

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/11
Greek Civilisation

Key messages

Candidates should be encouraged to:

- read and follow the instructions carefully
- answer the correct number of questions
- answer from one section only
- make greater use of the passage or image for 20 mark question in the commentary questions
- write in greater depth using a range of relevant examples.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1: ALEXANDER

The Alexander topic was very popular, with the vast majority of the candidature attempting the questions in this section.

Question 1

- (a) (i) Only about half of the candidates were able to identify India as the country of which Porus was king.
- (ii) Slightly less than half of the candidates knew the name of the battle at which Alexander defeated Porus.
- (iii) The date of the battle was sometimes known even if the wrong battle had been identified.
- (iv) Candidates were less secure on who the Companions were. Few accessed the full range of marks here. Quite a few candidates simply gave the names of individual Companions.
- (b) The question of whether Alexander always treated those he defeated with great respect produced responses which were rewarded with almost the full range of marks. Better answers were able to give examples of both good and bad treatment, with Darius and his family being the most commonly discussed examples. Such answers often went on to discuss Thebes, Gaza and Tyre as examples of poor treatment. There were many candidates who did not discuss Porus, despite the instruction in the question to use the passage as a starting point. A significant number decided to focus almost their entire response on the Policy of Fusion, taking 'enemies' to be the Persian nation as a whole. Some described the killing of Cleitus, classifying him as an 'enemy' because of his opposition to the Policy of Fusion.

There were unbalanced responses which did not consider the idea of 'always' and just gave examples of good treatment of enemies. There was also some evidence of the misunderstanding of the term 'enemies', with candidates discussing the way Alexander had fought, suggesting that killing enemy troops was the equivalent of not treating his enemies with respect. A few thought the question was about Alexander wanting to be respected.

Question 2

Question 2 was not as popular as **Question 3**. The candidates generally knew about the roles played by Parmenio and Antipater in Alexander's success, though most were able to say more about Parmenio than Antipater. The best answers considered both in roughly equal measure, and were able to make a reasoned argument, also noting Alexander's success after the death of Parmenio.

Question 3

'An excellent role model for future generals' was a very popular choice of question. It is very important that candidates read not just an introductory quotation but also the question which follows that quotation. In this case, candidates were asked to examine Alexander's military career and to assess whether he was a good role model for future generals in that context. A large number of responses just listed all the things Alexander did without concentrating on what the question was actually asking. Many responses were therefore largely irrelevant, even if there appeared to be a lot of content.

Those candidates who had some knowledge of the subject were able to discuss Alexander's military successes, mentioning both battles and sieges, and analysing the reasons why these encounters were won. Some looked at the question by discussing different aspects of Alexander's leadership. Many candidates simply answered the question as one about Alexander's leadership, without considering the idea of him being a role model. Better answers went beyond the simple idea of him being unbeaten to look at negative aspects, such as his lust for glory and how it affected his men. Only a few answers actually mentioned any generals who were influenced by Alexander, such as Julius Caesar and George Washington. Some also went beyond his military leadership into aspects of him being a king, such as his Policy of Fusion, and struggled to make this relevant to him being a role model for future generals. Some responses had a narrow focus, but with a lot of detail (for example talking about strategy, but without mentioning some other factors, such as Alexander's leadership skills).

Another favourite topic was Bucephalus, but those who used the incident were not really able to link this to the question.

Section 2: Aristophanes

Question 4

- (a) (i) Half of the candidates identified the city as Athens.
- (ii) Fewer candidates knew that Lysistrata and Calonice were meeting outside their houses.
- (iii) The type of humour was rarely identified as innuendo or an appropriate explanation of innuendo.
- (iv) The majority of candidates were able to offer at least one valid point about Lysistrata's plan. The points were usually quite general, but some answers offered quite a lot of detail about ending the war by means of a sex strike and seizing the Acropolis.
- (b) The question of whether women are always portrayed negatively in *Lysistrata* was not well answered. Responses tended to be short and lacking in detailed knowledge of the play. Most of those who tackled this question rarely went beyond general comments about the role of women in ancient Greece..

Question 5

The question about role reversal being the only source of humour had limited attempts at answering it. As with **4(b)** it tended to be answered by those who did not follow the rubric of the paper. The points offered in response to the question tended to be about comedy in general (from different eras) and there was little knowledge of *Frogs* on display.

Question 6

The answers to the question about whether it is possible for a modern audience to enjoy *Women at the Thesmophoria* without understanding the social and political background were few in number and they showed little knowledge of the play.

Section 3: Greek Vase painting

The vase painting section was much less popular than in previous years, with a minority of the candidature attempting this section.

Question 7

- (a) (i) The shape of the pot was not generally correctly identified.
 - (ii) About a third of the candidates were able to give the approximate date of the pot.
 - (iii) Candidates were more successful in identifying the black figure technique.
 - (iv) The subject matter of the decoration [a wedding scene] on the pot was not well known.
- (b) The very few responses varied in quality, both in accurate knowledge of the pot and the ability to discuss specific elements which might be considered 'a lively scene'. The answers did not go beyond what was in the image printed on the paper.

Question 8

Although Achilles was a popular subject for Greek vase painters, the same cannot be said for Achilles as the subject for essays. There were plenty of pots depicting Achilles which candidates might have used to answer this question. In addition, there were several points which might have been made about the opportunities and challenges offered by stories involving Achilles and his exploits.

Question 9

The question about whether the painters of red-figure pots were always imaginative and creative elicited even fewer responses, but the quality was slightly better. Questions which have a general focus tend to be more popular than those which have a specific focus, like **Question 8**. There was a good range of red-figure pots available for candidates to discuss but detailed knowledge of individual pots was lacking. To achieve marks in the higher levels for AO1 candidates need to refer to specific details from named pots by named painters. To achieve higher level marks for AO2 candidates then need to apply their knowledge to the precise question asked.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/12
Greek Civilisation

Key messages

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- read and follow the instructions carefully
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- write in greater depth using a range of relevant examples.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

The Alexander topic was very popular, with over 80 per cent of the candidature attempting the questions in this section.

Question 1

- (a) (i) Many candidates were able to make a creditworthy comment about the importance of Persepolis.
- (ii) Few candidates could name both Susa and Babylon as the cities Alexander captured on his journey from Gaugamela to Persepolis. Many were able to name one of the cities.
- (iii) Less than half of the candidates were able to give the correct date for the burning of the palace in Persepolis.
- (iv) The Persian king who had commanded the invasion of Greece which led to the destruction of Athens was often identified as Darius or Cyrus rather than Xerxes.
- (b) Candidates were generally able to give a good account of the role played by Parmenio in Alexander's success, especially about Parmenio's role in battle. Better answers dealt with Parmenio's leadership of the Macedonian left wing, which was an important factor in enabling Alexander to win battles. The strongest answers mentioned Parmenio's role in Alexander becoming king, and Alexander's successes following Parmenio's death. Several answers offered some sensible comments about the differing portrayal of Parmenio in Plutarch and Arrian.

