

# CLASSICAL GREEK

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Paper 9787/01  
Verse Literature

## Key Messages

- Most candidates chose to answer on Euripides, *Troades* and opted for the Unseen Literary Criticism question.
- The critical approaches used for commentary questions should also be used on the Unseen Literary Criticism question.

## General Comments

A number of scripts this year were well below the standard encountered in previous years. However, there were also many good and some excellent scripts.

There is still a tendency for some candidates to concentrate on sound effects (often spuriously stated to have specific meaning) rather than on the specific meaning. This was most observed in the answers to the Unseen Literary Criticism option.

The majority of candidates opt for the Unseen Literary Criticism option. However, outcomes on the Unseen Literary Criticism option tend to be lower than on the theme essay. The candidates who take the theme option demonstrate their learning about the ancient world and Greek literature. Centres may wish to consider taking the option of the paired text essay from 2016.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### Question 1

- (i) Most candidates were able to comment on the extraordinary list of fantastic encounters Cassandra prophesies for Odysseus. Some rightly commented on the piling up of interesting adjectives (*stenon, deine, omobros, pikran, muria*).
- (ii) Well answered, as a rule. Some candidates were able to make informed remarks about the change of meter (trochaic tetrameter often signifies heightened emotion). Many observed that Cassandra's eagerness to leave seemed to show signs of psychological disturbance, as did her imagining of her unburied state. Good comments were made as well about her direct remarks of farewell to Apollo.
- (iii) Generally translated well. Candidates, for the most part, were clearly familiar with the text.

### Question 2

- (i) There were some good answers here. Most were able to see how ingenious, and indeed startling, are the arguments used by Helen in these lines. There were some good comments about how Helen shifts the blame – onto the gods, onto Paris. More could have been made of her address to Menelaus as 'o kakiste' – deeply ambiguous, so a lot to say.
- (ii) Candidates for the most part did not know the technical term 'argument from probability (or *eikos*)', this is what Helen uses in her opening remarks. Her view that Aphrodite is even more powerful than Zeus could have been more sharply criticised as a cliché.
- (iii) Translated well, for the most part.

### Question 3

- (i) Fairly well answered, but on occasion there needed to be more specific reference to and analysis of the text.
- (ii) Well translated.
- (iii) Fairly well answered. Some candidates referred to only small parts of the passage.

### Question 4

- (i) Well translated.
- (ii) As a rule, candidates did this fairly well.
- (iii) Mainly good, but there could have been more specific reference to the text.

### Question 5

Few took this on, but, those that did, wrote a sound essay. Some were keen to stress that plot is not everything in a play, and that *Troades*'s distinctiveness may in part be to do with its raw representation of (mainly) grief and anger, going in hand with a lack of plot development.

### Question 6

This essay was more popular and was fairly well done. Obvious points of contrast – manic joy vs. despair; marriage vs. slavery; triumphalism vs. defeatism – were well observed. More could have been made of the different approaches the two characters have towards Troy (victor or not; present or not).

### Question 7

Candidates showed good knowledge of the text, but answers sometimes needed better organisation of the argument.

### Question 8

Candidates showed good knowledge of the text, but answers sometimes needed better organisation of the argument.

### Question 9

Even though there were some very good answers, there was still a lot of literary criticism which would be more appropriate in a lower level of examination. Even extremely good candidates (as evidenced in their answers to other questions on this paper) resort to unconvincing observation of stylistic features (mainly to do with sound effects having some specific meaning). To observe that there is alliteration or assonance or asyndeton or polysyndeton or hyperbaton or aposiopesis in a line is, on its own, not enough; nor is it sufficient to (usually arbitrarily) claim that this stylistic feature emphasises the meaning. Candidates would do better to concentrate on the meaning itself.

- (i) There was a lot to comment on here, and most candidates commented reasonably on most of it. But there were easier and more obvious ways to answer the question than most candidates chose. The opening three lines are dominated by adjectives of loss and suffering, all in a series of rhetorical or deliberative questions which stress Iphis's profound uncertainty. The second half of the passage contrasts earlier scenes of tenderness.
- (ii) Many candidates did not say just how extreme these lines are: the extreme hatred of old age; the extreme wish to die, and so on.

