

# CLASSICAL HERITAGE

Paper 9786/01

Foundations of History & Culture (Greek)

## General comments

The entry for Paper 1 was small. Candidates answered on the Alexander topic, the Athenian democracy topic and on Greek Architecture. As there was such limited script evidence, teachers preparing candidates for the other topics on the paper should consult the published mark scheme for the other topics on this paper.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

The Alexander topic produced some well-developed responses that showed a good understanding of the period, and it was pleasing to see that the best essays engaged well with the relevant sources. **Question 1 (b)** proved more popular than **1 (a)**. Candidates were able to show a good understanding of the Macedonian background and also of the problems caused by Alexander's adoption of Persian customs. There was also some sensible discussion in **1(a)** of the nature of Alexander's ambitions.

### Question 4

Answers on Greek Architecture showed a good knowledge of a variety of buildings on the Acropolis in answering **4(a)**, but responses needed to focus more on the demands of the question.

### Question 5

In the Rise of Athenian Democracy **Question 5 (b)** proved more popular. Candidates were able to draw on a reasonable range of sources to address the questions, but there was scope for a clearer explanation of the workings of the democratic system and the role of the poor.

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Paper 9786/02

Foundations of History & Culture (Roman)

## Key Messages

To reach Levels 4 and 5 in their responses candidates need to combine a range of detailed knowledge that is well directed at the question, with strong analysis demonstrating reasoning and judgement.

## General Comments

Better responses did indeed combine such knowledge and analysis. Where analysis was present, it was often patchy, suggesting confident knowledge only of certain aspects of a given topic, and perhaps uneven or rushed coverage. Certainly it appeared that a number of candidates had covered material at some speed and had not had the opportunity to study it in detail and become confident and familiar with it. Better responses also tended to be more tightly focused on the wording of the question, with candidates who performed less well tending to write what they knew or felt comfortable with rather than paying strict attention to what was on the paper. Some responses did not offer much more than lists of examples or facts; some offered assertions and opinions without much in the way of supporting evidence; neither of these approaches is likely to gain above a low Level 3.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### Question 1

- (a) Better responses focused well on the specific mention of 'brute force' in the question, supported this with several examples, and also attempted to examine other methods Augustus employed to secure and maintain power, such as popular support founded on stability and building programmes, and political influence. The interconnected nature of brute force, stability and political influence, with the latter two not truly possible without the threat of the former, was hinted at but not often argued clearly, at times restricting candidates to Level 3.
- (b) Responses to this question tended to cover most aspects of the question with a fair degree of knowledge; arguments could have been better and more consistently developed. For example, an interesting idea about promoting civic pride to aid administration was raised, but this was not expressed clearly and so it was difficult to see how this might have worked in practice or succeeded as a policy – it is possible that the candidate was thinking creatively in the examination room rather than expressing an idea previously considered, regarding which see general comments above. Alternatively, the use of client kingdoms as buffer states was mentioned but not put clearly into context or discussed in any depth.

### Question 2

Responses to **Questions 2(a)** and **2(b)** exhibited similar characteristics and so are commented on together. A general and crucial observation is that candidates knew a great number of stories from the *Metamorphoses*, and were able to list several examples relevant to the question; beyond this, they were limited in their ability to construct an argument or offer any literary judgement, or critical or personal response. For **2(a)**, regarding the suitability of Ovid's stories for children, there was little attempt to get to grips with what the stories were in fact suitable for, and the strong suggestion that audience and the stories' impact should be considered was missed. In **2(b)**, responses listed different emotions but went little further, with limited attempt to discuss emotional impact or response, the importance of variety, the unity or otherwise of the work, or develop other critical arguments. It was clear that candidates had greatly enjoyed reading the stories Ovid presented, which has great value in itself; it was less clear that they had learned to develop and argue any critical response to them as literature.

**Question 3**

No candidates answered on this option.

**Question 4**

No candidates answered on this option.