Question 2

The question of whether Alexander was in more danger from his own men and his allies than from his enemies was a popular choice for discussion. Candidates were generally familiar with instances where Alexander was in danger from his own men. They were able to mention the mutinies against him, and the plots against his life. However, most of the answers to this question were unbalanced, with little discussion of the dangers he faced from his enemies. There was also confusion in some answers as to who his friends and allies actually were.

Question 3

The question of whether Alexander was an ‘excellent role model for future rulers’ was the most popular of all the essay questions on the paper. Most candidates were able to make some analysis of Alexander’s role as a leader, but many did not go beyond his military achievements, rather than looking at what he did as a king. Many answers considered his Policy of Fusion, both in terms of his vision and of the effects of policy on his men. Better answers also looked at Alexander’s failure to provide an heir to the throne, and the collapse of his empire after his death. Even the better answers generally looked at Alexander’s success as a king, rather than as a role model for future rulers. This question is a good example of how candidates need to read the question very carefully and understand what they need to do before they start to answer the question.

Section 2 Aristophanes

After last year’s surge in popularity, Aristophanes did not retain his popularity. Less than 10 per cent of the candidates tackled the questions in this section. It was, however, the best answered section on the paper.

Question 4

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to give two good reasons why Mnesilochus was dressed as a woman.
- (ii) Most candidates knew that Agathon was a Greek playwright.
- (iii) Not all candidates knew the device was the ekkyklema [or English equivalent]
- (iv) Even where candidates did not name the ekkyklema, they could state what the device was used for.
- (b) Candidates were well versed in the idea of disguise within the play and they were able to comment on other sources of humour within the play. The best answers knew about the parodies within the play and could discuss the parodies and the elements of disguise in some detail using strong reference to the text.

The weaker answers were couched in more general terms and while there were comments on disguise and other forms of humour, these comments tended to be general with a lack of specific references to the play.

Question 5

The question about whether Aristophanes always portrays women negatively in *Lysistrata* and *Women at the Thesmophoria* was answered a little more frequently than **Question 6**. Candidates were generally able to discuss the portrayal of Lysistrata herself in some detail, mentioning her role as leader and organiser and her persuasiveness in speech. Discussion of the other women in the play was rather more general. Candidates tended to deal with them as a whole, rather than as individuals. Reference to the *Women at the Thesmophoria* was more limited, with little reference to the women being portrayed as drunken stereotypes.

Question 6

The answers to the question about whether it is possible for a modern audience to enjoy *Frogs* without understanding the cultural and political background showed quite a detailed knowledge of the play with a range of appropriate references to sections of the play. What would have raised these answers to a higher level is a definition of what was meant by cultural and political background and a more focused approach to the analysis of the examples of cultural and political background.

Section 3 Greek Vase painting

The vase painting section was much less popular this year.

Question 7

- (a) (i) Few candidates could identify the pot as a lekythos.
- (ii) Many more were able to identify the use of the pot as an oil container.

- (iii) About half the candidates identified the Amasis Painter as the artist of the pot.
- (b) The responses varied in quality both in accurate knowledge of the pot and the ability to discuss specific elements which might be considered ‘a detailed and elegant portrayal of women at work’. Many candidates were able to comment on what they could see in the image printed on the paper, but seemed to lack a deeper knowledge of other areas of the pot. There were many aspects of the pot which were disregarded – the grouping of the women, the use of white paint, the detail of the drapery worn by the women.

Question 8

There were very few answers about the opportunities and challenges offered by the Trojan War as the subject matter for vase painters. Candidates tended to discuss what was depicted on pots with Trojan War scenes rather than focussing on the ideas of opportunities and challenges. Candidates were able to call upon a good range of appropriate pots.

Question 9

The question about whether the painters of black-figure pots lacked imagination and creativity was slightly more popular than **Question 8**. Generally, questions which have a more general theme such as this are more popular than questions which have a specific theme [as in **Question 8**]. The responses displayed some appropriate knowledge of specific pots and made some relevant comments. There was occasional confusion as to whether named artists worked in the black-figure technique or the red figure technique. Some candidates showed a full appreciation of the work of black-figure artists.

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Paper 9274/13
Greek Civilisation

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CLASSICAL STUDIES

<p>Paper 9274/21 Roman Civilisation</p>

Key messages

Candidates should be encouraged to:

- focus on one topic when answering the paper for the new specification
- use the passage or image when answering the 20-mark questions
- read the questions carefully, especially the 20-mark questions
- tailor their knowledge to the question posed
- understand the difference between the 20-mark questions and the 30-mark questions and plan and write accordingly
- provide more detailed responses to the higher tariff questions
- have a clearer knowledge of what happens in each of the books of the *Aeneid*
- learn to distinguish between BCE and CE.

General comments

There were far fewer rubric errors with the first paper on the new syllabus than in previous years.

The most popular topic, by some margin, was Virgil's *Aeneid*, followed by Augustus. Architecture of the Roman City was less popular.

The standard of the factual knowledge was slightly better than in the legacy specification, though this was not always apparent in the low tariff questions in the Augustus and Architecture of the Roman City topics. In the 20-mark questions, especially in Virgil's *Aeneid*, there was often some very detailed factual knowledge on display. All too often, however, the material presented did not meet the demands of the question and strayed outside the parameters set out in the rubric, e.g. In Book 4, the relationship between gods and humans is always depicted negatively, or the passage/image was not used as a starting point.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 Augustus

Question 1

- (a) (i) Very few candidates were able to give the date of the publication of the Res Gestae. Several seemed to confuse CE with BCE.
- (ii) The question about 'my father' was the most successfully answered question on this paper.
- (iii) Most candidates could name one of the killers of Julius Caesar. Cassius was often confused with Crassus.
- (iv) Most could name the battle of Philippi, though sometimes the spelling challenged some candidates.

- (b) The question about whether the description ‘totally accurate and truthful’ could be applied to the *Res Gestae* was generally not well answered. Many candidates did not seem to be aware of the contents of the *Res Gestae* beyond what was in the passage, so found it hard to answer the question. Even those who had some knowledge of the contents struggled to distinguish between what Augustus said and the reality of the situation. There was much which could be said in answer to this question. Not everything in the mark scheme was required to achieve a high level mark on the assessment grid.

