ δὲ ... ἐξήγγελλον: this final section was well done, except that only some translated αὐτοί τε, and one or two omitted πολύ as well.

Question 2

- (a) Although marks were regularly just a little lower than on the prose passage, many candidates were able to write fluent and convincing versions.

ὁ δ' ... τάδε: not everyone realised that ὁ δ' actually was Polynices, referred to by name later in the sentence, and a number of candidates translated Πολυνείκης, when it did come, as a genitive singular. Some translated κασιγνήτην as if it had been κασίγνητον.

ἀπωλόμεσθα ... φίλος: there were few problems here, though not everyone got the full force of ἀπωλόμεσθα ('we are done for'), and τήνδ' ἀδελφήν ('my sister here') was correctly translated by only some; but there were many good versions of the typically Euripidean line 5, φίλος γὰρ ἐχθρὸς ἐγένετ', ἀλλ' ὅμως φίλος.

θάψον .. ἀπώλεσα: this section usually began well, up as far as παρηγορεῖτον, including good translations of θυμουμένην, but ὡς τοσόνδε γούν τύχω χθονὸς πατρώας ('so that I may obtain at least this much of my native land') was widely misunderstood, even if the final conditional clause was translated accurately (κεῖ δόμους ἀπώλεσα).

ξυνάρμοσον ... σκότος: this section provided plain sailing once again, but two things were noteworthy, candidates did not always realise that Polynices himself (αὐτός) placed his mother's hand on his eyes, and χαίρειτ' was regularly translated as 'rejoice' rather than 'farewell', the obvious choice in these circumstances.

ἄμφω .. χέρας: much of this final section was well handled and there were good translations of all of ἐξέπνευσαν ἄθλιον βίον, ὑπερπαθήσασ' and κάπραξε δεινά. αὐχήν, though, was largely unknown (though ὠθεῖ σίδηρον was well translated), and the final line and a half ('and she lies dead among her dearest ones, having thrown her arms around them both') was misunderstood in a variety of different ways.

- (b) The scansion was generally well done, though not all saw the tribrach in line 12.

CLASSICAL GREEK

Paper 9787/4

Prose Composition or Comprehension

Key Messages

- There was a very high standard this year.
- Some sound grammatical knowledge was displayed, alongside an awareness of how to subordinate and to use appropriate connectives.

General Comments

The standard was extremely high. Many candidates were happy subordinating, mainly through participles, though some recasting occasionally went wrong. There were some ingenious uses of rare forms of verbs (please see more specific points below).

Overall, another impressive year in which candidates, under the pressure of time and with no access to grammars or dictionaries, were for the most part able to write clear, grammatically correct and sometimes stylish Greek.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

This was well done, as a rule.

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| First sentence | Most candidates had a clear understanding of the syntax of this sentence. There were a variety of ways to do the purpose clause at the beginning. Some candidates were able both to subordinate one of the verbs in the second half of the sentence, and to distinguish between the two uses of 'leave'. |
| Second sentence | Some good attempts here: (a) to put the conditional into indirect speech; (b) to use an aorist passive participle for 'as it has been done'. |
| Third sentence | A few struggled with remote conditional sentence, but most coped. There was the odd use of a participle in place of the protasis. Also, 'as long as' caused some difficulty, but some got round the problem by using a genitive absolute. |
| Fourth sentence | 'While you survive' was often correctly translated using a genitive absolute. Some candidates struggled to identify a good verb for 'endure' (<i>paskw</i> was the obvious choice). |
| Fifth sentence | Most coped with 'surely . . . not'; most also were familiar with the syntax for verbs of fearing. |
| Sixth sentence | There were mixed results in relation to 'merely' (obvious choice: <i>monon</i>) and 'even' (<i>kai</i>), but the conditional sentence was handled well. |
| Seventh sentence | 'so successful' caused some problems but was mainly well done. A few candidates were not able to translate 'in flames'. |
| Eighth sentence | 'advice' was often reasonably translated as <i>logoi</i> , and there were some very good recastings of 'expression of his own thinking' (e.g. she said the sorts of things he also thought). |

Section B

Insufficient candidates attempted the comprehension questions for a report to be produced.