

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/11
Greek Civilisation

Key messages

Candidates should be encouraged to:

- plan answers to the longer, high tariff questions;
- use the mark allocation to determine how much to write;
- write in complete sentences to ensure that they explain their answers fully and give sufficient detail to be awarded the marks available;
- make greater use of the passages and images in the mini-essays of the commentary questions
- spell Classical names printed on the paper accurately;
- refer to Alexander the Great as Alexander and not as Alex, and Socrates as Socrates and not as Soc;
- number questions carefully.

General comments

There were very few rubric errors this year. In addition, it was felt that most candidates made better use of their time – answers were longer and there were far fewer scripts which had very short responses. There was hardly any evidence of planning longer answers on this year's scripts.

Comments on specific questions

SECTION ONE

Question 1

Surprisingly few candidates attempted this question, but those that did were generally well informed.

- (i) Most knew who the Companions were.
- (ii) The year of the battle of Gaugamela was generally well-known. Some confused it with the Battle of Issus.
- (iii) Some did not seem to understand the word 'omen'. The question was often omitted.
- (iv) This was generally well-answered, with many candidates able to access the majority of marks.
- (v) Candidates knew the basics of this question, but needed to explain their answers more fully.
- (vi) Few candidates followed the instruction to use the passage as a starting point. It was common to read responses which discussed generic leadership skills rather than specific examples of tactics employed by Alexander. Candidates need to give specific examples.

Question 2

The topic of Alexander being a 'great leader of men' was the most popular question by far. The answers varied tremendously in quality. There were some good essays which were able to see both sides of the argument and refer to specific incidents. Less good responses tended to argue one way or the other without offering a balanced argument. A few offered what read like a prepared answer – about how great Alexander was.

Question 3

Most candidates had the material to answer the question about how Alexander used religion and mythology to promote his image, but they did not direct it specifically enough towards the question. They gave information about Alexander and religion and mythology but did not discuss 'effectively', or Alexander's claims to divine parentage and mythological ancestors. The material needed to be used more effectively to create and argue a coherent case.

SECTION TWO

Question 4

- (i) The year of Socrates's trial was generally well known.
- (ii) The vast majority of candidates knew the other charge brought against Socrates.
- (iii) There were some interesting answers to this question – ranging from Homer, Odysseus, Achilles and Sophocles. Aristophanes was not as well-known as expected.
- (iv) Whilst some knew the name of the play, few could provide the date of the play.
- (v) Candidates did not seem to have sufficient knowledge of this part of the Apology to be able to answer the question.
- (vi) This was well answered with all candidates naming at least one of the accusers.
- (vii) Candidates could provide detail about the arguments Socrates used to defend himself, but did not focus adequately on the 'convincing' element of the question.

Question 5

This question, on Socrates's ideas about the gods and public worship was often answered as a 'why was Socrates found guilty' essay. Knowledge about Socrates' ideas about the gods and public worship was limited.

Question 6

The question of the extent to which Socrates was a law-abiding citizen was a very popular one which produced answers which varied considerably in quality. Candidates were able to refer to his refusal to escape in *Crito*, his death in *Phaedo* as examples of how he obeyed the laws. Few used material about Socrates fighting in the army and his carrying out his political duties.

His refusal to countenance the trial of the generals was felt to be an example of Socrates breaking the law rather than upholding it.

SECTION THREE

Question 7

- (i) The key word here was 'already'. Many made reference to the passage or to incidents after it.
- (ii) Candidates knew that Anticleon was referring to Cleon and other demagogues.
- (iii) This question was poorly answered.
- (iv) A wide variety of possible answers was available for this question on the Chorus. Few mentioned the visual spectacle of the costumes and the dancing of the Wasp chorus. It was common for candidates to concentrate on the words spoken by the chorus, especially when they comment on the *agon*.

- (v) Candidates seemed well versed in the behaviour of Procleon in Act One, but did not have the same familiarity with similar material in Act Two. Even when candidates were able to offer comment on the how his behaviour changed, they tend to omit any reasons as to why his behaviour might have changed.

Question 8

There were no responses to this question.

