

EXAMINER'S REPORT AS LATIN 2009

There were 27 candidates, only one fewer than in 2008, and still higher by a pleasing margin than the 20 of 2007. The range of marks in the Language paper was 95 to 53.5 (96.5 to 65 in 2008), and the median was 80.5 (86.5 in 2008); in the Literature paper the range was 96.5 to 55.5 (92 to 32 in 2008), and the median was 80.5.

Latin Language 8282/01

Both translations were attempted by 9 candidates (13/28 in 2008); of the 18 who offered one 14 offered Livy. The examiner was surprised; but a slightly higher proportion of candidates did score better than 40/50 for the Livy than for the Virgil. Of the top seven candidates both translations were offered by only one. But the proportion of candidates scoring higher than 40/50 for Section C was only very slightly higher than the proportion scoring higher than 40/50 for Livy.

In the passages for translation there are certainly difficulties (for the candidates) in Virgil that are at least not so common in Livy. For example, economies such as the simple ablative (*tellure*) or the syllepses *crudeles aras traiectaque pectora ferro/nudavit* (where *crudeles aras* is best translated 'the cruelty at the altars' [*ab urbe condita*], as indeed it was, by two or three candidates), and *fugam Dido sociosque parabat* (where inflection was often overridden by more familiar forms of expression, and *socios* was translated as nominative). But word order, significant indeed in Virgil (*impius ante aras*, which moreover should not be separated from the rest of the line), needs to be noticed also in Livy: *verbis* with *increpans*, not with *transfigit*, *ipse* inside the *ne* clause, *ad uulgus*, between *ingrati* and *iudicii*, dependent on *ingrati*. One or two forms were not recognised by everyone, e.g. *oblita, eat* (Livy), *omne* (Virgil); the inflection that apparently escaped most of the candidates (all male) was *quaecumque Romana*, feminine. Translation of verse may be helped by scansion: so in Virgil, line 352, *multă*.

In the explanation of syntax there were thirteen marks at 16/20 or higher (and one of 20/20); candidates demonstrated a fair competence at this level, and the examiner notes here only one larger point and a couple of small ones. In Sentence ii he had hoped for an explanation of *cum... regnabat* as 'determinative' (*vel sim.*); when it came to marking he decided to accept 'purely temporal' for full marks and even 'temporal' for half marks; but he notes that *cum* is used with the indicative in a number of types of 'purely temporal' clause, including *cum* 'equivalent' ('when you say that you wrong me'), *cum* 'frequentative' ('whenever'), and *cum* 'inversum', as well as (in this case) *cum* 'determinative'. In Sentence iii the passive (gerundive) form is impersonal, because the verb is intransitive; in Sentence iv *meminerit* governs *mei*, not *dolentis*, which describes/takes the case of *mei*.

For the translation into Latin there were only eight marks at 24/30 or higher; candidates were less successful here than in the explanation of syntax. But there were only three below 20/30. Vocabulary seemed to present few problems, but in Sentence ii *laetissima* is better than *beatissima* or *felicissima*, and in Sentence iii *perfecti* is better than *progressi*. Pronouns and possessive adjectives did again present problems: the neuter form *illud*, the dative of *ea*, 'someone', the idiomatic

order *tecum, secum*, the necessity sometimes to specify (in Sentence viii 'his'). In Sentence xiii two or three excellent candidates who could probably have offered interesting arguments for taking the sentence to refer to the future did not suffer for the examiner's decision that he still thinks the condition refers to the present.

Literature 8282/02

In 2008 candidates were clearly more successful with Caesar than with Virgil; in 2009 twenty one candidates were more successful with Livy than with Virgil (or in one or two cases equally successful).

The Latin of the texts was evidently familiar to most candidates. Long hypotactic sentences are out of use, derided and damned, in modern English; successful negotiation of Livy's sentence in 1,60,1 deserves applause. In Virgil some candidates punctilious with commas in English took *iamdudum* away from *saucia* and gave it to *alit* and *carpitur*; that seems improbable (word order and phrasing again). Some translated *subito* in 697 as an adverb (parallel to *ante diem*), not the adjective with *furere*; very improbable. *Animo* in 3 is perhaps a minor Virgilian uncertainty: with *recursat*, apparently dative, parallel (in sense) to *pectore*, perhaps ablative. But *uiri* in 3 certainly does not mean, in this context, 'her man'.

Anna's persuasion of Dido was recalled in some detail by several candidates, and an extra mark was bestowed on detail; but her role in the rest of the book is also significant, especially in the tragic mode of the conclusion. Ardea was to the east of Rome on many maps in the mind, even of candidates who knew it was a port. The examiner admires the textbooks for this course very much; they are a very respectable achievement. But when he considered the answers on the consuls he wondered whether the Livy does not perhaps contain too much information for students to absorb and order in importance in relation to this part of the history; in which, on the other hand, they do seem to enjoy the legends and traditions, for example the additional detail that several reported from Dionysius that Sextus had had himself whipped.

In dealing with the scansion and the rhythm of line 702 most candidates observed the bucolic diairesis after *astitit* (but not the lighter but effective division after *deuolat*), ands 'dactyls'; but they did not all identify the same dactyls, and some scanned *cāpūt* or *astītīt*. The examiner recalls that he himself certainly did not hear and speak enough Latin at their level. Readier recognition of verse rhythms would have improved answers on Dido's emotions, in which few if any candidates noticed the same bucolic diairesis and three accents in the last two feet in line 13, or the contrasting rhythms of lines 13 and 14 (although one or two did make acute comments on the elisions in line 14 and elsewhere).

Enough of what will seem to be complaints. The examiner repeats what he said last year, that the best candidates are as good as the best he has seen at this level over the last twenty years, and that almost all have demonstrated that they have learned much from some very good teaching; he hopes at least some of them will continue with the subject at tertiary level.