### Questions 10–17

There were insufficient responses to comment in detail on the individual questions. Overall, these questions were generally well answered. Candidates made appropriate reference to two or even three texts, and there was much good use of specific detail. Some answers could have been improved by a clearer structure, or definition of the terms of the question. Some answers needed more specific reference from the texts rather than overly broad generalisations.

# CLASSICAL GREEK

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Paper 9787/02  
Prose Literature

## Key Messages

- This paper required a thorough knowledge and understanding of the relevant portions of the set texts: either Thucydides Book 2 or Plato's *Apology*.
- Translation of short sections was required. Candidates need to make sure that they can translate all the set text securely.
- Comment on points of linguistic, literary and cultural interest was required on the commentary questions.
- The essay questions required a synoptic view of the entire set text to be taken and a coherent analysis of it to be made.

## General Comments

Good answers showed a very secure understanding and translation of the Greek. Good answers to commentary questions showed a full and rounded consideration of all relevant linguistic considerations, as well as drawing on wider cultural understanding, where appropriate. Candidates need to make sure that answers to commentary questions address the whole passage indicated and not just a small portion of it. Good essays considered more than one analytical perspective on the set text. Candidates must show knowledge and understanding of the entire set text in the essay, as far as possible. Where this includes the entirety of a book (e.g. Thucydides Book 2), they should be encouraged in the essay to range beyond the sections set in Greek. Extra credit will also be available in the essays for consideration of and reference to wider historical and cultural factors.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

- (i) This question was mainly answered well, with a good understanding of the various contrasts (Athens-Sparta, open-closed, relaxed-tense, etc.). The best answers accompanied this with substantial quotation and understanding of Greek to illustrate their points. Less good answers drew only vague contrasts and did not show a clear understanding of the Greek.
- (ii) The best answers understood that 'convincing' could be interpreted in at least two ways – from the perspective of the candidate but also from the perspective of a contemporary Athenian. Good answers carefully considered the plausibility of Pericles's words and the nature of the context – a highly propagandistic one. They also considered how plausible it would be for Pericles to know what enemies were saying about Athens.
- (iii) This translation caused a few difficulties although it was mainly well done. Words that caused difficulty included:
- φιλοκαλοῦμέν
  - εὐτελείας
  - ὁμολογεῖν

## Question 2

- (i) This translation also caused some difficulties. Words that candidates found particularly difficult included:
- πόνον
  - περιγενώμεθα
  - ἀρκείτω
  - ὑποπτευόμενον
  - ἐνθυμηθῆναι
- (ii) There were some good answers to this question. Good answers commented effectively on aspects such as the repeated negatives regarding the inability of any force to prevent the exercise of Athenian naval power, the minimising of importance of the things the Athenians have lost through belittling description of it, and the overall positive and confident tone of the section. The best answers considered how contentious or extraordinary Pericles' claims are. Some answers either did not show sufficiently secure understanding of the Greek or tended to generalise, or both.
- (iii) Good answers identified both main strands of Pericles's appeal here: patriotism and a type of logic-based arrogance. The best answers commented on the almost sophistic word play of φρονήματι...καταφρονήματι...αὔχημα...καταφρόνησις...τόλμαν whilst some answers again did not make adequate reference to the Greek.

## Section B

### Question 3

- (i) This question produced some good answers. The best answers commented on linguistic detail such as the repetition of cognates like διαβολή...διέβαλλον...διαβάλλοντες and Socrates's outlining of the ridiculousness of the (in his view) false Aristophanic portrayal of him. Some answers did not identify sufficiently carefully that the passage deals with Socrates's interpretation of the slanders against him rather than the actual charges (as throughout much of the rest of the speech). Some answers were also not explicit enough about the link to Aristophanes, surprising given that Socrates names him.
- (ii) This passage was mainly well translated – tenses were an issue with some candidates. There were also some common omissions, such as:
- ἀξιῶ
  - πώποτε
  - ἀλλήλοις
  - τις
  - καὶ τᾶλλα
- (iii) Answers to this question broadly divided into two groups – those who thought that Socrates shows genuine admiration for the sophists in this passage and those who regarded him as hostile to them. Either is of course a sustainable position, if appropriately supported by reference to the Greek. The best answers also commented on Socrates' suspicion of rhetorical prowess and the extent to which this was hypocritical, and considered whether Socrates could be both hostile and admiring of the sophists in this passage.