Question 2

The question on the importance of religion to Augustus was the more popular essay on this topic. Some candidates who tackled this essay had a good knowledge of Augustus’ restoration of temples and traditional beliefs. These candidates were able to formulate a reasonable argument, and some even saw the importance of religion to Augustus as being political rather than a matter of faith. Some included his social legislation on marriage and adultery as having a religious foundation, rather than a moral one. Whilst counter arguments are valuable, it is important to focus on the topic of the essay. Some candidates got too carried away in presenting a counter argument and produced an unbalanced argument by discussing other things which were important to him at the expense of the discussion of religion.

Question 3

Very few candidates tackled the question about Augustus always trying to expand the frontiers of the empire during his reign. Candidates were in general unable to distinguish between the wars fought by Augustus (especially the civil wars) and his frontier policy. A very small number of responses did mention the Germanic campaigns and the Varian disaster, but did not develop the ideas.

Section 2 Virgil’s Aeneid

This section was by far the most popular on the paper. There were some superb responses, particularly to the higher tariff questions. In addition, there were a lot of middle range answers and very few who did not attempt parts of the paper.

Generally, knowledge of the key aspects of the plot was good. To their credit, candidates showed solid knowledge of the second half of the *Aeneid*. The best answers gave some really nuanced perspectives and explained how a single event could be read in different ways. Most answers balanced knowledge and evaluation and there were not many answers which simply retold the story without answering the question.

Some candidates showed a lack of knowledge of the *Aeneid*. For example, they did not know who Iarbas was, or thought that Ovid’s information about the origins of the Sibyl was in the *Aeneid*.

Question 4

- (a) (i) About half of the candidates were able to relate the news which Iarbas has heard before the passage begins.
- (ii) Most candidates identified Carthage as the ‘little city’.
- (iii) There were many opinions as to who Paris was – e.g. a goddess or a place. Only about half of the cohort was able to gain marks on this question.
- (iv) The question about the ‘all-powerful god’ was not done as well as expected. There were many more Zeus answers than Jupiter answers.
- (b) There was a complete range of marks achieved on the question about the relationship between gods and humans always being depicted negatively in Book 4. Those who limited their discussion to Book 4 generally scored well, making good points about Aeneas being put back on track and the treatment of Dido, although quite a few were unsure of the roles of Juno and Venus, and thought that Dido had been made to fall in love with Aeneas in Book 4. There were many candidates who did not make use of the passage as stated in the rubric of the question; there were many others who discussed the relationship between gods and humans throughout the *Aeneid*, using much material which was irrelevant to the question.

Question 5

The essay questions in this section were equally popular.

There were many sensible responses to the question of whether Aeneas always shows the characteristics of a hero. Such responses looked at both sides of the question and could discern the difference in his character in both halves of the epic and present a range of detail from across the epic, including books not specified for detailed study. There was room for a more sound grasp of what constituted a hero in the ancient world. For instance, there was a tendency to view divine help as a non-heroic quality. Those who defined the characteristics of a hero, and specifically the characteristics that made Aeneas a Roman hero, were able to analyse how a hero should behave and make detailed reference to examples from the epic. Some essays were simply a list of things Aeneas did with a comment about whether these actions were heroic or not, for instance fighting in Troy or abandoning Dido.

Question 6

The question of whether there are any interesting female characters in the *Aeneid* was a popular choice for many candidates and it was generally well answered when candidates got beyond the character of Dido. Most were able to discuss a range of female characters, both divine and human. Dido was the most widely analysed female character, with Venus coming a very close second. Other female figures mentioned included Juno, Creusa, the Sibyl, and even Anna and Camilla. Juturna was surprisingly neglected. Candidates considered the chosen examples both as personalities and for their role and function within the epic. The consensus was that most female characters were not interesting. The main exception was Dido, and to a lesser extent Juno and Venus.

Section 3 Architecture of the Roman City

This was the least popular section on the whole paper.

Question 7

- (a) (i) The House of Menander was not well recognised.
- (ii) Only about a third of the candidates knew that the house was in Pompeii.
- (iii) A very small number of candidates identified the atrium.
- (iv) Again, only about a third of the candidates identified the lararium and impluvium [the English equivalents were acceptable].
- (b) The lack of factual knowledge about the House of Menander meant that the answers to this question lacked any detailed information. Answers tended to rely on observation of the image in the question. This led to statements such as ‘the walls were rough and lacking in any decoration’, ‘there was a lack of natural light’ and ‘this house did not have any wall paintings and mosaics nor any outdoor space’. Several answers claimed that the house was not impressive because there were other more impressive buildings such as theatres, amphitheatres and temples.

Just as with a passage question, candidates need to go beyond the source and be able to bring in their own knowledge of the building shown in an image. Candidates need to think about a building as it was in Roman times not just as a building badly affected by the eruption of Vesuvius and the ravages of time.

Question 8

The question about how well the design of Roman amphitheatres met the needs of the audience was slightly more popular than **Question 9**, but was not answered as well. Answers tended to be rather brief, anything from six lines to just over one side of writing. Candidates could name two amphitheatres, but their knowledge was rather general, about what took place in an amphitheatre, and rather light on specific factual detail about the two amphitheatres named in the prescribed material.

Detailed knowledge of the specifics of an individual building is key to gaining the AO1 marks for the question and then having a foundation on which to base the analysis and evaluation for AO2.

Question 9

There was a wide range of material available for the question about architects designing public buildings with 'strength, function and beauty in mind'. The Colosseum and the Pantheon were often chosen for consideration. The key words in the question – strength, beauty and function – essentially formed a plan for the essay with careful choice of the buildings to match the three criteria. Knowledge of the buildings needed to be much more detailed to answer the question fully.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

<p>Paper 9274/22 Roman Civilisation</p>

Key messages

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- use the passage or image when answering the 20-mark questions
- read the questions carefully, especially the 20-mark questions
- tailor their knowledge to the question posed
- learn the detail to be able to answer the low tariff questions quickly and accurately
- understand the difference between the 20-mark questions and the 30-mark questions and plan and write accordingly
- provide more detailed responses to the higher tariff questions
- have a clearer knowledge of what happens in each of the books of the *Aeneid*
- learn to distinguish between BCE and CE.

General comments

There were far fewer rubric errors than in previous years.

The most popular topic, by some margin, was Virgil's *Aeneid*, followed by Augustus. Architecture of the Roman City was less popular.

