

## EXAMINER'S REPORT AS LATIN 2010

There were 23 candidates, fewer than the 28 of 2008 and the 27 of 2009, but still more than the 20 of 2007. The range of marks in the Language paper was 96.5 to 16.5 (95 to 53.5 in 2009), and the median was 88 (80.5 in 2009); in the Literature paper the range was 95 to 12 (96.5 to 55.5 in 2009), and the median was 79 (80.5 in 2009).

### Latin Language 8282/01

Both translations were attempted by 6 candidates (9/27 in 2009 and 13/28 in 2008); the one translation offered by all the other 17 was Caesar. That is a still stronger demonstration of the same two preferences that the examiner noted in 2009 and 2008: translation of prose over translation of poetry, and Section C over translation, or at least translation of poetry. Candidates were certainly more successful with Caesar than with Virgil; only two scored lower for Caesar than the candidate who scored highest for Virgil. Again, four candidates scored higher for Section C than the candidate who scored highest for Virgil; on the other hand the proportion of candidates scoring higher than 40/50 for Section C was about the same as the proportion scoring higher than 40/50 for Virgil. But the figures are too low for Virgil to allow conclusions; and the examiner has no idea whether candidates make their choices in advance.

The translations of Caesar indicated little trouble with words and phrases: (*longe*) *alia ratione ac* (glossed as *aliter quam*, because *aliter* is in the prescribed word list; the examiner concluded that *aliter* does not deserve its place there); *reliquus* (which does deserve a place in the word list, is not there, and should have been glossed; but only two candidates took it for anything else, and the examiner made allowances for them); *Galli* (however often 'the Gauls' must be heard in class); *contendissent* (ambiguous, but certainly 'contend' here); *suis* (after *nostri*, still 'their men'). Little *id* (line 4) is 'that', not 'the'. The sentences are long; candidates needed to notice *-que* carefully, and did well to retain the order of Caesar's phrases and clauses, which is both temporal and logical (e.g. circumstances before action or event). Virgil was certainly harder. *Euhantes orgia*, even glossed, now weighs on the examiner's conscience; but the syntax of 526-7 is that of everyday, and needed only attention to form and inflection. *Nimium* is in the word list; only nine times in the *Aeneid*, and only once in Books 2 and 4, but in the latter in *felix, heu nimium felix* (657), which those who read it ought to remember.

For the explanation of syntax marks were not as consistently high as they were in 2009; but there were four of 20/20 (one in 2009) and three of 19 or 19.5. The examiner allowed that *persuadeamus* (iii) might be potential, and that the indirect question in (viii) might be one of fact (in the future). He also allowed 'mixed time' for the tenses in (vi), but required 'unreal condition', *vel sim.* (because 'mixed time' may be expressed in all sorts of conditions); he had hoped to see explicit reference to 'past' and 'present'.

For the translation into Latin there were only five marks at 24/30 or higher (eight in 2009), and there were six below 20/30 (three in 2009); candidates were less successful

here than in the explanation of syntax. But there were few common errors: forms of *morior*, the gender of *urbs*, the dative of *senatus* (often \**senato*, perhaps from *Senatus populusque Romanus?*), sequence of tenses in indirect questions ((iv)).

## Literature 8282/02

Candidates were more successful with Virgil than with Caesar (13 scored higher, although not often by much), so reversing the difference of 2009 and 2008 (and the difference, if it should be recognised, in the Language paper in this examination). But it appeared that a number of candidates were running out of time in Section B.

The translations of most candidates were satisfactory, many very satisfactory. Virgil does not always use words in senses with which students will be familiar: e.g. in these passages *matres* (797; Austin), *pubem* (798; Austin). *Polum* (251) was translated as 'sea' by more than one candidate; and *summae* (801) was transferred by many to *iugis*. In Virgil tenses are often worth some attention: *conticuere* (253; perhaps best 'had fallen silent'), *ibat* (254; Austin), *convenere* (799; 'had come together'). Caesar's *intellegerent* and *cognoscerent* denote different mental processes (ch.30, ll.3, 5). His long sentences distracted some candidates from his short words: *ad eum* (ch.22, l.2), *sibi* (l.7). The relation of phrases and clauses to each other in these sentences demanded (again) care: in ch.30, ll.8-11, *his...interclusis* is part of what the Britons thought (*confidebant*). Candidates knew the content of both works well. Some offered (correctly) that a final reason for Virgil to get Creusa off the stage was Lavinia. Caesar's cavalry made two attempts to cross the Channel (4,23 and 28); a number of candidates described only one, or described the two as one.

In dealing with the scansion and the rhythm of Virgil's line 250 the candidates who did not comment on the monosyllable *nox* were more numerous than those who did; it was less surprising that few of those who commented on effects in 265-7 said much about verse and rhythm (although there is much in the lines). 'The principal metrical caesura' in 250 was located by some candidates between *et* and *ruit*. Metrical caesurae are still occasionally the subject of debate; and that requirement in the examination paper is not always happy in practice. It is scarcely worth imposing if all the candidate has to do is find the middle of the third foot (which is only the most common caesura); in 250 it is much more interesting in the rhythm of the line that the principal sense break is at the end of the third foot, at the elision of *caelum* with *et*.

But many of these candidates have evidently been encouraged by some good teaching to look for and to find much of what is interesting in Virgil, and may have begun to sense the elegance of Caesar's writing (also interesting, if the examiner dared); it is to be hoped that whether they continue with the language or not they may remember the experience with pleasure.