Question 9

The question about the use of parody in *Wasps* and *Frogs* was not popular. Those who did tackle the question did not have a firm grasp on what constitutes parody. Whilst there was some attempt to explain why Aristophanes uses parody, specific examples were few and far between.

SECTION FOUR

Question 10

- (i) Candidates knew that the belly amphora was used for storage, but many did not go on to give examples of what might be stored in the pot, so denying themselves access to the full range of marks.
- (ii) Examiners were surprised by how few could name the painter as the Lysippides Painter.
- (iii) The dates offered were usually outside the Archaic period and more into the Hellenistic period.
- (iv) Candidates tended not to name the black figure technique and this led to difficulties with naming three features of the technique as shown in the scene depicted. References to the firing of the pot, though accurate, were not relevant to the question. Some seemed to think that figures were painted red or white and very few mentioned incision at all.
- (v) Answers tended to be very short, which meant that the candidates could not access the higher levels of marks for this question. Some provided generic answers about vase-painting from the geometric period and offered no specific detail about relevant pots or scenes. There was even little, if any, discussion of the scene depicted on the paper.

Question 11

There were very few answers to this question on the Pioneers and Mannerists. Whilst candidates were able to pick out aspects of the P and M style, they found it difficult to offer specific and accurate examples of scenes on pots by named painters.

Question 12

There were no responses to this question.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/12
Greek Civilisation

Key messages

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- (iv) This was generally well-answered, with many candidates able to access the majority of marks.
- (v) Candidates knew the basics of this question, but needed to explain their answers more fully.
- (vi) Few candidates followed the instruction to use the passage as a starting point. It was common to read responses which discussed generic leadership skills rather than specific examples of tactics employed by Alexander. Candidates need to give specific examples.

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Question 4

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- (ii) The vast majority of candidates knew the other charge brought against Socrates.
- (iii) There were some interesting answers to this question – ranging from Homer, Odysseus, Achilles and Sophocles. Aristophanes was not as well-known as expected.
- (iv) Whilst some knew the name of the play, few could provide the date of the play.
- (v) Candidates did not seem to have sufficient knowledge of this part of the Apology to be able to answer the question.
- (vi) This was well answered with all candidates naming at least one of the accusers.
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SECTION FOUR

Question 10

- (i) Candidates knew that the belly amphora was used for storage, but many did not go on to give examples of what might be stored in the pot, so denying themselves access to the full range of marks.
- (ii) Examiners were surprised by how few could name the painter as the Lysippides Painter.
- (iii) The dates offered were usually outside the Archaic period and more into the Hellenistic period.
- (iv) Candidates tended not to name the black figure technique and this led to difficulties with naming three features of the technique as shown in the scene depicted. References to the firing of the pot, though accurate, were not relevant to the question. Some seemed to think that figures were painted red or white and very few mentioned incision at all.
- (v) Answers tended to be very short, which meant that the candidates could not access the higher levels of marks for this question. Some provided generic answers about vase-painting from the geometric period and offered no specific detail about relevant pots or scenes. There was even little, if any, discussion of the scene depicted on the paper.

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CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/13
Greek Civilisation

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General comments

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Comments on specific questions

SECTION ONE

Question 1

- (i) Most candidates knew that the Battle of Issus took place before the siege of Tyre.
- (ii) All candidates seemed to be able to come up with Darius's wife and mother, but were less certain about the other members of his family. Some forgot to answer the second part of the question.
- (iii) The year of the siege of Tyre seemed to cause candidates few problems.
- (iv) The spelling of Heracles was an issue for some candidates. Some gave Achilles, Ammon-Ra and Bucephalus as the god Alexander wanted to worship.
- (v) Many candidates ignored the very careful wording of the question 'why did Alexander SAY...' which made it clear that the answer had to come from the speech attributed to him by Arrian. There were many general discussions of the strategic importance of Tyre or repetition of the answer to **1(iv)**.
- (vi) Gaza was often not treated as a separate entity. There were a lot of general responses about Alexander's mastery of strategy and leadership skills. The best responses gave clear and specific examples, showing good knowledge of Arrian's description of these two sieges and treating both in more or less equal depth.