### Question 4

- (i) This question was mainly very well translated. Some candidates struggled with vocabulary, such as:
- τὰ συμβεβηκότα
  - ὑπείκασθαι
  - φορτικὰ
  - δικανικά

- (ii) Good answers to this question concentrated on the opposition Socrates draws between himself and the demos, made clear the context of the aftermath of the battle of Arginusae (which did not of course need to be named), and focused on the language of legality vs illegality which Socrates uses to highlight this: *παρὰ νόμους...τότ' ἐγὼ μόνος...ἠναντιώθη...παρὰ τοὺς νόμους*. Some answers did not explain adequately how Socrates's language poses him in a lonely and heroic posture against the rest of the city.
- (iii) Good answers to this question clearly defined what impression of Socrates they thought came from this passage – in most cases: courageous, unthreatened by physical power and idealistic. Good answers gave at least some of the detail, which is in the passage itself, of the context of the 30 tyrants and Socrates's rejection of an order from them. Weaker answers gave more general points on the nature of Socrates's portrayal.

### Question 5

The majority of candidates who answered on Thucydides attempted this question. There were some excellent answers and some more speculative efforts. Good answers ranged widely over the entire prescription of the set text and considered various ways and analytical poses in which Thucydides's writing could be interpreted as 'intellectual' or 'emotional'. The best answers attempted to define the terms of the question carefully. Good answers also made detailed and specific reference to the Greek. Some answers did not refer in anything more than quite general terms to the set text. Prepared essays or chunks of them are also to be avoided as in some cases these intruded on an otherwise interesting analysis. Candidates should also be encouraged to range as widely as possible over the entire prescription, which in this case included the whole of Book 2 and potentially useful incidents such as the battle of Naupactus and the raid on the Piraeus.

### Question 6

There were insufficient responses to comment on this question.

### Question 7

The majority of candidates who answered on Plato attempted this question. Good answers carefully defined what they considered constituted a 'serious attempt'. Full coverage of the *Apology* was also an important part of good answers, including sections such as the cross-examination of Meletus which were not in the prescribed Greek. Good answers also gave interesting considerations of the different emotional poses that Socrates adopts in the *Apology*. Weaker answers made only very non-specific references to the text.

### Question 8

Only a few candidates who answered on Plato attempted this question. Good answers to this question were heavily dependent on a personal view and careful definition of 'irritating'. Where candidates clarified what they personally or a contemporary Athenian audience would find irritating, they were able to make good points. Good answers here also made reference to Socrates's use of emotional effects, and to what extent these could be defined as 'irritating'.

# CLASSICAL GREEK

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Paper 9787/03  
Unseen Translation

## Key Messages

To do well in this paper, candidates need to have a secure and accurate knowledge of Greek grammar, both accidence and syntax, and a healthy working vocabulary of the language's most common words. It is the use of both these elements together which will enable them to produce accurate English versions. In addition, up to 5 marks are awarded for stylistic fluency in the translation of the prose passage, whilst a detailed understanding of the iambic trimeter is needed to pick up the marks for scansion in the verse passage.

## General Comments

Many candidates did both unseens very well indeed. On the whole the prose passage was found more approachable than the verse, though there were cases of the opposite as well. Lower marks were almost always the result of vocabulary problems, themselves sometimes leading to grammatical confusion and the inevitable guesswork. The scansion question was, on the whole, very well done.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### Question 1

This question was well done by most candidates, and the very best translations were very good indeed, accurate and stylish.

ταύτην μὲν οὖν ... παρὰ βασιλέως: although there were a few problems with ταύτην and αὐτοῦ, and some confusion between τῇ ὑστεραίᾳ (line 1) and τῇ προτεραίᾳ (line 4), this section was generally well handled, most having no problem with ἐκκλησίαν ποιήσας ὅτ παρεκελεύετο, and ἄφθονα, even when wrongly translated, was not allowed to disrupt the rest of the sense.

τῇ δὲ προτεραίᾳ ... ζημίαν: this section was largely understood. A few had problems with the purpose clause (ὅπως ... ἐξαγγείλαι) and a few more with the indefinite ὃς ἂν ἀλίσκηται, whilst the full sense of the participle διαπλέων was not always brought out.

μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ... οὔσας: even if the general sense of this section was usually kept going, there were one or two regular issues: παρασκευασάμενος not correctly joined with ὡς ἐπὶ ναυμαχίαν; ἀνάγομαι not always known; the force of the compound in ἐκλάμπαντος often ignored; πόρρω ἀπό not completely understood and ἀπειλημένας (from ἀπολαμβάνω) only infrequently recognised and correctly translated.

οἱ δὲ Πελοποννήσιοι ... τοῖς ἐναντίοις: the main issues in this section were: πολλῶ (much more numerous) not understood, or at least omitted; πρὸς + dative sometimes missed, and συνορμίσαντες surprisingly often (given that ὀρμίζομαι was glossed) not properly understood. It is, however, a pleasure to record that the challenging participial phrase, ἐπιπλέουσι τοῖς ἐναντίοις, was well handled by almost everyone.

Ἀλκιβιάδης ... ἔφυγον: this final sentence was regularly well done, even if the full sense of καὶ αὐτὸς was not always acknowledged.

## Question 2

- (a) Some candidates responded well to the challenge of dealing with stichomythia; for others its very nature seemed to pose problems. Still, on the whole most translations kept the general sense going.

ὁ παῖς ... παιδεύεται: many translations of this section were very good indeed. Such problems as did arise were caused by uncertainties over ἐκτεθείς and (surprisingly) παιδεύεται.

τίς γάρ ... ἔπη: most dealt capably with line 5, the force of the question (οὐ γάρ δὴ σύ γε;) well picked up by many; and in the rest of the section σπαργανώσαντες provided the only source of error or confusion.

φεῦ ... ἔπασχεν ἔξ ἑμοῦ: the force of τόλμης here, with τλήμων, caused some problems, and in the next line ἐκτείνοντά sometimes went badly wrong, especially when mistakenly derived from -κτείνω rather than τείνω. In line 12 μαστόν was a problem only for some; but line 13 turned out to be the most problematic section in the whole passage, especially when candidates insisted on making ἵνα (here with the indicative) mean 'in order to' rather than 'where'.

οἴμοι ... μένει: there were a few vocabulary issues in this final section, notably ὄλβος, ὡς (= how!) and κῥᾶτα (acc. of κᾶρα, not any part of κῥάτος); and a few candidates thought that ταύτῳ in the last line meant the same as τούτῳ. Both δακρυρροεῖς and δυστυχοῦντας were well handled.

- (b) The scansion was generally well done, though not all noticed the dactyl in line 8.



# CLASSICAL GREEK

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Paper 9787/04

Prose Composition or Comprehension

## Key Messages

- The standard of compositions was again very high this year.
- Candidates successfully recast indirect statement in the prose passage.

## General Comments

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. Many candidates were happy subordinating, mainly through participles. There was a lot of indirect statement in the passage; most candidates coped well with this.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### **Section A**

#### **First sentence**

This was a challenging opening sentence. Not all candidates had a good word for 'addressed', and some were unsure about the aorist of *peiraomai*. There was some ingenious recasting of 'frighten...with stories'. Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the necessary superlatives and conjunctions in this sentence.

#### **Second sentence**

More straightforward and accurately translated by most.

#### **Third sentence**

It was gratifying to see how many were able to translate 'he reminded' accurately.

#### **Fourth sentence**

Most candidates understood that they needed to use some form of *tugchano* for 'encountered'; some forgot that the verb normally takes a genitive. 'Less dangerous' caused some problems, though one good way out was – one way or another – to use some form of *chalepos*.

#### **Fifth sentence**

Not all candidates fully understood the necessary syntax here. Some candidates did not know *palai* for 'long ago' or that *pseudos* as a noun is third declension neuter.

#### **Sixth sentence**

Some candidates encountered similar syntactical problems as in the last sentence.

#### **Seventh sentence**

Many candidates saw through 'what actually happened' and simply (and correctly) wrote *ta genomena*.

**Eighth sentence**

Many candidates understood that a jussive subjunctive was called for to translate 'let us hope', and then knew the right form. It was also impressive that so many knew the (irregular) future infinitive of *nomizo*.

**Section B**

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