The standard of the factual knowledge was slightly better than in the legacy syllabus, though this was not always apparent in the low tariff questions in the Augustus and Architecture of the Roman City topics. In the 20-mark questions, there was often some very detailed factual knowledge on display. All too often, however, the material presented did not meet the demands of the question. Answers strayed outside the parameters set out in the rubric, for example, the passage was often not used as a starting point to discuss the topic of Fate in Book 10.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 Augustus

Question 1

- (a) (i) Candidates could not always give an accurate date for the Varian massacre. It is important that candidates can distinguish between BCE and CE.
- (ii) About half the candidates knew that the massacre took place in the Teutoberg Forest.
- (iii) Knowledge of Augustus' reaction to the massacre was, at best, sketchy. Very few knew any information beyond the passage.

- (b) The question about the effect of the Varian massacre on Augustus' frontier policy had some mixed responses. Most were able to use the passage as a basis for their response and went for a policy of consolidation rather than pushing the 'frontiers' of their answers. Some were able to explore the effect of the Varian massacre on Augustus' policy in Germany but were unable to extend their points to discuss events elsewhere in the empire. Some answers were limited to Augustus' military campaigns in general, with little regard for the frontier policy.

Question 2

The question about the extent to which candidates agreed that Augustus acted in a totally unconstitutional and illegal manner was the more popular essay in this section. Candidates generally had an awareness of how Augustus seized power, and how his actions may have been wrong. However, many were unsure of what the actual legal and constitutional situation was with regards to a citizen obtaining power, and how Augustus' actions may have violated these norms. Some answers went well beyond Augustus' seizure of power into his reign. The best answers displayed a detailed knowledge of Augustus' route to power and showed a clear understanding of what was illegal about it.

Question 3

The question of whether the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* were the most important way in which Augustus preserved his reputation for future generations was not a popular choice for candidates, but it generally produced better responses than **Question 2**. Strong responses showed a good range of knowledge of the content of the *Res Gestae* but also displayed a sound understanding of how they promoted Augustus' image. Some candidates displayed an awareness of his use of other forms of propaganda, but this needed to be fleshed out and developed to produce well-rounded answers.

Section 2 Virgil's Aeneid

The Aeneid remains the most popular topic in the new syllabus, with about two thirds of candidates choosing to answer on this topic, and responses to the questions were among the strongest on this paper. A common theme in the Virgil answers was the use of Greek names for Roman gods.

Question 4

- (a) (i) The majority of candidates knew where Venus was when she was making the speech in the passage.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to identify at least one being who advised Aeneas to found a new city.
- (iii) Almost all the candidates recognised that 'she' was Juno.
- (iv) About half the candidates were able to identify Allecto as a fury.
- (b) Candidates seemed to find the question about Fate being the dominant theme in *Aeneid* Book 10 a little challenging because their knowledge of Book 10 was not secure enough. Most answers concentrated on events beyond the scope of Book 10. Some candidates also struggled to discuss themes other than Fate. The better answers mentioned topics such as war, heroism and father/son relationships. A few made good use of the passage and, impressively, a few remembered the Jupiter and Hercules scene.

Question 5

Although the topic of war and warfare was a popular choice from the essay questions, it was not as popular as **Question 6**. There were some good answers in which candidates recalled details from Book 2 and also put forward a range of scenes from the second half of the epic. It was encouraging to read that many observed that the epic was not all gloom and doom and that war offered the chance to win glory, to expand the empire and to set Aeneas on the path of his destiny. Very few discussed the effects of war on the vulnerable, such as the women and children.

Question 6

'Aeneas is never free to make his own decisions.' This was the most popular of the essay questions on the whole paper, by some margin, and it produced some of the best, most thoughtful answers. Some candidates understood that Aeneas has a degree of free will. It is because of this free will that he often strays from his fate and needs yanking back and setting on the right path so often. There was lots of good recall, with many candidates including information from Book 10 and Book 12. The majority of candidates agreed with the premise of the question, citing examples of how Aeneas was guided on his way by the gods, and had no free will due to Fate. These examples included leaving Troy, abandoning Dido and the war in Italy.

Section 3 Architecture of the Roman City

This was the least popular topic on the whole paper.

Question 7

- (a) (i) Only a few candidates could identify the Samnite House.
- (ii) Again, very few were able to name Herculaneum as the Roman town.
- (iii) Identifying the compluvium proved challenging.
- (iv) Virtually all the candidates who answered this question were able to make two sensible points about the purpose of the compluvium.
- (b) 'The most run-down and unattractive house in the town.' This question was either omitted or not answered successfully. Candidates commented on what they could see in the image rather than base their answer on knowledge of the house. Comments tended to be about the poor state of the walls and decoration as they are now, the crumbling plaster and the broken tiles around the impluvium. There was no mention of other houses to help the discussion.

Question 8

The question about Roman architects being driven only by practical issues was the slightly more popular essay option than the question about Roman theatres. The most discussed buildings were the Colosseum, the Pantheon and the Pont du Gard. Answers tended to focus on the idea of practical issues and often side-stepped the aesthetic aspects. Candidates should be encouraged to tackle all aspects of a question so that the top levels of the assessment grid can be accessed in the higher tariff questions.

Question 9

In the question about the design of Roman theatres, knowledge of at least one of the theatres on the syllabus was generally sound. To answer the question successfully, candidates needed to discuss the design elements rather than simply describe the theatres. Knowledge of the theatres had to be tailored to the demands of the question about how well the design met the needs of the audience.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

<p>Paper 9274/23 Roman Civilisation</p>

Key messages

Candidates should be encouraged to:

- focus on one topic when answering the paper for the new syllabus
- use the passage or image when answering the 20-mark questions
- read the questions carefully, especially the 20-mark questions
- tailor their knowledge to the question posed
- learn the detail to be able to answer the low tariff questions quickly and accurately
- understand the difference between the 20-mark questions and the 30-mark questions and plan and write accordingly
- provide more detailed responses to the higher tariff questions
- have a clearer knowledge of what happens in each of the books of the *Aeneid*
- learn to distinguish between BCE and CE.

General comments

There were far fewer rubric errors than in previous years.

The most popular topic, by some margin, was Virgil's *Aeneid*, followed by Augustus. Architecture of the Roman City was less popular.

The standard of the factual knowledge was slightly better than in the legacy syllabus, though this was not always apparent in the low tariff questions in the Augustus and Architecture of the Roman City topics. In the 20-mark questions, there was often some very detailed factual knowledge on display. All too often, however, the material presented did not meet the demands of the question. Answers strayed outside the parameters set out in the rubric, for example, the passage was often not used as a starting point to discuss the topic of Fate in Book 10.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 Augustus

Question 1

- (a) (i) Candidates could not always give an accurate date for the Varian massacre. It is important that candidates can distinguish between BCE and CE.
- (ii) About half the candidates knew that the massacre took place in the Teutoberg Forest.
- (iii) Knowledge of Augustus' reaction to the massacre was, at best, sketchy. Very few knew any information beyond the passage.