Question 2

This question was the most popular choice within this option, and on this paper. Too many general re-hashes of 'Was Alexander a good leader' which had clearly been discussed at some length in class and had obviously engaged candidates' interest. 'Friends' sometimes too narrowly interpreted as referring only to Hephaestion and Bucephalus. The best responses gave careful thought to the changing nature of

Alexander's relationship with the Macedonians and gave very clear, specific, relevant examples, citing names and facts in some detail. Better answers gave details of how Alexander treated his enemies such as the Persians and Porus and contrasted this with the reactions of the Macedonians.

Question 3

A substantial number of responses confused 'the Greeks' and 'the Macedonians' and, therefore, did not address the question posed. The question was about Alexander's relationship with the Greek City States. Those who addressed the question directly had a good range of knowledge which they were able to employ effectively.

SECTION TWO

Question 4

- (i) The majority of candidates got either Socrates' death cell or Phlius.
- (ii) Many candidates were able to give the name of one person with Socrates when he died. Very few were able to name two.
- (iii) There were many incorrect answers.
- (iv) Although there were some very good, clear explanations of why Socrates' wife was not present, some did not know her name.
- (v) Sometimes candidates did not name the chosen technique (analogy or elenchus) or explain it clearly enough.
- (vi) There were some very good responses, which showed sound knowledge of the *Phaedo* and a good understanding of the issues. The most common error was to go beyond *Phaedo* to include other dialogues in which Socrates' views about death had clearly been analysed during lessons.

SECTION THREE

Question 7

- (i) Candidates could generally identify the prologue, but were not always able to explain its purpose.
- (ii) Only a few responses showed knowledge of Herakles' visit to the Underworld during his Labours and therefore missed the point of Dionysus' 'disguise'.
- (iii) Not as many candidates knew about the enfranchisement of slaves after the battle of Arginusae as in previous years.
- (iv) There were some good responses, which gave clear, relevant detail, mostly from the first part of the play.
- (v) The best responses covered the use of the ekkyklema as Charon's boat, but most responses did not go beyond Dionysus' costume, the scales used to weigh the poetry and some generic mentions of props.

Question 8

This was the most popular question in this section. Answers showed awareness of who Cleon was, and most agreed with the statement, basing much of their response around the Trial of the Dog. Very few went very deeply into either the opening scene or the latter half of the play. The strongest responses contained a clear awareness of performance possibilities. Better responses considered elements such as humour and spectacle to argue that a modern audience would be able to enjoy the plays.

Question 9

There were very few examples of answers to this question. Candidates who did attempt the question based their answers on *Wasps*. Some sensible points were made about thematic similarities to modern political and social issues, with clear references to the play.

SECTION FOUR

Question 10

- (i) Candidates knew that the belly amphora was used for storage, but many did not go on to give examples of what might be stored in the pot, so denying themselves access to the full range of marks.
- (ii) Some candidates did not seem to understand that the question referred to the picture on the question paper, which clearly showed the red-figure side of this bilingual vase, consequently giving an incorrect answer.
- (iii) The date was often not known.
- (iv) A surprising number of candidates failed to mention the words 'red-figure', instead giving some characteristics of red-figure painting without using that term at all anywhere in the response.
- (v) Generally speaking, there were clear responses which showed good knowledge of at least one other vase showing gods. The Sophilos *dinos* and the Niobid Painter *kalyx krater* were the most popular choices. Some answers needed great accuracy of detail when referring to the pots.

Question 11

There were no responses to this question.

Question 12

Candidates who chose this question generally demonstrated a good knowledge of at least two pots in each technique, though a few responses were just general comparisons of technique. Less good was the attention paid to the two key words in the question – 'powerful' and 'emotional', with many detailed responses commenting on such aspects as drapery or realism without discussing the effect on the viewer. The most popular black-figure examples were Exekias 'Ajax and Achilles playing a dice' and the François vase. The most popular red-figure ones were Herakles and Antaios and the Niobid Krater.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

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

Key messages

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- spell Classical names accurately;
- use the full version of a character's name, Augustus rather than Aug.

Comments on specific questions

Section One

Question 1

This was not a popular question. Those who did attempt this commentary question did not have the full range of factual knowledge required to achieve all the marks.

