

CLASSICAL GREEK

Paper 9787/01
Verse Literature

Key messages

Good answers:

- Addressed the question fully
- Organised arguments effectively.

General comments

The standard was very high this year, with some outstanding scripts and with most being very competent. In answering the various types of question, candidates were able to demonstrate excellent knowledge of their set text and the ability to analyse the texts in a sophisticated and compelling way.

Comments on specific questions

- 1 Most candidates clearly knew the text well and were able to translate accurately.
- 2 (a) Candidates wrote well about the tension between Oedipus and Teiresias, and a tension as well as to whether Teiresias is indeed going to speak at all. Candidates were also able to trace Oedipus' changing response to Teiresias' refusal to talk, moving from surprise to appeal to threat.
(b) To achieve the highest marks candidates had to argue for, and explain, the plausibility of Oedipus' response to Teiresias' refusal to speak.
- 3 (a) This question was well answered for the most part, with appropriate attention paid to Oedipus' excited and troubled reaction to the news about his 'father' – he wants to condemn oracles as worthless, but is still worried about his mother. Jocasta confirms his criticism.
(b) The criticism of oracles continues in these lines. Candidates – with justification – tended to spend quite a long time on the famous lines about men and their dreams. But some candidates also well observed the foreboding we feel at the mini-exchange between Oedipus and the messenger that ends the passage.
- 4 For the most part, this passage was well translated.
- 5 There were too few answers to this question to make general comment appropriate.
- 6 (a) This was well answered, with candidates analysing the suitors as panicking cattle, and Odysseus and his companions as vultures swooping down. Candidates also wrote well about the bloody conclusion.
(b) Again, this was well answered, with answers giving time both to the nature of Leodes' appeal, Odysseus' rejection of the appeal, and the final violence.
- 7 This was the more popular of the *Oedipus* essays, with candidates demonstrating excellent knowledge of the text. They were also able to organise their answers well, allowing room for some sophisticated critical analysis.

- 8** Candidates showed good knowledge of the text, but answers sometimes needed better organisation of the argument, as well as a clearer understanding of the nature of 'fate'.
- 9** This was the essay chosen most on Homer. Candidates wrote well, giving time to analyse Odysseus' relationship with the suitors, the way he relates to his son, to the members of the household, most particularly, the women.
- 10** There were too few answers to this question to make general comment appropriate.
- 11** There were some very good answers, which were able to concentrate on the disturbing but comic tone of the exchange between Dionysus and Pentheus. In particular, some very good answers were able to see the scene as a piece of meta-theatre, with the god of theatre costuming and directing the king of Thebes.
- 12–15** Very few candidates chose the paired text option and, of those that did, nearly all wrote on Sophocles. Both essays 12 and 13 were attempted and, in both sets of answers, candidates were able to demonstrate thorough knowledge of both *Oedipus* and *Antigone*. The essays were, for the most part, well-structured and were able to analyse the texts in a sophisticated way.

CLASSICAL GREEK

Paper 9787/02
Prose Literature

Key messages

- Answers should focus on the actual question set.
- In essays, candidates should support points with detail from the text.

General comments

The majority of candidates attempted the Plato questions. The great majority of candidates were obviously very familiar with their chosen text. Candidates should be encouraged to write their translations on alternate lines. Most answers tried to remain focused on the question, but there was a tendency sometimes to offer slightly spurious or irrelevant comment on linguistic features. In terms of the essay questions, candidates should be able to cite details from the text which do not appear in the commentary or translation questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most of the passage posed no problem; there was some confusion in the final clause.

Question 2

- (a) A significant amount of material was available in this passage to illustrate Herodotus' skill as a story-teller. Most answers covered the humour in the extract, with good detail from the Greek. The best also commented on whether or not the story was credible or coherent, and analysed whether this made the passage plausible or not.
- (b) The best responses considered the question: 'is this an effective conclusion?', which they backed up with detail from the text, citing, for instance, the king's response to the thief and the thief's change of opinion towards the king.

Question 3

- (a) Candidates made some good use of the Greek, pointing out the presence of motifs of, for instance, aetiology and justice.
- (b) Answers to this question focused on the idea of oracles versus mankind, with the very best noting the contrast between Egyptian and Greek practice.

Question 4

This translation was done extremely well in the main, the major reason for loss of credit being omitted words.

Question 5

- (a) This proved the most popular commentary question. Most candidates considered the main points, such as Socrates' friends and the fact that Meletus chose not to call them as witnesses, along with the final conclusion that Meletus is lying, whereas Socrates is telling the truth. Strong answers considered the second part of the question, analysing whether they thought it was effective (rather than merely providing a narrative), and outstanding answers provided the possibility of counter-arguments.
- (b) Most candidates (though not all) addressed the practice of appealing to the jury through relatives and emotional posturing, and Socrates' rejection of this practice. Most also referred to the dismissal by Socrates of the notion that the jury might vote in anger and then discussed the credibility of this claim. Only a few candidates commented on the effect of the quotation from Homer.

Question 6

- (a) The question of 'tone' proved tricky for some candidates, but most made reference to the question of whether or not Socrates was 'wise'; few considered whether his approach in this passage is consistent with former approaches.
- (b) Candidates addressed the two major analogies drawn in this passage, that of the warrior and that of the slow runner being caught by the quicker. The better answers considered how appropriate these might be, and what they contributed to a portrayal of Socrates in general.

Question 7

Too few candidates attempted this question to make specific comment appropriate.

Question 8

Most of those doing Herodotus chose this question. Most considered Proteus and the Rhampsinitis episode, but there was little specific detail from the text.

Question 9

Too few candidates attempted this question to make specific comment appropriate.