- (b) The question about the effect of the Varian massacre on Augustus' frontier policy had some mixed responses. Most were able to use the passage as a basis for their response and went for a policy of consolidation rather than pushing the 'frontiers' of their answers. Some were able to explore the effect of the Varian massacre on Augustus' policy in Germany but were unable to extend their points to discuss events elsewhere in the empire. Some answers were limited to Augustus' military campaigns in general, with little regard for the frontier policy.

Question 2

The question about the extent to which candidates agreed that Augustus acted in a totally unconstitutional and illegal manner was the more popular essay in this section. Candidates generally had an awareness of how Augustus seized power, and how his actions may have been wrong. However, many were unsure of what the actual legal and constitutional situation was with regards to a citizen obtaining power, and how Augustus' actions may have violated these norms. Some answers went well beyond Augustus' seizure of power into his reign. The best answers displayed a detailed knowledge of Augustus' route to power and showed a clear understanding of what was illegal about it.

Question 3

The question of whether the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* were the most important way in which Augustus preserved his reputation for future generations was not a popular choice for candidates, but it generally produced better responses than **Question 2**. Strong responses showed a good range of knowledge of the content of the *Res Gestae* but also displayed a sound understanding of how they promoted Augustus' image. Some candidates displayed an awareness of his use of other forms of propaganda, but this needed to be fleshed out and developed to produce well-rounded answers.

Section 2 Virgil's Aeneid

The Aeneid remains the most popular topic in the new syllabus, with about two thirds of candidates choosing to answer on this topic, and responses to the questions were among the strongest on this paper. A common theme in the Virgil answers was the use of Greek names for Roman gods.

Question 4

- (a) (i) The majority of candidates knew where Venus was when she was making the speech in the passage.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to identify at least one being who advised Aeneas to found a new city.
- (iii) Almost all the candidates recognised that 'she' was Juno.
- (iv) About half the candidates were able to identify Allecto as a fury.
- (b) Candidates seemed to find the question about Fate being the dominant theme in *Aeneid* Book 10 a little challenging because their knowledge of Book 10 was not secure enough. Most answers concentrated on events beyond the scope of Book 10. Some candidates also struggled to discuss themes other than Fate. The better answers mentioned topics such as war, heroism and father/son relationships. A few made good use of the passage and, impressively, a few remembered the Jupiter and Hercules scene.

Question 5

Although the topic of war and warfare was a popular choice from the essay questions, it was not as popular as **Question 6**. There were some good answers in which candidates recalled details from Book 2 and also put forward a range of scenes from the second half of the epic. It was encouraging to read that many observed that the epic was not all gloom and doom and that war offered the chance to win glory, to expand the empire and to set Aeneas on the path of his destiny. Very few discussed the effects of war on the vulnerable, such as the women and children.

Question 6

'Aeneas is never free to make his own decisions.' This was the most popular of the essay questions on the whole paper, by some margin, and it produced some of the best, most thoughtful answers. Some candidates understood that Aeneas has a degree of free will. It is because of this free will that he often strays from his fate and needs yanking back and setting on the right path so often. There was lots of good recall, with many candidates including information from Book 10 and Book 12. The majority of candidates agreed with the premise of the question, citing examples of how Aeneas was guided on his way by the gods, and had no free will due to Fate. These examples included leaving Troy, abandoning Dido and the war in Italy.

Section 3 Architecture of the Roman City

This was the least popular topic on the whole paper.

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- (a) (i) Only a few candidates could identify the Samnite House.
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Question 9

In the question about the design of Roman theatres, knowledge of at least one of the theatres on the syllabus was generally sound. To answer the question successfully, candidates needed to discuss the design elements rather than simply describe the theatres. Knowledge of the theatres had to be tailored to the demands of the question about how well the design met the needs of the audience.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/31
Classical History

Key messages

- Stronger candidates used sources convincingly throughout their responses.
- It is important that candidates understand key terms taken from the syllabus.
- The source-based question (1 and 4) was too often constrained by limited use of the extract provided.

General comments

In this first year of the new syllabus, students adapted well to the demands of the new format paper and in almost all cases attempted both the compulsory source-based question and then selected one of the two essay questions. There was greater engagement with the Roman section (Emperors and Subjects) than in the old syllabus.

Candidates were able to demonstrate in most cases some knowledge of detail relevant to the question, though less strong responses tended to be vague about the chronology of the period studied and were inclined to generalise in response to the question. In many cases, candidates were able to reflect their study of the details of the syllabus. In **Section A**, while **Question 2** was much more popular, there were a good number of candidates who knew who Nicias was in **Question 3** and were able to assess his contribution effectively. On the other hand, in **Section B**, **Question 5** exposed uncertainty about the Imperial cult, as some of those who chose this option clearly were confused by the term, though it is covered in the syllabus. While **Question 6** was handled in general rather more securely, the interpretation of 'political elites' was not always convincing.

The source-based question was compulsory, and some candidates paid rather too little attention to the source. The wording of the question ('Using this passage as a starting point') was intended to ease candidates into the discussion of the topic by focusing on the example presented in the passage. In some case very little use was made of the passage, which could then impact the mark awarded.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

While stronger candidates were able to use the passage selected for the paper as a useful starting point for an extended discussion, the main issues for the less strong responses were the lack of reference to the passage and also a lack of clarity about context. In addition, where candidates did not include relevant sources (including the passage), there was little if any evaluation of the evidence. Where there was some good engagement with the extract, there often was limited appreciation of the context, despite the provision of a heading.

The majority of responses included factual knowledge of the relationship of Sparta with her allies, with stronger responses providing a good range of detail of events ranging from 460s to the latter years of the Peloponnesian War. The best responses were able to explain the immediate context of the passage in 432 BCE.

There was some confusion between the events leading to the First Peloponnesian War and those leading to the Second, for example linking the Megarian Decree with Megara's move from the Peloponnesian League to the Delian League in 460. Some candidates confused the Hellenic League with the Peloponnesian League. Athens was said to be an ally of Sparta in 432 (perhaps linking back to the Persian Wars), leading to a discussion of the relationship with Athens as an ally.

There was a general lack of supporting detail, a weakness in chronology, and tendency to describe rather than analyse. Some better responses used sources suggested in the mark scheme to support the discussion, and these responses did try to deal with the terms of the question regarding the specific time period mentioned.

Question 2

This was by the far the more popular of the two optional questions.

Although candidates were generally able to give some account of the position of women in Athens, there was much comparison with women's freedom in Sparta, sometimes to the detriment of answering the specific question on Athens. Candidates need reminding of the importance of answering the question set.