- (i) Candidates were able to mention some ideas about propaganda, but did not go on to explain fully why Augustus might need to publish the Res Gestae.
- (ii) Candidates generally talked about books or scrolls. Few mentioned that the Res Gestae were engraved on bronze pillars and placed in the Forum Romanum.
- (iii) Candidates often omitted the question about imperium. Others had some uncertain knowledge about why it might be important.
- (iv) Very few candidates knew the name of the battle 'when both consuls had fallen in battle'.
- (v) About half the candidates could offer the names of Brutus and Cassius as the ones who 'butchered my father'.
- (vi) Candidates were more successful in naming the Battle of Philippi.
- (vii) Answers to this question tended to be rather brief and did not offer the detail necessary to achieve the higher levels on the assessment grid. Candidates need to read the question carefully and follow the instructions, especially 'Using this passage as a starting point...' and the year '43 BC'. There was a tendency to use information from beyond the year specified.

Question 2

The essay on Octavian's defeat of Mark Antony was the most popular question in this section and the second most popular question on the whole paper. Candidates generally showed good knowledge of how Octavian used his position as Caesar's adopted son to convince the veterans to follow him and of the breakdown in the relationship between Octavian and Antony. There was a tendency to concentrate on the end of their relationship at the expense of some of the earlier events.

Question 3

Candidates were not always clear about the main features of the Constitutional Settlements of 27 BC and 23 BC, and had difficulty assigning features to the correct Constitutional Settlement. Only the better answers went on to offer some response to the second part of the question as to why Octavian thought that these settlements were necessary.

Section Two

Question 4

- (i) Everyone knew that the group of people referred to were the Trojans.
- (ii) The question on Laocoon was well-answered. Candidates gave a range of points about what he had said and done.
- (iii) Candidates were able to choose appropriate examples from the passage to show how Virgil stresses the strength and power of the serpents. Those who went on to discuss the effects of their selected examples tended to access the higher levels of the available marks.
- (iv) The marks varied according to the difference in quality between the precision of detail offered and the general knowledge supplied of what happens to the Trojans during the fall of Troy. There is so much material that could have been offered in answer to this question that it is difficult to understand why so many answers were very brief. There was a tendency to answer the question from an emotional point of view without any supporting evidence.

Question 5

There were very few responses to this question about the character of Aeneas in Book 2 and Book 6. Candidates tended to make up their minds before answering the question rather than arguing the case during the course of the essay. Candidates agreed with the statement, but did not offer a balanced view or a balance of information from both Book 2 and Book 6.

Question 6

This was the most popular question in this section and on the whole paper with around half the candidates choosing to attempt it. It offered candidates an opportunity to display their knowledge of the Aeneid. The discriminating factor was the level of detail offered and the extent to which candidates used their knowledge to answer the question rather than just tell the story of their chosen books.

Section Three

Question 7

The Juvenal questions are the least popular on the whole paper, but the commentary questions were reasonably well-answered.

- (i) Most could access one of the marks, but found it difficult to access the second mark which required explanation of how the example supported Juvenal's point.
- (ii) Candidates did not do well on this question about the myths referred to in lines 6–7. Many simply identified the myths in the lines by writing them out, but it was not evident that they knew precisely which myths they referred to.
- (iii) This question was very carefully worded to take candidates through what was expected step by step. Many chose to ignore one of the steps and leave out a key point – the example, the technique or the explanation of its effect. The most common techniques identified were rhetorical questions, metaphors and repetition – the examples, however, did not always illustrate the technique identified.
- (iv) There was quite a lot of evidence that candidates knew the material relevant to the question about 'money being the root of all evils'. The use of that material tended to be quite narrative and there was not enough focus on the 'how far do you agree' part of the question.

Question 8

There were very few responses to the question about Satire 10. Answers tended to be quite narrative in approach.

Question 9

There were even fewer responses to the question about the reader being 'battered into submission'. As with **Question 8**, candidates tended just to say what was in individual Satires [especially Satire 3] rather than create an argument to answer the question.

Section Four

Question 10

- (i) The commentary question was not quite as popular as in previous years. The monument was not always identified as a triumphal arch.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to offer one valid reason as to why triumphal arches were built by the Romans.
- (iii) Most were able to give one or two ways in which triumphal arches were decorated.
- (iv) Only a small number of candidates were able to offer the name of another triumphal arch, which inevitably led to problems in **Question (v)**.