Question 10

Candidates answered this question well, utilising specific detail from the passage (such as the scrutiny of his sons; the ignorance of the possibility of the afterlife) and attempted to set it in a wider context of the *Apology* as a whole.

Question 11

Candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the text, with all able to list the different techniques employed by Socrates, though a few went no further than this and provided a narrative of different arguments, without analysing whether they were effective or convincing. The best responses offered interpretation of whether some arguments prove more convincing at certain points than others.

Question 12

This question was the less popular of the two essay questions, but was generally answered well. All considered the obvious characters, such as Meletus and the Oracle (and the best responses also contemplated Socrates' *daimonion*). Some also explored the idea of the city as an agent of blame. Only the strongest answers addressed whether there was any implication of blame on Socrates' own part.

CLASSICAL GREEK

Paper 9787/03
Unseen Translation

Key messages

Success in this paper depends on a secure and accurate understanding of Greek grammar coupled with a working vocabulary of the language's most common words. In addition, up to 5 marks are awarded for stylistic fluency in the translation of the prose passage, and a detailed knowledge of the iambic trimeter is needed to gain the marks for scansion in the verse section.

General comments

Many candidates did both unseens very well indeed. There was not much indication that the prose passage was found easier than the verse, or vice versa: marks for both were often quite closely matched. As usual, lower scores were the result of grammatical misunderstanding or of vocabulary confusion, or of both. The scansion question was generally well done.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This passage of Xenophon was well handled by most candidates, a number producing highly polished and fluent versions.

ἐπεὶ δ' ἦλθον ... συνθεμένους: the precise significance of the phrase οἱ ἐκπεπτωκότες Ῥοδίων ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου caused some problems, as did also the meanings of περιδεῖν and καταστρεψαμένους; but even so, the general sense was usually well recognised, so that the passage continued to move in the right direction.

γνόντες οὖν ... ἐπέστησαν: this sentence was well understood on the whole, though some did not realise that ἔσται Ῥόδος ἅπασα had to be taken with ἐαυτῶν as well as with Ἀθηναίων; and even though ἐπλήρωσαν was sometimes translated as if it came from πλέω, not πληρώω, it was pleasing to see how many understood and correctly construed ἐπέστησαν (from ἐφίστημι).

συνεξέπεμψαν ... Στρούθαν: there were few problems with the first of the two sentences in this section, but the second, with its succession of participles and infinitives, produced a number of confusions. Such passages need to be carefully analysed, to determine what goes with what, before a final, fluent version is produced. ὑποδεξαμένης was sometimes problematic, and the sense of ποθεν ('from anywhere') was not always fully appreciated.

ὁ μὲν δὴ ... μισθοδοτεῖν: this section was well understood, though the phrase χρημάτων πολλῶν ἀπέλυσεν ('ransomed for much money') was less often than expected fully understood, and the full sense of ἐντεῦθεν ('from that source', i.e. the ransom money) was regularly overlooked.

ἦν δ' οὗτος ... ἔπραττεν: although the general sense of this last section was well maintained, some details produced minor confusions: the full sense of the phrase εὐχαρίς τε οὐχ ἦττον was not always grasped, and the penultimate phrase, πρὸς ᾧ εἴη ἔργω ('on whatever task he was engaged') was a problem to almost everyone.

Question 2

- (a) There were many fluent and largely accurate translations of this passage, though only a few managed to cope convincingly with its trickiest elements.

ἐπίσχεσ ἀυτοῦ ... σῶσαι θέλω: the first of these lines (apart from πρέσβυ) caused almost universal problems, but the other three were easily understood and well translated in the main.

θέλεις ... ἐπήγαγεν: in the first two lines there were a few problems with the phrase σπουδὴν ἔχεις and with correctly construing μάλλον with δεῖ, but everything else was well handled; in particular, virtually all candidates scored full marks in the second two lines.

ὄδ' οὐ μακρὰν ... φράσω: the general sense was well maintained here, but there were some individual problems with μακρὰν (some wanted it to refer to time rather than to distance), with the 3rd, person imperative ἀπελθέτω, with ἐκάς and with πεφυκῶς.

κλύων γὰρ ... ὑπὲρ πάτρας: this section was almost universally well done.

ὦ πολλὰ ... σωτήρια: these two lines also were well translated, bringing the unseen to a confident close for virtually everyone.

- (b) The first of the two lines for scansion was very well done by everyone, but the second, with two tribrachs in a row, caused a few more problems.

CLASSICAL GREEK

Paper 9787/04

Prose Composition or Comprehension

Key messages

The standard was very high this year. Many candidates were happy subordinating, mainly through participles, though some recasting occasionally went wrong. There was quite a lot of indirect statement in the passage; most candidates coped well with this, as they did with indirect questions and result clauses. Some connected their sentences excellently; some others were a little minimalist in this respect.

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.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

First sentence

Structurally at least this opening sentence was something of a challenge. Some good choices made were to make *Polycrates* the object of *advised*, and to make *was very lucky* a participial phrase. Candidates coped very well with the necessary superlatives (though there were some interesting variant forms of *philtatos*).

Second sentence

The difficulty in this sentence was, again, when and how to subordinate. Candidates who found a way to only translate one of *sea* and *water* were rewarded.

Third sentence

This sentence perhaps presented less of a challenge. Most were able to use participles to subordinate successfully.

Fourth sentence

Some candidates were able to combine this and the next sentence. Most made *caught* into a participle.

Fifth sentence

Some candidates were troubled by *pleased*, but most were easily able to translate the result clause accurately.

Sixth sentence

Some candidates combined this sentence with the last, again successfully.

Seventh sentence

Various – mainly successful – attempts were made to subordinate *the slaves were happy*. The syntax of *even though* was well understood, though *failed* caused a few problems.

Section B

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