Better responses used a range of sources in evidence such as Thucydides' version of the Funeral Oration, and plays by Aristophanes such as *The women at the Thesmophoria* and *Lysistrata* and there was some accurate recall of relevant detail. Very rarely did responses engage in any critical analysis of the texts, especially the comedies, which were often accepted at face value. Some did point out they were comedies and might not be completely reliable.

Stronger responses included relevant details of what women could and could not do in Athens, and made effective use of these in constructing an argument over the extent of control. The majority of responses focused on essentially the better off sections of Athenian society with regard to control, emphasising the restriction to the house, lack of control over marriage and divorce and limitation of legal and political status.

Despite reference to scenes in comedy, many responses did not note the more complex picture that emerges when we consider different groups or classes of women in Athens. Few mentioned metic women, although there was the occasional mention of Aspasia. There were better responses also which suggested women had some areas of control such as within the home and in some religious matters (for example, festivals). However, these responses were sometimes limited by assertions rather than analysis supported by relevant evidence. The most successful responses often organised their essay around the argument over control, challenging 'completely' to good effect. Weaker responses tended to generalise for all women in Athens, and suggest men were in total control without providing evidence to support what they claimed. Others claimed that women could, for example, influence political decisions through their husbands, but rarely offered evidence to make this convincing (such as *Lysistrata*).

Question 3

Candidates who attempted this question displayed some detailed knowledge of Nicias' career, in particular his role in establishing the Peace of Nicias and later his involvement in the Sicilian expedition. Relatively few referred to his contribution during events at Pylos. There were some very good responses where candidates were able to demonstrate a good understanding of the military aspects but most were less secure on his political achievements.

The information on the Peace of Nicias varied. The precise date was not always known, and it was confused with the 30 Years Peace of 446 BC; some responses had more specific detail of who was involved and how it broke down.

When candidates turned to Sicily, there was often an extended narrative of what happened, not all of which related to Nicias – for example, Alcibiades in Sparta was not really relevant. The responses tended to become an account of the overall failure of the expedition rather than an assessment of Nicias as a military commander.

There were a few candidates who noted other achievements from the Archidamian War (e.g. the initial phases of the events at Pylos, or the attack on Megara) but gave limited assessment of his political role and influence. There was some mention of his rivalry with Cleon and his pro-Peace stance. Candidates were not always able to support their discussion with relevant sources.

Section B

Question 4

The same general issues arose here as in **Question 1** regarding the use of the extract, its context and detail. Candidates did not, for the most part, use the information in the extract as fully as they might. Most noted the Praetorian guard as significant but few dealt with the involvement of the Senate or why it might be important. There was relevant detail in the extract, and stronger answers were able to draw out the significance of at least some of this.

Most were aware of the Guard's role in the death of Gaius and the accession of Claudius: the story of him hiding was told with various details, usually with reference to Suetonius, but also sometimes referring to Tacitus. The role of the Senate in the events of his accession was largely ignored. There was an extended narrative of what happened rather than a closer focus on the details of the transfer of power.

The discussions of Domitian and Trajan lacked detail for the most part. Only the stronger responses indicated the smooth transition in the Flavian dynasty as opposed to the problems for the Julio-Claudians. Some understood the role of Nerva in Trajan's accession. The role of adoption was considered by some in Trajan's case along with the adoption of Nero by Claudius, and this led to discussion of Agrippina's part in the transition.

Question 5

Stronger responses demonstrated an understanding of the Imperial cult, in the context of the emperor needing means to control such a large area and diverse peoples. The cult was, therefore, a means to spread a message about Roman power, especially that of a semi-deity like the emperor. Better responses taking this line had some detailed knowledge of the existence of the Imperial cult and the practices, supported by some reference to the limited information available. However, weaker responses, while understanding the theory, had little to support it. They were unable to name a particular instance or piece of evidence. While engaging with the question well, there was a lack of substance to merit higher credit in AO1 and AO2.

Some responses did not distinguish between religion in general and the cult; There were some with narratives of the emperors and their attitudes to a range of religions: e.g. the Jews, Christians, eastern cults. There were statements regarding the banning of other religions, not always correct (some claimed Claudius did not ban Jews, when in fact Suetonius says he did). Weaker responses discussed religion generally when the nature of the Imperial cult was not understood.

Better responses had detail of the deification of some emperors and family members (information on Claudius was contained in the extract). Very few mentioned Domitian's preference for being addressed as 'Lord and God'. Some candidates were able to refer to specific examples of temples dedicated to an emperor, but in general sources for this area of the syllabus were not known.

Question 6

This was by far the more popular question. Generally, candidates understood that emperors needed others to govern the Empire but had an insecure understanding of political elites – some included under this heading the Praetorian Guards (not just their commanders), freedmen, and even the ordinary people and slaves. Better responses dealt with senators but not equestrians, and then moved on to how emperors built up support among the different classes of Rome more generally, sometimes with little mention of the Empire beyond the city. Narrative of individual reigns was often set out at length; some of this could be related to the issue of elites but less strong responses offered an abbreviated account of the highlights of particular emperors.

Details concerning the reigns of emperors varied and there were some confusions between the actions of emperors: e.g. Nero was said to kill 35 senators which was the number recorded by Suetonius for Claudius. However, better responses did use Suetonius well, although sometimes his evidence was attributed to Tacitus or Cassius Dio. There was occasional mention of 'elites' governing provinces: Agricola was mentioned most often in this regard.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/32
Classical History

Key messages

- Stronger candidates used sources convincingly throughout their responses.
- It is important that candidates understand key terms taken from the syllabus.
- The source-based question (1 and 4) was too often constrained by limited use of the extract provided.

General comments

In this first year of the new syllabus, students adapted well to the demands of the new format paper and in almost all cases attempted both the compulsory source-based question and then selected one of the two essay questions. There was greater engagement with the Roman section (Emperors and Subjects) than in the old syllabus.

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Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

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Section B

Question 4

The same general issues arose here as in **Question 1** regarding the use of the extract, its context and detail. Candidates did not, for the most part, use the information in the extract as fully as they might. Most noted the Praetorian guard as significant but few dealt with the involvement of the Senate or why it might be important. There was relevant detail in the extract, and stronger answers were able to draw out the significance of at least some of this.

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CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/33
Classical History

Key messages

- Stronger candidates made better use of the extracts (**Question 1 and Question 4**) as a starting point for their response.
- In some of the longer essays, candidates were drawn into extended narrative rather than presenting an answer to the question set.
- Stronger answers reflected a sound understanding of the chronology of the period studied.