Question 11

Despite the popularity of Pantheon questions in the past, there was only a small handful of response to this question. Candidates tended to write very briefly and not answer the question. Simple description does not attract many marks. The knowledge needs to be used to show understanding, both of the material and the question.

Question 12

There were some interesting discussions which simply agreed with the quotation in the question, but all too often they were not backed up with close reference to details of the selected buildings. It is not enough to merely 'name drop' a building or monument, examiners have to be able to see that candidates know details about the buildings. The most commonly selected buildings for discussion were the Pantheon, the Coliseum and Hadrian's baths.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

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

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Paper 9274/23
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Comments on specific questions

SECTION ONE

Question 1

- (i) Various explanations were offered about who the Chief Priest was, but not all candidates were able to explain the importance of the role.
- (ii) Candidates were generally well informed about Marcus Lepidus.
- (iii) Candidates had some awareness of what the Sibylline books were, but they were not able to extend their responses to include detail about why they were important to the Romans.
- (iv) Very few candidates knew the date of Augustus's first consulship.
- (v) Most candidates could offer one point about the role of the Vestal Virgins. Few were able to provide full details.
- (vi) Candidates showed detailed knowledge of the religious policies of Augustus, but were not always able to use their knowledge to answer the question about why religion was important to him.

Question 2

Candidates generally showed good knowledge of how Octavian obtained power. Many produced a narrative answer which did not allow for a coherent argument to be formulated. By far the majority of candidates did obey the timeframe given within the question. Better answers looked at both his legal and his illegal actions.

Question 3

Candidates were not always clear about who was a member of Augustus's family and who might be considered a friend. Many seemed to take a narrow focus on the question and concentrate on either family or friends. Some also seemed to think that he relied on his daughter Julia rather than that he used her to try and cement a line of succession. More balanced responses provided a counter argument.

SECTION TWO

Question 4

- (i) Most knew that Aeneas and Anchises were in Elysium.
- (ii) There were many generic answers about Aeneas and Anchises greeting each other and talking. Some mentioned reviewing the fates of the souls waiting to be reborn.
- (iii) Surprisingly few candidates knew of the relationship between Marcellus and Augustus.
- (iv) Candidates were able to choose appropriate examples from the passage and they tended to write well about whether the selected examples were patriotic or tragic.
- (v) The marks varied according to the difference in quality between the precision of detail offered and the general knowledge supplied of who Anchises is, what he does and why he is important

Question 5

The best responses created a balanced, coherent argument by specific, detailed reference to both Book 2 and Book 4. There are candidates who still make their choice in their heads and try to set out their position on paper without considering both books in their answers. Candidates seemed to find little in Book 2 to be tragic, whilst the plight of Dido seemed much easier for candidates to write about. A select few, however, considered the fall of a nation to be much more tragic than the fall of an individual, especially when the episode was recounted by a native Trojan.

Question 6

Whilst there was a wide variety of both literary elements and literary techniques available for candidates to discuss in answer to this question, the responses tended to be on the quality of the story rather than Virgil's skill in telling the story. Those who were able to consider the literary elements and literary techniques and provide specific examples from the text achieved the higher levels of marks.

SECTION THREE

Question 7

- (i) Most could name the lower-income guest as Trebius.
- (ii)/(iii) These questions achieved high marks.
- (iv) This question was very carefully worded to take candidates through what was expected step by step. Many chose to ignore one of the steps and leave out a key point – the example, the technique or the explanation of its effect. The most common techniques identified were rhetorical questions, hyperbole and repetition – the examples, however, did not always illustrate the technique identified.
- (v) There was quite a lot of evidence that candidates knew the material relevant to the question about the rich and the poor. The use of that material tended to be quite narrative and there was not enough focus on the 'how effectively' part of the question.

Question 8

There were very few responses to the question about the *persona* of Umbricius. Some candidates did not know the term *persona*. There was one answer which was convincing, original and persuasive and had showed a detailed knowledge of Satire 3.

Question 9

The question about 'indignation' driving Juvenal 'to verse' was more popular than **Question 8**. Most candidates did not fully grasp the meaning of the quotation and so tended to ignore it and use it as an excuse to write an essay on why Juvenal wrote satire.