**Question 5**

- (a) In general candidates showed good awareness of the importance of the Verres prosecution for Cicero's career, especially the way it 'rescued' him from relative obscurity after his own magistracy in Sicily. The best responses tied relevant evidence simply and effectively to sensible and uncomplicated analysis, showing a firm overall awareness of the material and clear understanding of the issues. Some responses gave a sound overall outline answer relevant to the question but supported it with little in the way of detailed evidence; others became sidetracked into discussing Catiline (not really an effective comparison for the prosecution of Verres due to the radically different circumstances) or later flirtations with *optimates* and *populares*.
- (b) No candidates answered on this option.

**Question 6**

No candidates answered on this option.

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Paper 9786/03

Classical Literature-Sources and Evidence

## General comments

This remains a small entry subject and for all papers candidates did not attempt the full range of questions. In Paper 3, candidates only answered the questions on the Roman Empire and the Gods and Heroes topics.

As previously, candidates should be encouraged to allocate their time on this paper as instructed on the front cover of the paper. Candidates are asked to address a question derived from a (modern) critical passage and also to use, not just mention, two separate text passages to present an argument. Candidates have tended to construe this task in too narrative a fashion to the detriment of the analysis. It is also advantageous for candidates to invest time in written planning as this has shown to be helpful in maintaining the logical progression of an argument and not drifting away from the point during the course of an essay. They have also often failed to bring in sufficient external detail, whether examples or citation which would help to support their argument.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 2

The candidates who attempted this question did, generally, manage to pursue their arguments to a logical conclusion whether they adopted the Tacitean view of the way the Romans maintained order in the provinces and the way they encouraged Romanisation or not. It would be fair to say that, though many arguments were advanced and, in some cases, valid judgements were made, there was a tendency not to give enough evidence or citation to support the argument that was advanced and, therefore, produce a cogent essay. As has already been mentioned, the text passages were acknowledged but not always used convincingly. The passages are selected in the hope that candidates may build them into their essays and use them as a starting point for discussion of a theme. If teachers are unsure about how this might best be addressed they should consult the mark scheme for the paper which outlines how the particular passages may be used and how candidates may expand on them as a starting point. In this instance, they were designed to give contrasting views on the relationships between provincials and the Romans.

### Question 4

Much of what has been written in the general points and in the specific comments for Question 2 also applies to Question 4. Candidates were asked to explore the similar natures of gods and heroes, which is a central theme of the topic. Again, the specific mark scheme is quite clear about how the passages may be used and the dilemma that Achilles faces in terms of life or death and glory would seem to lead to a fruitful discussion of the value of this code, especially in the light of Achilles' remarks to Odysseus when they meet in the underworld. There are also plenty of examples for candidates to choose from whether to illustrate godlike or un-godlike behaviour, mortals behaving like gods or gods behaving like mortals. The Bowra passage also introduced the interesting idea that gods are immortal and happy while men are mortal and miserable which also might have proved a fruitful area for discussion.

Candidates should be reminded that planning is never a waste of time. It is also true that questions do not demand one right answer but examiners are looking for substantiated argument. There are plenty of examples of men being happy even living under the shadow of imminent death, for example, as there are of poor moral behaviour by gods and good moral behaviour by mortals or vice versa.

**Questions 1 and 3** were not attempted by any candidate.

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<p><b>Paper 9786/04</b> <b>The Classical Heritage</b></p>
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On this Controlled Assessment task, all candidates dealt with their chosen themes in a way that allowed them (with varying degrees of success) to compare an element of the ancient world with its equivalent in more recent times. In fact, the majority of comparisons were, perhaps not surprisingly, with the various forms of modern popular culture.

Whilst there was some pleasing evidence of analytical thought in identifying factors in the argument, the overall performance of most candidates was somewhat depressed by not citing detailed evidence, particularly from classical sources, to support assertions. Most references to classical authors appeared to come via secondary sources rather than any reading of the original texts. Also, where the focus of the study was on one or two films, detailed reference to scenes (or even dialogue) can be expected.

Most candidates made sensible use of the A4 sheet of notes but not all provided the required bibliography (this requirement is clearly stated in the syllabus). Teachers are advised that candidates often need help in compiling a bibliography in an acceptable format. Internet references need to be precise (references merely to Google are not very helpful!).