General comments

In this first year of the new syllabus, students adapted well to the demands of the new format paper and in almost all cases attempted both the compulsory source-based question and then selected one of the two essay questions.

Candidates were able to demonstrate in most cases sound knowledge of detail relevant to the question, though weaker responses tended to be vague about the chronology of the period studied and were inclined to generalise in response to the question. In many cases, candidates were able to reflect their study of the details of the syllabus. In **Section A**, while **Question 2** was much more popular, there were a good number of candidates who were able to explain the strengths and weaknesses of the *ecclesia* in **Question 3**. On the other hand, in **Section B**, **Question 5** proved very popular, though less strong responses did not make much of ‘women of all classes’. While **Question 6** was answered by fewer candidates, there were some convincing responses based on a good understanding of specific examples, while weaker answers tended to generalise and lack evidence for a convincing case.

The source-based question was compulsory, and some candidates paid rather too little attention to the source. The wording of the question (‘Using this passage as a starting point’) was intended to ease candidates into the discussion of the topic by focusing on the example presented in the passage. In some case very little use was made of the passage, which could then impact the mark awarded. But the majority of candidates judiciously combined details from the extract with their wider knowledge of the evidence for Claudius’ treatment of his subjects.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

While stronger candidates were able to use the Aristophanes passage as a starting point for an effective discussion, the main issues for the less strong responses were the failure to use the passage and a lack of clarity about context. In addition, where candidates did not include relevant sources (including the passage), there was little if any evaluation of the evidence. Where there was some good engagement with the extract, there often was limited appreciation of the context within a comic play, despite the provision of a heading.

The main failing, to some extent, was a focus on explaining what women could or could not do, rather than an assessment of relationships between men and women as such. Even better responses suffered at times from a lack of evidence outside the extract. There was also a tendency to compare women in Athens with those in Sparta. Non-citizen women were often not mentioned. However, the vast majority of responses did focus on the question in some form and did use the passage, even if that use was limited.

Question 2

This was by far the more popular of the two optional questions.

The responses showed a good knowledge of the period and the events which led up to the start of the Peloponnesian War. Stronger responses were able to provide extensive accurate detail on the development of the Delian League and the growth of Athenian power. Athenian interactions with Naxos and Thasos were also used to reasonable effect. Most responses dealt with the issues of Corcyra and Potidaea in the 430s and the quote from Thucydides on Spartan fear of Athens (Book 1.23) was often used. There was a general tendency to jump from 464 to 432 without analysing the intervening years. There were some good discussions of the walls of Athens, though there was also some confusion between Themistocles' walls and the Long Walls of the 450s. There were relatively few good discussions of the 440s, including the 30 years Peace and the failure to help the revolt of the Samians. Although there was a clearer focus on the 430s and the role of Corinth, the question did lead some candidates into excessive narrative at times.

Question 3

Candidates who attempted this question displayed some knowledge of the *ecclesia* but also some confusion about how it worked and what it did. There was much detail about the constitutional role but limited specific examples in practice (for example, from Thucydides). The role of the *boule* was sometimes overstated or not clearly understood.

The discussion of the strengths and weaknesses was often set out in rather general terms, though there was some useful discussion of the role of 'leaders'. There was a limited use of evidence and examples to support the argument put forward.

Section B

Question 4

Candidates generally engaged effectively with the extract and were able to give some assessment of Claudius' character. There was often a focus on the more brutal aspects of the Suetonius passage; many did consider it as atypical of Claudius, citing examples of his good treatment of the plebs: for example, his arrangements for the supply of grain and his use of games. They noted his treatment of the praetorians and the reason for this. There was perhaps less focus on his engagement with the Senate. Suetonius was quoted or referenced in most responses, although Tacitus was less effectively used.

Most responses tended to treat what the sources state as facts and offered limited evaluation of the more questionable claims, especially in Suetonius and Dio.

Question 5

This was by far the more popular of the two options. Better responses demonstrated a very good understanding of the status and role of women in Roman society, though quite a few answers did not range beyond the elite. Agrippina and Messalina were used as examples of women with influence in almost all responses, even if at times the claims made were overstated. Better responses were also able to refer to the women in Pliny's letters as a balance to these more important women of the imperial family: Calpurnia and Fundanus' daughter were mentioned in some responses. There were some extended narratives relating to Agrippina and her role under Claudius and Nero.

Better responses included a range of evidence, but there were sometimes errors of attribution: Tacitus and Suetonius were at times used interchangeably even in the stronger answers.

There was some evaluation of the sources used, though often this did not go much beyond that the authors were hostile to women.

Some of the argument presented was rather generalised: for example, Messalina's role in ordering many deaths was noted, but no details were given; in a similar vein, Agrippina's control over public business in the early years of Nero's reign was asserted, but not always supported with appropriate evidence.

Question 6

This proved a far less popular question. Many answers focused on Nero and his golden house, though sometimes without a convincing argument. There was scope to make more effective use of Domitian's building work. There were some good discussions of Claudius' aqueducts and his development of Ostia, so improving the basic amenities of the city. Some candidates were able to use Trajan's column to good effect. Better responses included a range of specific details of the buildings and were able to connect their purpose with 'gaining popularity'. However even in those stronger answers there was a good deal of generalisation about the archaeological evidence and the supporting sources.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/41
Greek Literature

Key messages

Candidates should:

- make sure the detail they give comes from the set text rather than its back story
- make sure that they leave enough time for both questions
- make full use of the passage on the paper
- define terms given in the question
- aim to be analytical rather than descriptive.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Candidates made a good attempt to answer this question, especially as it is a new element to the paper. The level of detail in answers varied. There seemed to be some confusion about from where in the play the passage was taken, with many thinking that Medea had already committed her crimes. In part, this seemed to be because although most candidates knew the basic events surrounding the story of *Medea* they were less confident with the play itself. This meant that many answers gave details of the back-story, which while somewhat relevant to the question, were not as valuable as a discussion of the material in the play itself. The strongest answers focused closely on the play and the change in Medea's character during the course of the drama. These answers were able to put the passage in context and discuss the change in the audience's sympathies. The very best answers tended to consider Medea from the point of view of both other characters and the audience – both modern and ancient. Some candidates helpfully commented on the role of the chorus, and on the function of the *deus ex machina* at the end of the play and how it affected our view of Medea. Most candidates made some use of the passage given, stronger answers tended to have a more consistent use of the whole passage. Candidates should aim to balance material from the passage with material from elsewhere in the play.