SECTION FOUR

Question 10

- (i) The majority of candidates identified the two types of building as a theatre and amphitheatre. There is still some confusion between the two buildings. Some seem to believe that a Colosseum is a type of building.
- (ii) This was generally well answered by those who knew the difference between a theatre and an amphitheatre. It was common for candidates to mention chariot racing as an activity held in both buildings.
- (iii) Most named the emperor as an individual who might donate these types of buildings. Some candidates could give the names of specific individuals such as Annobal Rufus, Quinctius Valgus and Marcius Porcius
- (iv) Virtually everyone could name a specific amphitheatre and theatre.
- (v) The success of this response depended very much on the buildings selected in (iv). Generally, there needed to be a much closer comparison of the buildings and facilities.

Question 11

Candidates tended to describe their chosen temples in greater or lesser detail and then write a short concluding paragraph in which they made brief mention of some of the factors an architect may have to take into consideration. Better answers focused more on those factors throughout the essay.

Question 12

There were some lively discussions which took issue with the quotation in the question. Whilst the arguments were interesting to read, all too often they were not backed up in sufficient depth by close reference to details of the selected buildings. It is not enough to merely 'name drop' a building or monument, examiners have to be able to see that candidates know the material. As with **Question 11**, there were some candidates who took a purely descriptive approach without actually answering the question.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/31
History: Sources and Evidence

Key Messages

Candidates should:

- Read the question carefully to ensure that they focus on the requirements and produce fully relevant answers
- Plan their writing carefully to produce an essay of an appropriate length and depth
- Ensure source material is used and reference this when relevant
- Spell names of plays and characters correctly.

General comments

The vast majority of candidates were prepared for and attempted **Question 1** on the Changing World of Athens. There were very few responses to **Question 2**. A reason for the greater popularity of **Question 1** may be the closer focus on the Greek world in the fifth century, than the broader **Question 2** which covers over 150 years, ranging from one end of the Roman Empire (Britain) through Gaul to the other (Judaea).

It was good to see evidence of planning in many cases. The broad range of questions on this paper places considerable demands on candidates, and time spent planning helped ensure that most answers stayed on course and were directed at the question.

The two questions share an identical structure, in both, the question itself is supplemented by an unseen passage from modern scholarship and by two passages drawn from the three specified authors. One technique used by many candidates was to explicitly turn their essay, usually towards the end, to cover the one source that had not been included in the question. So in **Question 1** a large number of candidates included a paragraph on Aristophanes *Acharnians*. In many cases this was very general and did not always show a convincing grasp of the material with the events of the play becoming rather garbled and not related to the question. However there was some good use of this material, and the same can also be said for Josephus in **Question 2**, where the extract from modern scholarship pointed candidates towards that particular source.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

Most candidates were able to demonstrate a reasonable grasp of what happened during the fifth century, though answers were not always clearly structured, and some candidates jumped forwards and backwards in time without making clear why they were doing so. Better responses had a confident grasp of the final stages of the Peloponnesian War; other answers were hazy about the sequence of events after the start.

Most candidates showed an understanding of the issues. There were some excellent answers that showed a good understanding of issues across the period, and put the two ancient sources effectively in context. There were some excellent accounts of the ways Athens challenged the freedom of others, in some cases drawing very effectively on a wide range of other sources, including a wider selection of events from Thucydides and some apposite inscriptions. Better answers were able to show how the Athenian treatment of states like Scione and Melos highlighted the issues raised by Buckley. Relatively few responses were able to take the story beyond the Sicilian expedition, and some references to the end of the war were rather confused. Some very effective answers argued that the growth of Athenian power in the end affected them as well as other smaller states. Less effective responses tended to summarise the passages from the ancient sources, and did not always appear to recognise that the two passages selected provided a challenge to what was argued by Buckley in the passage from *Aspects of Greek History*.

Question 2

Most answers used the passages on the paper sensibly and clearly, and there were some reasonable discussions of Josephus. Some candidates struggled to deal effectively with the different contexts of the three specified sources in a short essay, and there was some confusion over dates. Better responses were aware that Calgacus' speech in the Tacitus passage was likely to be an invention of Tacitus himself, effective but open to challenge. There were some interesting lists of 'what the Romans have done for us' to challenge the assumption of the question.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/32
History: Sources and Evidence

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Question 2

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CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/41
Classical Literature -
Sources and Evidence

Key messages

Successful candidates:

- showed a strong focus on the question;
- employed examples from all texts studied, not only the ones from which extracts featured on the question paper;
- paid close attention to the stimulus text that preceded the question and how this related to the question;
- constructed a clear and focused, consistent argument;
- gave extensive and relevant support from the texts, without sections of narrative;
- showed an awareness of relevant classical ideas and thought.

General comments

All candidates this year responded to **Question 2**, so the general comments here are also specific comments for that question.

Overall the standard of responses was markedly improved on last year, and this continues a general upward trend in the quality of candidates' work. The vast majority of candidates retained some level of focus on the specific question asked throughout their responses, covered all three epics to some degree and could differentiate between those epics and between different characters.

The best responses explored the idea of selfishness and public responsibility in a nuanced way, making careful judgements about the central characters of each epic, and finding elements of selfishness or responsibility in each, while still making a strong argument one way or another. This was a successful way of achieving balance in an answer, rather than 'sitting on the fence' and trying to argue both sides of an argument, an approach that left some candidates producing rather contradictory answers.

Another feature of answers that achieved the top band of marks was evidence of some impressive secondary reading, which was deployed in a selective and appropriate manner to reinforce a candidate's argument, in some cases from a considerable range of sources. However where candidates' use published study aids as their main source of secondary reading there is a tendency for responses to be over-simplified.

Strong responses showed a firm grasp of contemporary values about heroism and the requirements and expectations audiences may have had about characters in epics. Many responses differentiated well between Greek and Roman epic; some also drew careful distinctions between the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*. A clear appreciation of ancient values and contexts was a consistent feature of stronger responses; on the other hand, some less successful responses attempted to build arguments on inadequate definitions: of selfishness as concern for material possessions and public responsibility as being nice to other people.

Most candidates showed familiarity with the actual texts studied and their contemporary context. Most candidates had a reasonable grasp of the plot of each poem; fewer believed they had been studying plays or novels instead of epic poems; and while a certain television movie version of the *Odyssey*, which contains some harmful inaccuracies, was still the primary source for some candidates on this poem, it was only a small handful. Spelling of classical names is greatly improved; as usual, there is no penalty for mistakes here, but the steadily improving level of accuracy in these matters of detail is a good indicator of greater familiarity with the texts, and where candidates mastered fine detail better their responses tended to be stronger.

Some common misconceptions or mistakes were:

- the idea that Odysseus simply abandoned his men
- the nature of the choice Odysseus had to make over Scylla and Charybdis
- erroneous islands, e.g. Carthage, or the land of the Cyclopes (never described as an island in Homer)
- incorrect books of the *Aeneid*, in particular, Dido in Book 5, the Burning of Troy in Book 3
- the idea that Achilles was immortal
- Odysseus being punished because he claimed that he conquered Troy without the gods' help (see comments about film adaptations above)
- references to demi-gods, sometimes harmless, but sometimes creating a false category of heroes who have 'special powers' because of divine parentage, akin to 'superheroes'.

In addition, most candidates used Book 4 of the *Aeneid* extensively in their answers, even though it is not a set book for this paper. Most, if not all, candidates are likely to have studied this at AS Level; there was no penalty for this in itself as it was appropriate for the particular question in this instance, but on occasion it was at the expense of detail from the books that were set, which was then a weakness in the response. Many candidates demonstrated in their responses that they had engaged with and considered these texts and had something meaningful to say about them. There was a correspondingly lesser amount of simple narration of the story in place of evaluation and argument; and there was a strong impression that most candidates had enjoyed studying the poems.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/42
Classical Literature -
Sources and Evidence

Key messages

Successful candidates:

- showed a strong focus on the question;
- employed examples from all texts studied, not only the ones from which extracts featured on the question paper;
- paid close attention to the stimulus text that preceded the question and how this related to the question;
- constructed a clear and focused, consistent argument;
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General comments

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CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/43
Classical Literature -
Sources and Evidence

Key messages

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