Question 2

In general, candidates made a good attempt to answer this question. The strongest answers were ones that started by defining what they understood by 'revenge' and 'justice'. Those answers that, for example, argued that vengeance was personal and justice impersonal tended to have a more compelling analysis than those that had not defined their terms. There was a tendency for candidates to simply retell the story of two or three plays and then conclude at the end that the play was to do with either justice or revenge. Stronger answers started from an analytical rather than a narrative point. The best answers tended to pick specific details from the play rather than try to use the entire plot. Most candidates considered *Medea* and *Electra* in their answers. The best answers tended to be ones that looked at *Antigone* as well, as they were able to draw a strong comparison between personal vengeance and impartial justice.

Question 3

This was a less popular question and answered by very few candidates. As with **Question 2**, the strongest answers were ones that defined their terms. Candidates who explained what they thought made a play entertaining, tended to write clearer answers. There was again, a tendency to give an overview of the plot of the plays rather than give details and the most effective answers were those that looked at individual scenes and details from the plays. There were also some strong answers that discussed effectively catharsis and the idea of moral messaging in tragedy. Very few answers looked at the context in which plays were performed in ancient Athens.

Question 4

There were a range of answers to this question. In general, candidates made a good attempt to answer the question. Most knew that Odysseus had returned home and was in disguise. Some candidates seemed to be a little confused by the exact nature of his disguise, with a number thinking that the ‘beggar’ disguise and the ‘old man’ disguise were separate, for example. The majority of answers picked up on the idea of disguise being important for Odysseus’ safety when he returned to Ithaca. More thorough answers also discussed how his disguise allowed him to test the loyalty of people in his household, although knowledge of names was often hazy. Beyond the passage, candidates showed good knowledge of the Cyclops episode and generally discussed it with relevance to the question. The use of disguise by Athene was covered by a number of candidates with varying degrees of detail, with some excellent answers offering a range of points and noting the similarities between the goddess and Odysseus. The best answers looked at the way that disguises were important not just to Odysseus but also as a plot device.

Question 5

Candidates showed a good knowledge of who the gods and goddesses were and the role that they played in the narrative of the epics. Most were able to discuss the plague sent by Apollo in the *Iliad* and the support offered by Thetis to her son. In the *Odyssey* most knew that Odysseus was hindered by Poseidon and helped by Athene. Some candidates seemed to have an idea that every hero must have both a god supporting them and a god hindering them. This led to some confusion as candidates tried to argue that Achilles had gods specifically working against him, rather than more generally supporting the Trojans. There were, however, some superb answers that looked in detail at a range of immortals and assessed their role. Only the very strongest answers were able to look at the nuances of helping and hindering and discussed the fact that in some cases a god is doing both simultaneously. In the *Iliad* for example, Apollo helps Hector by knocking Patroclus’ armour off and in doing so is hindering Patroclus. Candidates who explored this duality tended to have sophisticated and analytical answers.

As in previous years some candidates spent too long retelling the background to the Trojan war and giving details of the contest of the golden apple, which is not mentioned in either epic. In general, candidates should try to avoid retelling the narrative of the poems and try to focus on key details that give support to a line of academic argument.

Question 6

Candidates generally answered this question well and showed a good knowledge of the epics. Achilles was discussed thoroughly and the concept of *Kleos* was familiar to most candidates and explored in detail. A large number of candidates, however, were confused about the idea of city states and individual kings, with lots of candidates thinking that Achilles was selfish for not fighting for his country. Very few candidates looked at other heroes from the *Iliad* and those that did tended to be the stronger answers. Candidates also knew the *Odyssey* thoroughly and discussed a range of details about Odysseus. On occasion candidates seemed a little unclear about Odysseus’ motivations, with a number arguing that he was selfish for killing the suitors for example. A number of candidates also were somewhat confused by the term ‘Homeric hero’ and discussed a range of characters that may show some of the characteristics of a modern hero but who are not ‘Homeric heroes’, such as slaves and women.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

<p>Paper 9274/42 Greek Literature</p>

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CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/43
Greek Literature

Key messages

Candidates should:

- back up points with selective primary evidence
- plan their examination time carefully
- make full use of the passage.

General comments

There was a strong set of answers this year. Candidates knew the epics well and included a good level of detail in their answers.

Comments on specific questions

There were too few responses to **Questions 1–3** on this paper to make specific comments.

Question 4

Candidates did well with this question, with most using the passage given to good effect to discuss both the role that Nestor was playing in the passage and how he is depicted elsewhere. Some candidates could have made more use of the material that they took from the passage. Interestingly, although many candidates picked up on the authority that Nestor has to offer advice to the leaders, very few mentioned the fact that his advice is ignored by Agamemnon, despite the respect he shows him in the passage.

There were some truly outstanding answers looking at the role of both the old men in Troy and those in the Greek camp. The very best answers also tended to look at the older characters in the *Odyssey* with some excellent answers comparing Nestor's portrayal in both poems. A small number of candidates found this question challenging and struggled to identify any other older characters and these answers generally showed knowledge of the poems but did not always include fully relevant information. Some candidates also clearly ran out of time for this question as they had tackled the higher mark essay question first. Hopefully, as this new style exam becomes more familiar, candidates will be able to better plan their time.

Question 5

This question was less popular than **Question 6**. It was generally answered well, with candidates being able to discuss a range of women depicted in both epics. Candidates tended to discuss both Andromache and Helen in the *Iliad* and draw interesting points of comparison between the two. The strongest answers looked at how there may be a difference between how a modern reader may view the women compared to their reception in the ancient world. Candidates discussed Penelope in the *Odyssey* well and generally agreed that she was a positive depiction of a woman. Other strong answers also looked at the Phaeacian queen, Arete and her daughter Nausicaa. Overall, a strong set of answers that demonstrated detailed knowledge and a thorough understanding of the question.

Question 6

This was the far more popular question. Candidates showed an excellent and detailed knowledge of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. They also had a great understanding of the concept of a Homeric hero and what motivated them. Candidates had enough knowledge of the poems that they were able to construct nuanced and sophisticated answers to the question. Most looked at the concepts of *kleos* and *time* and discussed how most heroes were motivated by these in the *Iliad* and then the strongest answers looked at a range of heroes and how their motivations varied. Most candidates discussed the death of Patroclus as the main motivation for Achilles to rejoin the fight. There was also a sophisticated level of discussion of Odysseus' motivations in the *Odyssey*, with most candidates identifying *nostos* as his main motivation in the poem. The strongest answers also discussed the echoes of his Iliadic desire for glory in the episode with the Cyclops and elsewhere. Some candidates clearly knew the poems so well that their essays contained a huge amount of incredibly detailed information. Although excellent, it did mean that their line of argument often became somewhat obscured. Selecting the precise detail to answer the question would have made their answers even better. Overall an excellent set of answers to this question.